



Three St Louis Seniors named National Merit finalists



Jordan Aubey



Bruno Beltran



Lauren Snider

LAKE CHARLES – Three senior class members at St. Louis Catholic High School have received finalist standing in the National Merit Scholarship program – Bruno Beltran, Lauren Snider, and Jordan Aubey.

The National Merit Scholarship program is a nationwide competition, the largest of its kind and is privately financed. The purpose is to seek and recognize academically talented high school students. Recognition is based on the scores made on the PSAT test, which is taken in the junior year.

Beltran and Snider have been named 2011 National Merit Finalists and will be considered for some 8,400 Merit Scholarship Awards, worth more than \$36 million, to be offered this year.

Aubey has been named a finalist in the 2011 National Achievement Program, conducted by the National Merit Scholarship Program. As a finalist, he will be considered for one of approximately 800 National Achievement Scholarships, worth \$2.5 million, to be offered to outstanding Black American students.

The National Merit Schol-

arship Corporation (NMSC), a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit program. Scholarships awarded through the program are underwritten by NMSC's own funds and by approximately 500 business organizations and higher education institutions that share NMSC's goals of honoring the nation's scholastic champions and encouraging the pursuit of academic excellence.

Rite of Election, March 13

LAKE CHARLES – The Rite of Election, the recognition of God's choice to call catechumens for immediate initiation into the Church, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 13, the First Sunday of Lent, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Most Reverend Glenn John Provost will preside.

The rite closes the period of the catechumenate, and begins the preparation for baptism at Easter. Catechumens who undergo this rite are called the "Elect" during the period of purification and enlightenment.

Two elements are key to the Rite of Election: the inscription of the names of the Elect, and the testimony of godparents and catechists. Testimony occurs in the form of affirmation by the godparents and the assembly. After the catechumens are presented, the Bishop asks the godparents if they consider the candidates worthy for initiation. This question and answer presumes that some deliberation has taken place prior to this moment. The Rite of Election brings to a ritual moment the decision that these catechumens are ready for baptism.

The inscription is made in the Book of the Elect. The names recorded there are the names by which the Elect will be baptized. After the enrollment, the Bishop announces that the catechumens are members of the Elect. All offer prayers on their behalf.

Baptized candidates, preparing for full communion with the Church, are asked to participate in the rite of calling the candidates to continuing conversion. The candidates along with their sponsors are presented to the Bishop for recognition.

Rice Bowl, Black and Indian Mission Collections upcoming

LAKE CHARLES -- Two very important special collections will be taken up in the Diocese of Lake Charles next week. Operation Rice Bowl, a collection beginning on Ash Wednesday that continues through April 24, provides the opportunity to aid in overcoming the challenges of poverty and hunger in our global community. The Black and Indian Mission Collection, taken up here the local church of Southwest Louisiana on March 12-13, continues the Church's faithful support of the evangelization needs of the Black and Native Ameri-

can communities in the United States.

In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Black and Indian Mission Collection has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars since 1980, to aid needy African American parishes and provide funding for evangelization efforts among African Americans and Native Americans.

Operation Rice Bowl invites everyone to pray with their families and faith communities; fast in solidarity with those in hunger, learn more about the challenges of poverty overseas, and give sacrificial contributions to

those in need.

Established in 1884 by the U.S. Bishops at the Council of Baltimore, the Black and Indian Mission Office supervises the Collection – the only annual appeal mandated by the Third Plenary Council – and distributes these funds as diocesan grants.

More information about each of the collections can be found on their individual websites – Black and Indian Missions at blackandindianmission.org and Operation Rice Bowl at orb.crs.org/.

Family Life Office offers Six Dates Program in Lent

LAKE CHARLES – The *Six Dates Program*, sponsored by the Office of Family Life of the Diocese of Lake Charles, will be offered on each of the six Saturdays of Lent at 6 p.m. in the Assembly Room of the Diocesan Chancery, located at 414 Iris Street.

"Dating is a ritual that comes naturally to couples," said Kathy Owen, director of the Office of Family Life. "Unfortunately as years go by in a marriage, this practice is often neglected. The goal of the Six Dates Program is to help couples strengthen their marriage by encouraging them to make some time for each other's company.

"In a world of competing demands for our attention, time for each other is a rare commodity," Owen continued. "Yet, without such opportunity for staying connected, spouses drift apart and marriages suffer. The strength of marriage is a concern of the Catholic Church because marriage is the heart of the family and families are the schools of love. This season of Lent spouses should do something loving for their family by making time to be with each other. This program is an excellent way to do just that!

Each of the six sessions will begin with prayer and introductions at 6:30 p.m. followed by a short video at 6:40 p.m. At 6:55 p.m. their will be directions and dismissal, following which couples may continue their evening on their own or stay for a fun optional enrichment, which begins at 7:15 p.m. and lasts about an hour.

Session topics and dates include, March 12, *Once Upon a Time* – Each couples love story is connected to God's love story; March 19, *Marriage is ...* – What we believe about marriage as Catholic; March 26, *What Keeps You Together?* – What keeps spouses in love

is the ability to see God's image in each other; April 2, *What About Me?* – Learning to love requires overcoming selfishness. God helps us with his graces and teaches us self-giving love; April 9, *The Blueprint of Christian Love* – Christ's love for the Church is the blueprint for our loving. Learning to love like Christ loves is the source of our happiness; and April 16, *Where Do I Find the Courage?* – Overcoming selfishness through learning to love is difficult. Prayer is the source of strength in our daily challenges. It opens us up to receive God's graces.

"Even if you cannot attend every date-night, I encourage you to register," Owen said. There will be door prizes each night, including one-night stays at Aunt Ruby's Bed and Breakfast.

Registration fee is \$30 per couple and includes the book, *Happy Together: The Catholic Blueprint for a Loving Marriage*. The form is available on the website of the Diocese of Lake Charles at live.lcdioocese.org/fta/136-marriage-and-family-life/806-six-dates.html and should be mailed back to the Office of Family Life, 411 Iris Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601. You may also e-mail the registration information to kathy.owen@lcdioocese.org and pay at the first session.

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, March 7 and 8 for Mardi Gras. They will reopen on Wednesday, March 9 (Ash Wednesday) at 8:30 a.m.



A meeting of a number of the Women Religious working in the Diocese of Lake Charles recently took place at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, hosted by the Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, Secretary for Clergy and Religious for the Diocese of Lake Charles. Following prayer, each Sister shared an explanation of the work of their current ministry and spoke of the blessings they have received. Attending the gathering were from left, standing, Sr. Mr. Chibuju Ejochi, DMMM; Sr. Shirley Gobert, SEC; Sr. Maura Theior, CCVI; Sr. Ann Margaret Savant, CCVI; Sr. Camille Martinez, SEC; and Sr. Charles Chidolue, DMMM. Seated, from left, are Sr. Leonie Iweh, DMMM; Sr. Josephine Okafor, DMMM; Sr. Clarire Pellerin, SE; and Sr. Catherine Leroux, SE.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations set May 15

LAKE CHARLES -- World Day of Prayer for Vocations will be celebrated in each of the three Deaneries of the Diocese of Lake Charles on Sunday, May 15, according to the Very Rev. Daniel Torres, Vicar General and Director of Vocations.

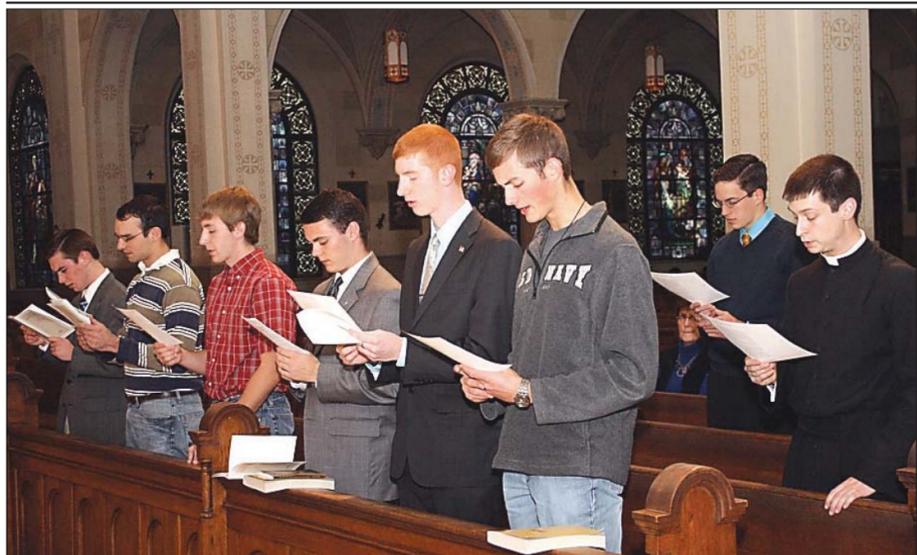
Masses will be celebrated at Our Lady of Seven Dolours Catholic Church in Welsh (Rev. Archimandrite Hebert May, celebrant and Dean of the Eastern Deanery) at 8 a.m., Immaculate Heart of

Mary Catholic Church in Lake Charles (Rev. Marcus Johnson, celebrant and Dean of the Central Deanery) at 11 a.m.; and Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Maplewood (Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, celebrant and Dean of the Western Deanery) at 11a.m.

Representatives from each church in each Deanery of the Diocese will receive a "vocations candle" during the Mass to take back to their respective parishes

to aid in the promotion of vocation awareness.

World Day of Prayer for Vocations is an opportunity to raise awareness of the need for men and women to say yes to their vocations, especially if one is called to the priesthood or religious life. In his 2011 address for the 48th annual World Day of Vocations, which has as its theme "Proposing Vocations to the Local Church", Pope Benedict XVI said, "The ability to foster vocations is a hallmark of the vitality of a local Church. With trust and perseverance let us invoke the aid of the Virgin Mary, that by the example of her own acceptance of God's saving plan and her powerful intercession, every community will be more and more open to saying "yes" to the Lord who is constantly calling new labourers to his harvest."



Father Nathan Long, right, prays with seven men who are discerning a call to the priesthood during a Vespers Service held in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. The men, who are part of the Central Deanery Vocaré group, were consecrating themselves to the Blessed Mother through a devotion developed by St. Louis de Montfort. According to de Montfort, the dedication to Mary is a fruitful path to close union with Jesus and signifies, for the young men, their willingness to offer their whole selves to God. For information on Vocaré or individual discernment regarding a priestly vocation, contact Father Long at 337-477-1236 or nathan.long@lcdioocese.org.

Did you know...

Pope Leo XIII established Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings on Dec. 7, 1891. The founding pastor, Rev. Cornelius Van de Ven who was named Bishop of Natchitoches in 1904, served less than a year in Jennings before being appointed pastor of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Lake Charles in 1892. Father Charles McMillin, ordained to the priesthood in May 2002, serves as the current pastor.

Six parishes celebrate anniversaries ranging from 40 years to 80 this year. Can you name them all? How about half that number? Find out which parishes in the next Catholic Calendar.

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Special Mass for Persecuted Christians in the Mid-East

LAKE CHARLES – A Mass for “Peace and the Safety and Welfare of Christians in the Mideast,” especially in those countries now torn by demonstrations and riots, will be celebrated on Sunday, March 27 at St. Henry Catholic Church in Lake Charles with a 5 p.m. Mass. All are invited.

The Very Reverend Daniel Torres, Vicar General of the Diocese and Pastor of St. Henry will be the principal celebrant with Reverend Archimandrite Herbert J. May, JCL, Pastor of Our Lady of Seven Dolours in Welsh as the homilist. The Mass is sponsored by the “Co-ordinating and Organizing Committee of Orders” (COCO) represented in the Diocese of Lake Charles of which Father May is the Chair.

Among the Orders represented in the Diocese of Lake Charles are the Sovereign Order of Saint John of Rhodes and Malta, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, all of whom have their origins in the Mideast and continue to provide ministry to the peoples of those lands.



Chris Padgett, a Christian speaker and worship leader, was one of the presenters at the annual Disciple Jam held at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Oakdale. The large number of young people and adults who attended the afternoon-evening event heard Padgett as well as master of ceremonies Katie Prejean and music by Kelly Pease as well as local musical talent. Father Jose Robles-Sanchez of the Diocese of Alexandria and Father Jose Vattakunnel, pastor of Sacred Heart Church were the celebrants of a special liturgy for the event.

Concert at St. Joan of Arc March 13

OBERLIN – The Carlow Choir of Alexandria, directed by John De Chiaro, will present a memorial concert on Sunday, March 13, at 3 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church honoring the memory of Claiborne Durio and Louis Karam.

The Choir was organized by De Chiaro, who formerly taught at the University of Southern Mississippi, and now resides in Pineville, following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The more than 100 members of the choir come

from throughout Central Louisiana. He now serves on the music faculty of Louisiana State University at Alexandria as well as teaching in several public schools in Central Louisiana along with being the music director at two churches in the Diocese of Alexandria.

It has given performances throughout Mississippi and Louisiana and in October 2008, performed in Florence, Assisi and Rome, Italy. The Rome concert was done for His Holiness, Pope Benedict

XVI in the Vatican. In 2010, the choir traveled to Ireland and performed at Carlow College, its namesake, and appeared on EWTN. Many concert selections can be found on the group's CD, “Reflections for the Heart”

Future concerts include a performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City later this year.

There is no admission charge, though free-will offerings will be gladly accepted.

Catholic Schools Notes

Our Lady's Catholic School

Our Lady's School wishes to invite you to its “New Family Open House” on Wednesday, March 16, starting at 6 p.m. Come out and see what OLS has to offer.

Immaculate Conception Cathedral Catholic School

Immaculate Conception Cathedral School registration information for the 2011-2012 school year is now available. New families are invited to tour the Cathedral School and receive registration packets. New Family Registration will be on Monday, March 28. For more information, please contact Susan Percele at 433-3497 or spercele@iccschool.org

Saint Margaret of Scotland Catholic School

SMCS will hold its Second Annual Viking 5K and 1 mile Fun Walk/Run, Saturday, March 19, beginning at 8 a.m. at the Lake Charles Civic Center. Cost is \$20 for 5K (3.2 miles) and \$10 for the mile. All proceeds will go to the SMCS Viking Fund /Annual Appeal. Registration forms can be downloaded at www.stmcs.com or www.lakearearunners.com. For more information, call 436-7959.

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School

OLI students and guests recently attended our All School Remembrance Mass celebrated by Bishop Provost. It was a blessing to pray during this special Mass for deceased loved ones. Plan to join us during Open House on Tuesday, March 22 from 6-7:30 p.m. New Family Registration begins Monday, March 28.

Sacred Heart of Jesus/

Saint Katharine Drexel Catholic School

Sacred Heart SKD School PTO Family Math Fun Night will be Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m. in the Sacred Heart gym. Book Fair Week will also begin on March 15.

St. Louis Catholic High School

The St. Louis Catholic High School Drama Club recently performed at the Lake Charles Boston Learning Academy auditorium. The “Club” directed, produced, and performed a full length production of “Sally Cotter and The Censored Stone,” a parody of the popular Harry Potter series.

St. Theodore's Holy Family Catholic School

New Families should not miss our Open House March 17 at 6 p.m. Returning families and new families will meet for the PTC meeting, followed by school tours and teacher classroom presentations from 6:30-8 p.m. Come see all the great opportunities at our school!

Upcoming events include the 5K and 1K Knights Run tomorrow, March 5. Registration fee is \$25. Race day registration will be from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. Race begins at 8:00 a.m. Call the school for more information at 855-9465. The Holy Family Golf Classic is April 9 at Pine Shadows Golf Course.

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School

OLQH School Alumni Fanfare Weekend is Friday through Sunday, April 8 through 10. The historic weekend will host a number of events bringing together family and old friends from the school.

- Friday, April 8 – OLQH Golf Classic (date changed from March 11)
- Saturday, April 9 – “Heavenly Fun Run for Others” and Saturday evening “Garden Gala”
- Sunday, April 10 – OLQH Family Mass & Brunch. More information will be forthcoming.

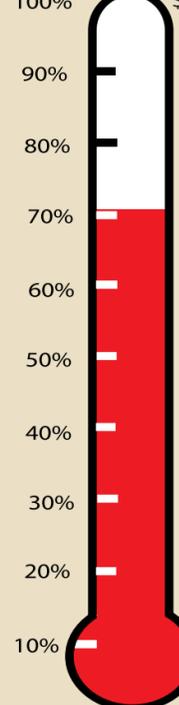
Lenten Regulations

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 our Lord. These are the regulations of the Church in United States of America.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. This means that we do not eat meat and that we have only one full meal on these days. 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 are encouraged to participate and may freely embrace these disciplines. However, these disciplines should never endanger one's health.

100% \$600,000



2011 Bishop's Services Appeal Progress Report

As of February 28, 2011
\$420,579.80
70.01% of Goal



Seek the Lord

“Glory in His Holy Name; Rejoice
O Hearts That Seek the Lord!”
Psalm 105:3

Bishop Provost's talks on St. John's Gospel continue

LAKE CHARLES – Bishop Glen John Provost continues his presentations on the Gospel of St. John on Friday, April 1 at the Men's Prayer Breakfast in Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception office complex and on Tuesday, April 5 at the Women's Luncheon to be held in the Lake Charles Civic Center. The discussion will center on the 18th and 19th chapters of St. John's Gospel.

The breakfast begins at 7 a.m. following Bishop Provost's celebration of First Friday Mass in the Cathedral starting at 6:30 a.m.

Those who plan to attend these presentations are asked to read the passages beforehand.

Women are asked to send 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 to register and include a stamped-self addressed envelope. The cutoff date for the April luncheon is Thursday, March 31.

Men should call 337-439-7400 to register for the breakfast.

Diocesan Briefs.....

Six-week Lenten series at OLQH

LAKE CHARLES – Rev. Nathan Long and Msgr. James Gaddy will present **The Prelude to Eternal Life: A six-week series on the Spiritual Life** on each Wednesday of Lent, the first following the 5:30 p.m. Mass on Ash Wednesday, March 9, in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church.

On subsequent Wednesdays during Lent, it will begin at 6 p.m. in the church, followed by a light meal in the Family Life Center. All adults seeking a deeper understanding of their faith are invited.

For more information, call Our Lady Queen of Heaven at 477-1236.

March schedule at Saint Charles Center

LAKE CHARLES – A number of events are scheduled for the month of March at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff.

A Handful of Ashes: Our Call to Lenten Grace will be Wednesday, March 9

“Male Spirituality: Tools for the Spirit, Tools for the Shed” will be Thursday, March 10.

A Spiritual Directors Day of Prayer is Saturday, March 12 and on Fridays during Lent (March 11, 25 and April 1, 8, 15) the Center will host the Stations of the Cross at 1:30 p.m.

Private **Directed Retreats** are available from Tuesday, March 22 through Wednesday, March 30. A weekend **Introduction to the Directed Retreat** will be Friday, March 25 through Sunday, March 27.

For information or to register, call 337-855-1232.

Forty Hours Devotion schedule

LAKE CHARLES – Forty Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and the religious life in the Diocese of Lake Charles, will take place at Our Lady Help of Christians in Jennings March 14-18.

Days and times are Monday, 7 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, 6 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, 7 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday, 12:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.; and Friday 7 a.m. to noon.

There will be no Forty Hours Devotion during the week of March 6-12.

Sites and times for the remainder of the month include St. Philip Neri in Kinder from Sunday, March 20 at 11 a.m. until Wednesday March 22 at 6 p.m.; Immaculate Conception in Jennings from Sunday, March 27 at noon until 6 p.m. on Monday, March 28; and at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Jennings from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29.

Lenten Day of Reflection: We Are All Broken

MOSS BLUFF – The Office of Family Life will offer a day of reflection on Saturday, March 15, at the Katharine Drexel Conference Center of Saint Charles Center beginning at 9 a.m. and continuing through a Vigil Mass at St. Theodore Catholic Church, which begins at 4 p.m.

From 9 a.m. to noon Barbara Clement will present “My Heart – Christ's Home”. Following lunch, the presentation will be “Healing Our Brokenness – Ways to Find Wholeness.”

Registration, which is \$15 and includes lunch, can be accomplished by calling the Office of Family Life at 337-439-7400, Ext. 301 or e-mailing your name, telephone and e-mail to connected.catholics@lcediocese.org. Participants may pay their registration fee on the day of the event but must register by Wednesday, March 9.

Women on the Way support group

LAKE CHARLES – **Women on the Way** is a monthly support group for women discerning a possible vocation to the Religious Life. Sponsored and hosted by various women Religious in the Diocese of Lake Charles, the meetings are open to all women 16 years and older.

For more information, call Sr. Camille Martinez, SEC at 477-1236.

Spring Vocaré meetings slated

LAKE CHARLES – Spring Vocaré meetings will be held on Sunday, March 13 and Sunday, April 10, in the offices of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, 617 West Claude Street, from 7:15 p.m. to 9 p.m. Young men 16 years old and older who are discerning a possible vocation to the priesthood are invited to attend for a light meal and discussion followed by time for Adoration.

A Game Day is scheduled for May 15 at a time to be determined. Contact Father Nathan Long at 477-1236 for more information.

Abbey Fest set March 26

ST. BENEDICT – St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College will sponsor the 11th annual Abbey Youth Festival on Saturday, March 26, which will have as its theme “ever Ancient ever New”.

On line registration ends at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 11 and late or on-site registration is \$35 per person. Late registration does not include a t-shirt. Registration is also accept-

ed by calling 985-867-2233.

For registration information go to abbeyyouthfest.com/reg.

Pre-K registration continues at SH/SKD

LAKE CHARLES – The Sacred Heart/St. Katharine Drexel Catholic School Pre-Kindergarten program is in its second year of operation under the Non-Public School Early Childhood Development Program (NSECD) operating through the Governor's Office. Open enrollment for the next school year continues through April 30.

The NSECD program provides scholarships for four-year-old children of families meeting Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligibility guidelines. All eligible children must be four years of age by September 30.

For more information, call the School Office at 337-436-3588 or check the Parent Information tab on the NSECD website at www.prekla.org to download the student application.

Vocation Drawing Contest slated

LAKE CHARLES – Student in grades second through twelfth in Catholic schools and in church parish CCD programs in Southwest Louisiana are invited to take part in a Vocation Drawing Contest in preparation for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, May 15.

The drawing should be on an 8.5 by 11 inch sheet of white poster board and turned into the Office of the Vicar General, Father Daniel Torres, at 414 Iris Street by 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 2. Each drawing is to be placed unfolded into a large envelope. The outside of the envelope must have printed - the name of the artist, the artist's age and grade level, parish church, and the name of the school. The envelope should be designated as being for the Vocation Drawing Contest.

First prize is \$200; second \$100 and third \$50. The first place drawing will be reproduced on prayer cards and in the Diocese on World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

For more information contact your church coordinator of religious education or the school religion coordinator.

St. Margaret of Scotland Lenten Mission

LAKE CHARLES – Fr. Jim Sichko will be the presenter for the St. Margaret of Scotland Church Lenten Mission on Sunday, March 20 through Tuesday, March 22 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. each evening in the church.

Known for his storytelling, Fr. Jim Sichko's presentation involves praise, worship and storytelling. All are invited!