

CATHOLIC CALENDAR



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The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

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Pro-Life advocate issues challenge to crowd to find place in movement

LAKE CHARLES – Abby Johnson, a Louisiana native who turned from the director of a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic to a fierce pro-life advocate and writer, asked the nearly 600 people attending the mid-January Respect Life Dinner to commit to do something, to look for a place for themselves in the pro-life movement.

“I know that there is a place for every single one of you in the pro-life movement,” Johnson said. “This (the banquet) is not your pro-life activity for the year. It is a good start but it is not even close to what we should be doing to protect the unborn and their mothers and our families. You may say ‘I don’t know’ but you have to look and find it.”

Johnson spoke for nearly an hour about her eight years of experiences with Planned Parenthood and about the day in September 2009 that changed her life, setting her onto the pro-life path. It was the day she was asked to assist in an ultrasound-guided abortion, a different type of abortion procedure than she had seen done before.

With the ultrasound, “you can actually see what you are doing. It is safer for the woman. The doctor wanted to teach me something, to learn a new type technique,” Johnson said. “My job was to hold the ultrasound wand on the woman’s abdomen, so the doctor could “visualize” his target.”

Ultrasound is used in other abortions but it is merely done to determine how far the woman is along in her pregnancy.

“There I was holding the probe and I look up at screen and she is 13 weeks,” Johnson continues. “Everything is there, everything we have, a child in the womb has. You can tell if it is a boy or a girl.”

In this case, it was a little boy.

“I figured nothing is going to shock me, there is nothing I hadn’t seen before,” she said. “But I felt anxious, looking at the screen it looked like a baby but Planned Parenthood said that wasn’t so. When I was pregnant with my daughter I knew it was a baby but maybe that was because she was wanted. If the child wasn’t wanted, maybe it

miraculously wasn’t a baby.”

The abortionist uses a plastic tube called a cannula, which is inserted into the woman’s uterus. The tube is attached to a suction machine and the child is literally ripped, piece-by-piece, from the womb.

“I was trying to reassure myself,” Johnson said. “I see the cannula go into the woman’s body. The suction is not on yet and I watch it go to the side of the little boy. He jumps, beginning to flail his arms and legs trying to move away from the abortion instrument, but there is nowhere for him to go.

“Then they turned on the suction and people make the assumption that what I saw next was the worst part.” Johnson said. “Seeing a child dismembered and torn apart in his mother’s womb, people think that would be the worst part, but I knew that was going to happen. The worst part was that I just stood there and did nothing. I remember wanting to yell out – stop, you are hurting him. I remember wanting to do that but I just stood there. I’m a mom. What

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John Souder instituted into Ministry of Lector

ROME – John Souder, a seminarian studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles, was instituted into the Ministry of Lector on Sunday, Jan. 12, by His Excellency Bernard A. Hebda, Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark, in the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at the Pontifical North American College.

Souder, in his first year of the theological formation for the priesthood, was one of 59 men to take part in the conferral of the Ministry of Lector. He has three additional years of theological studies and spiritual formation before being ordained.

Souder graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana in 2009 with both a

B. A. as well as a B. S. degree in Chemical Engineering and is originally from Knoxville, Tenn. He was accepted as a seminarian of the Diocese of Lake Charles for the 2010-2011 academic term, studying at St. Joseph Seminary College in Covington. He is in his second semester at the Pontifical North American College.

Archbishop Hebda, the celebrant of the Mass, is a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an alumnus of the North American College who had served the College as an adjunct Spiritual Director, was named Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark in 2013, having previously served as the Bishop of Gaylord, Michigan.

As part of the rite, the Bishop placed the Lectionary, from which the readings used in the celebration of Mass are taken, in the hands of each candidate and said, “Take this book of holy Scripture and be faithful in handing on the word of God, so that it may grow strong in the hearts of his people.”

The Pontifical North American College serves as the American seminary in Rome. Founded in 1859 by Blessed Pius IX, the college has formed over 5000 priests near the heart of the Church for service in dioceses around the United States, Canada, and Australia. The College strengthens the bonds between Rome and local Churches worldwide, and it allows its students to study the Church’s rich religious and cultural heritage at close range.



John Souder, a seminarian of the Diocese of Lake Charles studying at the Pontifical North American College, was instituted into the Ministry of Lector by Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda, Coadjutor Archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, on Jan. 12. Souder was one of 59 seminarians to receive the ministry. (Photo courtesy: Pontifical North American College)



Abby Johnson, left, a former Planned Parenthood director in Houston who has become a staunch pro-life advocate spoke to a crowd of about 600 at the Respect Life Dinner, sponsored by the Office of Pro-Life of the Diocese. Seated at right during the talk were, from, left David Dawson, director of the office; his wife, Katharine Anne; and Marjorie Long, site leader for Rachel’s Vineyard/the Gabriel Project.

New study on abortion rate doesn’t tie drop to new state restrictions

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Almost two weeks after the national March for Life rally in Washington, the Guttmacher Institute reported a 13 percent drop in national abortion rates from 2008 to 2011 -- making for the lowest rate since 1973 when abortion on demand was legalized in the U.S.

However, “no evidence was found” of a correlation between the declining rate and new abortion restrictions set between 2008 and 2011, said the study released Feb. 3.

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, stated that the study “shows the long-term efforts of the right-to-life movement,” even though Guttmacher gave no credit to groups against abortion.

Legislative efforts and pro-life campaigns “should not be minimized when discussing the decline in abortion numbers,” Tobias said in an NRLC news article.

The study reported 16.9

abortions per 1,000 women ages 15-44 in 2011, totaling almost 1.1 million abortions that year. The peak was in 1981 with nearly 30 abortions per 1,000 women, according to The Associated Press.

Guttmacher wrote that “more effective contraceptive methods” may have contributed to the decline in unintended pregnancies, thus causing a decline in abortions.

“Contraceptive use improved during this period, as more women and couples were using highly effective long-acting reversible contraceptive methods,” Rachel Jones, an author of the study, told the AP.

Jones said the recent recession may have also contributed to the decline in pregnancy rates, as more women wanted to “avoid or delay pregnancy and child bearing” in tough economic times.

The student also showed a 4 percent drop in the number of abortion providers, but

that had no effect on the decline in abortion rate, Jones said.

Jeanne Monahan, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund, said the authors of the study “conceded the fact that there was no data” to confirm a direct link between legislation and abortion decline, implying there was no way to trace such evidence.

“They have decent data that’s not 100 percent accurate, and they say that in the (study),” Monahan told Catholic News Service.

Despite this, March for Life and other organizations need data from the Guttmacher Institute to track measurement, she said, because there are no official government reports that have the same data.

Though pro-life organizations see positive signs in Guttmacher’s study, Monahan said there’s more to do.

“Obviously, we’re delighted,” she said of the decline. “It’s great news for women and (the) babies ... but the statistic ‘1.1 million’ is still so sad.”

Though the annual March for Life rally on the National Mall has come and gone -- it was Jan. 22 -- Monahan encouraged pro-life supporters on the March for Life organization’s blog to “make an impact all year-round in our communities, be it through starting a group, writing an op-ed, joining a school board or health board, or praying in front of an abortion clinic.”

Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, issued a statement Feb. 4 in response to the study and NRLC’s article.

“A decline in abortion, for whatever reason, leads us closer to our goal of protecting children in the womb by law,” he said. “The fewer abortions there are, the more legislators will consider it realistic to change public policy on the matter, and the more judges will consider it prudent to uphold such changes.”

Vocation Drawing Contest slated

LAKE CHARLES – A Vocation Drawing Contest will be held in the Diocese of Lake Charles in preparation for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

All students in grades 2 through 12 are invited to create a drawing depicting awareness of the vocation of the priesthood in Southwest Louisiana. The drawing must be on an 8.5 x 11 inch white sheet of poster board, with a deadline of noon on March 7. The drawings are to be placed in a large envelope, unfolded, with the name of the artist, their age, grade level, church parish attending or the city, and the name of the school at which they attend/city printed on the back. Submissions must be made to the Office of the Vicar Gen-

eral at the Chancery, 414 Iris Street, Lake Charles. Winners will be announced by fax on March 21.

The first place winner will receive \$200, second place, \$100, and third place, \$50. The first place winner will have their drawing reproduced on prayer cards in observance of World Day of Prayer to be presented at the 9:30 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Sunday, May 11.

GLAD TIDINGS PRE-EMPTED
The Sunday, Feb. 23, airing of Glad Tidings, the television program of the Diocese of Lake Charles, will be pre-empted due to NBC network coverage of the 2014 Olympics from Sochi, Russia. The program, beginning at 6 a.m., will be streamed on the diocesan website at lcdioocese.org.

MARDI GRAS HOLIDAY HOURS

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, March 3 and 4, for Mardi Gras. They will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Ash Wednesday, March 5. Regular office hours will be observed the remainder of the week. Bishop Glen John Provost will distribute ashes during the celebration of the 12:05 p.m. Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

PLANTING THE SEED

March for Life not hindered by weather

Last month I had the honor of accompanying 250 of my fellow Catholics from the Diocese of Washington on the 41st anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, January 22. The weather was intimidating. It was bitterly cold. The streets were blanketed in snow. The sub-zero wind chill cut through warm clothing. But as incentive as it was, the frigid temperatures and difficult road conditions didn't keep over 100,000 from coming to demonstrate for human life. And five busloads of men and women from the Diocese of Lake Charles were there.

On the morning of the March, we began, as we should, with Mass. Our group was large enough to book a church, Holy Trinity in Georgetown, the oldest Catholic parish in Washington, established in 1787. Gathering around the historic altar to celebrate the sacred mysteries of our redemption, we prayed and sang asking God's blessing on our endeavor and well-being, as well as petitioning for a greater respect for human life in this country.

The readings from Sacred Scripture assigned for that Mass were extremely appropriate. We began with a passage from the First Book of Samuel. It spoke of David defeating Goliath. A seemingly helpless youth conquered the hero of the Philistines with a stone and a sling. My favorite verse was this one: "All this multitude, too, shall learn that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves. For the battle is the Lord's..." (I Samuel 17:47). It is not human strength or "sword or spear" that conquers but the Lord himself. When faced with the Goliath of public opinion and indifference, it is good to remember this.

The second Scripture reading was taken from the Gospel of St. Mark. Against the indignation of the Pharisees, Jesus dared to cure a man of a withered hand on the Sabbath. In

doing this, Jesus commented, "Is it lawful, 'Is it lawful, to do good on the Sabbath rather than to do evil, to save life rather than to destroy it?' (Mark 3:4). A democratic republic is a marvelous system of government, but it crosses a perilous line when it ignores and eventually opposes natural law. We have not saving a right but a moral obligation to ask the question if saving life is a value.

Some, including elected leaders, would argue that the Roe v. Wade decision articulates a fundamental principle, i.e. "that every woman should be able to make her own choices about her body and her health." They see this as necessary in a country "where everyone deserves the same freedom and opportunities to fulfill their dreams." How remarkable! Does the American "dream" now include abortion? For some it would appear so.

In a scientific age, so enlightened by experimentation and discovery, we have learned that the fetus can feel pain. We can hear the heartbeat. Ultrasound permits us to view viable organs developing. Reformed abortionists will describe to us how the fetus appears helplessly to defend itself against the surgical instruments that would dismember it in the womb. And what of discrimination in a society that prides itself in equality? The disproportionate number of abortions performed on minorities and handicapped children speaks for itself.



**Bishop
Glen John
Provost**

The final commentary on this sad chapter is found on the ends of the Supreme Court where the March for Life stands. There women, who have experienced what some would call their "dream," gather to tell their stories of abortion. They are courageous. They are, as they describe themselves, "silent no more." Their witness is compelling. Only the calculus could remain unmoved.

The marchers who braved the cold were witnesses, as Cardinal O'Malley referred to them in his Vigil Mass homily the night before the March. Pope Francis sent his blessings and prayers. The peaceful demonstration of hundreds of thousands that the Holy Father endorsed was a calm witness, a peaceful statement. Contrast this to the police canine patrols that we spotted along the route of the March or the woman who spit on one of our Lake Charles people while she knelt to pray the rosary in front of the White House. Let us not forget that the word for witness in New Testament Greek is translated "martyr."

A remarkable witness of the March for Life is the overwhelming presence of young people below the age of 30. Critics would say they just want a few days off from school, but only someone who has never been to a March would say that. The voices and faces of the youth tell a different story. They are convinced of their witness. They are there for a reason, and they know it is important. I asked someone once why so many youth participated in the March. The unforgettable answer was, "Because they are thankful to be alive." Their parents told, "Because the 'choice' offered them, and they chose life—to save life rather than to destroy it."

Blessed are the losers, at least by worldly standards, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The "poor in spirit," the pure and the merciful, whom Jesus described as "blessed," are the same people the world considers to be "losers," Pope Francis told Catholic young people.

But Jesus offers his followers the true path to happiness, and faith in him "will allow you to expose and reject the 'low-cost' offers and approaches all around you," the pope said in his message for World Youth Day 2014.

The message, released Feb. 6 at the Vatican, focused

on the beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Pope Francis has chosen the beatitudes from the fifth chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew as the themes for World Youth Day 2014-2016. This year and next, World Youth Day will be celebrated on a local level -- on Palm Sunday at the Vatican -- and in 2016 it will be an international gathering in Krakow, Poland.

The pope told young people that in April, he will can-

onize Blessed John Paul II, who began the international celebrations and will be "the great patron of the World Youth Days."

"To be blessed means to be happy," the pope said. "In an age when we are constantly being enticed by vain and empty illusions of happiness, we risk settling for less and 'thinking small' when it comes to the meaning of life.

"Think big instead," he told young people. "Open your hearts."

"Young people who choose Christ are strong: They are fed by his word and they do not need to 'stuff themselves'" with money, possessions and fleeting pleasure, the pope said.

"Have the courage to swim against the tide. Have the courage to be truly happy," he said.

Explaining how true happiness includes being "poor in spirit," the pope said he knew it seemed strange to link happiness and poverty.

But, he said, in the Bible being poor isn't just about having few material possessions. "It suggests lowliness, a sense of one's limitations and existential poverty."



Rite of Election Sunday, March 9, in Cathedral

LAKE CHARLES -- The Rite of Election, the recognition of God's choice to call catechumens for initiation into the Church, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 9, the First Sunday of Lent, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Most Reverend Glen John Provost will preside and meet the catechumens and candidates.

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.

This year there will be more than 200 catechumens and candidates.

Two elements are key to the Rite of Election: the inscription of the names of the Elect, and the testimony of godparents and catechists. 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 de-liberation 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 continuing conversion. The candidates along with their sponsors are presented to the Bishop for recognition.

Did you know...

The most recent year of 14 that saw three men serve as the Successor of St. Peter was 1978. That year Pope Paul VI died on August 6, closing out 15 years and 46 days as Pope. Twenty-two days later his successor - Pope John Paul I (Cardinal Albino Luciani) began what would be a 33-day reign, dying on September 28. Eighteen days following the death of Pope John Paul I, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope, the first Polish pope and the first non-Italian pope in 455 years. He took the name John Paul II. His reign as Supreme Pontiff lasted 26 years, 168 days - the third longest after Pope Pius IX and St. Peter.

Even though three popes in the same year is unusual, do you know the year in which four men led the Roman Catholic Church? Find out in our Catholic Calendar - March 21.



Young Catholics from 11 parishes of the Diocese of Lake Charles attended a weekend Confirmation retreat, sponsored by the Offices of Religious Education and Youth and Young Adult Ministry, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Oakdale. Pictured here, speaking to the retreatants, is Steve Angrisano, a veteran musician, composer and youth minister who has been featured at such World Youth Days, several National Catholic Youth Conferences and many diocesan youth conventions/conferences including a number of appearances at events in the local church in Southwest Louisiana.

Mass isn't a tourist activity; it's God's time

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- An invitation to attend Pope Francis' early morning Mass is a hot ticket in Rome, but the pope said the Mass -- in his residence or anywhere else -- isn't an event, but a time for entering into the mystery of God.

"Maybe someone would say, 'Oh, I must get to Mass at Sanctae Marthae because the pope's morning Mass is on the Rome tourist itinerary,'" he said, according to a report by Vatican Radio.

Addressing those gathered for the Mass Feb. 10, he said, "All of you come here, all of us gather here to enter into a mystery, which is the liturgy. It is God's time, it is God's space, it is God's cloud that envelops us all."

The Mass is one of those occasions when the Lord is present, Pope Francis said. The Mass isn't a social occa-

sion or even "a prayer meeting. It's something else. In the liturgy, God is present."

The Mass is not a re-enactment of the Last Supper, he said. "It is the Last Supper. It is living again the passion and redeeming death of the Lord. It is a theophany: the Lord is present on the altar to be offered to the Father for the salvation of the world."



Brian Butler and Greg Boudreaux with Dumb Ox Ministries led the annual eighth grade retreat for Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles in Founders Hall of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church. The Office of Religious Education of the Diocese sponsors the all day event, which is aided by St. Louis Catholic High School students.

Pilgrimage to March for Life in Washington, DC



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More than 240 pilgrims – youth, young adults, clergy, adult staff, and chaperones – filled five charter buses from the Diocese of Lake Charles attended the National March for Life Rally in Washington, DC. The group left the Diocese on Saturday, Jan. 18 and returned on the evening of Thursday, Jan. 23. In preparing for the journey (1) Milissa Thibodeaux, director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and Carrie Cabbage, right, a longtime adult volunteer to the diocesan office and a parishioner of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur cut scarves from bolts of heavy purple and orange felt used by the pilgrims for warmth and ready identification in the crowds that attended the event; (2) Father Nathan Long celebrated Mass for the pilgrims before the departure in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; (3) pilgrims checked in with diocesan staff after the departure Mass to determine on which of the five buses they would be traveling to the nation's capital; (4) the buses were loaded with luggage and other assorted necessities (such as food and water for the pilgrims) for the journey; (5) Bishop Glen John Provost celebrated Mass for the pilgrims at Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Georgetown, the oldest Catholic church in continuous operation in the District of Columbia; (6) some of the pilgrims from the Diocese during the celebration of the Liturgy at Holy Trinity; (7) some of the more than half million pilgrims await the beginning of the cold and snowy march that led past the Capitol and the U.S. Supreme Court, where abortion was legalized on Jan. 22, 1973 with the Court's decision on *Roe v Wade*.

Pope clears way for beatification of Korean martyrs

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis recognized the martyrdom of 124 Catholics who were killed during widespread persecution in Korea in the 18th through 19th centuries.

He also approved a decree recognizing the martyrdom of Conventual Franciscan Father Francesco Zirano, an Italian priest killed in Algeria in 1603.

The pope's approval of the martyrdom decrees Feb. 7 opened the way

for the martyrs' beatifications on a date yet to be announced. A miracle is required before any blessed may be canonized.

The Korean cause, referred to as the cause of Paul Yun Ji-Chung and 123 companions, recognizes the sacrifices of those killed for their faith between 1791 and 1888. More than 10,000 Catholics in Korea were killed during that period, starting in 1785.

Blessed Pope John Paul II de-

clared Paul Yun and his companions "servants of God" in 2003. He already had canonized Father Andrew Kim and 102 other Korean martyrs during a trip to South Korea in 1984.

While no date has been set for beatification of Yun and his companions, the Vatican has said it is studying the possibility of Pope Francis visiting South Korea, in mid-August to coincide with the celebration of Asian Youth Day in Daejeon.

On Feb. 7, the pope also approved three other decrees, recognizing the Mexican founder of a religious order, an Italian Franciscan priest and a Spanish nun for having lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way and declaring them "venerable." Recognition of a miracle attributed to each candidate's intercession is needed before beatification.



Pope Francis

Lent: the chance to regain our footing

Observant Catholics sometimes experience frustration with various elements of our society that tend to grow ever more distant from the values that shape Christian discipleship. Raising children, after all, is difficult enough without having to deal with the widespread promotion of lifestyles that clash with the pursuit of holiness. Lent gives us a chance to face our footing in the moral battle.

We face a problematic situation that results from the lack of a coherent way of morally evaluating human behavior in our cultural environment. The question about values is an important one because some time during the last century, on the whole, the thing we call American society made the transition into a state of moral mayhem. This affects Catholics and other Christians as much as anyone.

The crisis of so-called same-sex marriage is an example of cultural confusion that is confounding many Christians. According to a rational understanding of the human person, marriage is contracted by the male and a female. The intelligent understanding of the meaning of the human body provides a way to define human married love. The elimination of that system of valuing human action has resulted in a vacuum that is being filled by political and social action. Authentic Christianity is replaced with what passes as social progress.

Amidst all the confusion, even among those who teach others, many people have had little chance of doing anything

other than abandon morality altogether. The truth of the moral life is pushed to the side and a distorted notion of faith steps in. Faith has come to mean being saved in spite of one's moral life. Could there ever be such a thing as having faith without moral values? Can one's faith save without choosing to live within a certain moral framework? Put more explicitly, "Can one have true living faith if his or her moral life is just a reflection of an allegedly value-free culture?"

The problem for Catholics who live by this false notion of faith, one having no authentic moral framework, is that the Church has a very clear one. In fact, some aspects of the moral life have been so defined that should one disavow these defined teachings that person has abandoned the faith of the Church. It could take a bit of thoughtful work to determine whether one has indeed left, but the Church can, does, and must make such judgments for the sake of the faith, in general, and for the well-being of the faithful, today. One cannot do everything possible to promote actions such as genocide,



Rev. Edward Richard, M.S.

slave trade, or same-sex marriage, to name a few, and hold to the faith of the Church.

Decisive pastoral leadership is duty bound to demonstrate that authentic faith and moral truth cannot be opposed to one another. Who could take seriously the suggestion that a person's immoral acts are inconsequential to faith when the highest expression of the Church's charter for living, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, contains a litany of actions that lead one to hell? Surely it cannot be said that our Savior was just trying to save us into being good.

Faith in God, as Jesus shows us, confronts us with clear moral choices having eternal consequences. During Lent, we return to the example of the Lord Jesus who rejects the de-ception of the devil and false hope. Those who repent and turn to the Lord Jesus, relying on his grace, will be saved.

Father Edward Richard, M.S., a native of DeQuincy, a priest of the Missionaries of Our Lady of LaSalette, and Pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur, is a nationally recognized expert in the field of medical ethics, as well as a highly published commentator on moral issues. Ordained in 1990, he holds a Doctorate in Moral Theology, a Juris Doctor, a Masters of Divinity, a B.S. from McNeese State University and studied at the Aquinas Institute of Theology.

Deacon Cormier takes Holy Land Pilgrimage

JERUSALEM – Deacon Matthew Cormier, a seminarian for the Diocese of Lake Charles studying at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, recently spent a week in the Holy Land along with six other deacons and staff from the Seminary.

"In the last few years, Notre Dame has offered the chance for fourth year deacons to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in preparation for priestly ordination," Deacon Cormier, a parishioner of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in Sulphur, said. "We were there from January 4-11, spending two days in Galilee and the rest of the trip in and around Jerusalem."

Others on the journey were Deacons John Paul Crispin, Franciscan Missionaries of Hope; Matthew Johnston, Charles Dousse, Ian Bozant, and Tim Hedrick, all of the Archdiocese of New Orleans; Joshua Johnson, Diocese of Baton Rouge; and Father Paul Gross of Baton Rouge, chaplain.

The group sailed on the Sea of Galilee; prayed at the Rock of Gethsemane, in the "Church of All Nations;" touched the Rock of the Holy Sepulchre, where the Cross of Christ stood, underneath the main altar on Calvary; had a view of Jerusalem from the Church of "Dominus Flevit", where the Lord wept over the city; served at Mass in the Holy Sepulchre itself; and visited the Western "Wailing" Wall.

Ordination to the priesthood for Deacon Cormier is scheduled on June 7 in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.



Deacon Cormier prays at the rock at which Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, located in the Church of All Nations. Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, near the foot of the Mount of Olives, the night before he was taken into custody.



Deacon Cormier served Mass in the Holy Sepulchre. The site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is identified as the place both of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus. It has long been a major pilgrimage center for Christians all around the world.



Deacon Cormier reaches out to touch the Western Wall, the Wailing Wall, located on the western side of the temple mount in the heart of old Jerusalem. It is a remnant of Herod's grand temple, and is the most holiest site for Jews.

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 Jesus. These are the regulations for the Church in the 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 a clear and uplifted 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 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.

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.

Cathedral Altar Society Spring bus trip planned

LAKE CHARLES -- The Altar Society of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception will host a bus trip to Natchitoches on Tuesday, March 18.

Mass will be celebrated at 6:30 a.m. on the morning of the trip in the Cathedral with departure at 7 a.m. A tour of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Natchitoches (built in 1850 and one of only two minor basilicas in Louisiana) is at 10 a.m. and followed at 10:30 a.m. by a walking tour of the historic National Landmark District of Natchitoches.

Lunch is set for 12:15 p.m. at The Landing. At 1:30 p.m., the walking tour of the downtown shopping district continues followed at 2:30 p.m. by a visit to the Louisiana State Hall of Fame and Northwest History Museum. The bus departs at 3:15 p.m. with a stop at Melrose Plantation on the way back to Lake Charles. Arrival back at the Cathedral is planned for about 8 p.m.

Cost is \$100 per person and includes meals, tours, fees, etc. A \$50 non-refundable deposit is required. A check for that deposit can be written, payable to "ICC Altar Society," and mailed to Karen Fills, 1513 Anita Street, Sulphur, LA 70663. Call Ms. Fills at 337-625-8436 or e-mail mkfills@suddenlink.net for more information.

Theresians Women's Day of Reflection set March 8

LAKE CHARLES – A Women's Day of Reflection – Clay in the hand of the Potter – hosted by the Fleur de Lis Theresians of the Southwest Louisiana will be held Saturday, March 8, in the Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Center from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Father Scott DesOrmeaux, Denise Donahoe and Larry Eagle will serve as presenters. Early registration with lunch by March 1 is \$25 and registration after March 1 is \$30.

Check in begins at 8:30 a.m. with a Welcome Prayer Service at 9 a.m. and the first talk is by Father DesOrmeaux - From His Hands - at 9:30 a.m. From 10:30 to 11 a.m., there will be private reflection and a break.

Denise Donahoe's presentation - Called to be His Vessel - is at 11 a.m. with lunch to follow.

The final talk of the day - We are the Clay - by Larry Eagle, opens at 1 p.m. and the closing prayer and song start at 2:15 p.m.

Theresians, Women in Support of Women-Reaching Out with Gospel Values, is an international organization of women of faith who meet in small Christian communities to pray, to be enlightened and challenged, and to support one another. Interested women are invited to visit the Outreach Table at the Day of Reflection for more information and to visit the many pages of the website - www.theresians.org.

Registration information can be obtained by writing Carole Thompson, 315 Dan Thompson Road, Ragley, LA 70657 or by sending a check payable to Fleur De Lis Theresians along with the name, address, telephone and e-mail address to the same address.

Catholic Charities Jazz Brunch slated May 18

LAKE CHARLES -- The annual Jazz Brunch, this year featuring Chester and Jarvis Daigle along with entertainment by Diocesan Clergy, benefitting the ministries of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, will be from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 18, at the Lake Charles Country Club. Tickets are \$75 each and a table for eight is available for \$700. Doors open at 11 a.m.

Sister Mary Vianney Walsh, R.S.M., the director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, will deliver a welcoming address.

Two special sponsorship levels are available: Disciple - \$1,500.00 and includes a table for eight and recognition at the event; Friend - \$1,000 and includes a table for eight and recognition at the banquet.

For more information and to purchase tickets contact Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, 1225 Second Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601 or call 337-439-7436.

March events slated at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF -- A Rachel's Vineyard Retreat will begin next weekend at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center, running from Friday, Feb. 28, through Sunday, March 2.

The Retreat for Healing After Abortion will be facilitated by Fr. Nathan Long, Margie Long and the Diocesan Team. The weekend will combine discussions, spiritual exercises, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a Memorial Service and a Mass of Entrustment. Participation is strictly confidential. The cost is \$210.00 for meals, private room with private bath and all retreat materials. If you have a financial burden, assistance is available. For more information or registration contact: Rachel's Vineyard of Southwest Louisiana at 337-439-7400, Ext. 317 or e-mail rachels.vineyard@lcdiocese.org.

Father Whitney Miller and Father Don Piraro will lead "Our Call to Lenten Grace," an Ash Wednesday Evening of Reflection on Wednesday, March 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. The program will consist of Holy Mass and the Distribution of Ashes, a simple supper and a presentation on Lenten spirituality. There will be no cost for the evening, but a free will offering will be accepted. Funds will benefit the Long Term Maintenance Account for the Center. Call 337-855-1232 to register.

On Tuesday, March 11, Sr. Diane Depwe will present "Simon Peter's Continued Conversion Story" from 6 to 9 p.m. This is an invitation to journey along with Jesus through the eyes and mind of Simon Peter. Call 337-855-1232 to register or go to stcharlescenter.com. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person and the deadline is Friday, March 7.

The Spiritual Book Club, led by Father Don Piraro, is 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, March 11. The spring selection is "Gateway to Hope: An Exploration of Failure" by Maria Boulding, O.S.B. Sister Maria was a British Benedictine and a member of Stanbrook Abbey. She died in 2009. "Gateway to Hope" was originally published in 1985 and is considered to be a modern classic in the spiritual life. It deals with the failure that many men and women of God have faced from Elijah to Jonah, from Peter to Jesus. It explores the mystery of our Redemption and, as such, is appropriate reading for the season of Lent.

Call 337-855-1232 to register or go to stcharlescenter.com. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person and the deadline is Friday, March 7.

The Lenten Mini-Mission, 2014 - "To Know Scripture Is To Know Jesus" - with Mike VanVranken is Tuesday and Wednesday, March 18-19 from 6 to 9 p.m. each day. Van Vranken, a lifelong Catholic, is a teacher, writer and retreat leader. He brings forty years of business experience and a Master's Degree in Theological Studies from the University of Dallas to every presentation he delivers. Call 337-855-1232 to register or visit stcharlescenter.com. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person per evening with a registration deadline of Friday, March 14.

Father Whitney Miller will lead "Lenten Reflections with Thomas Merton" from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25. This Evening of Reflection will focus upon a random sampling of his work through the years, particularly, those having to do with themes from the Lenten scripture readings. Call 337-855-1232 to register or visit stcharlescenter.com. Registration deadline is Friday, March 21. Suggested donation is \$20.00 per person.

Lenten Private Directed Retreats, either three or five days in length, will be available from Monday, March 31 to Sunday, April 6, led by Fr. Miller, Fr. Piraro, Judy Savoie and Gloria Villegas. A directed retreat is a form of silent retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola focusing on the personal prayer of the individual. There are no group activities or conferences other than the daily Eucharist and an individual daily meeting with the director. The retreatant spends about four hours in contemplative prayer each day of the retreat. The retreatant may choose to do three or five days. For more information or to register, those interested must call 337-855-1232. There is no online registration for these retreats. Suggested donation is \$265.00 for three days, and \$440.00 for five days. Scholarship information is available upon request for those in need of assistance.

Pope says relativistic ideas of marriage lead to divorce

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis said contemporary ideas of marriage as an arrangement defined by personal needs promote a mentality of divorce, and he called for better preparation of engaged couples as well as ministry to Catholics whose marriages have failed.

The pope's remarks appeared in a message distributed to Polish bishops making "ad limina" visits to Rome to report on the state of their dioceses. Pope Francis met with the group but, as he frequently does, dispensed with reading out his prepared text.

In his message, the pope warned the bishops of some

of the "new challenges" the church faces in their society, including the "idea of liberty without limits, tolerance hostile to or wary of the truth, or resentment of the church's justified opposition to the prevailing relativism."

"Marriage today is often considered a form of emotional satisfaction that can be constructed in any way or modified at will," he said. "Unfortunately this vision also influences the mentality of Christians, causing them to resort easily to divorce or de facto separation."

Pope Francis said pastors should search for ways to minister to divorced and separated Catholics, "so that

they do not feel excluded from the mercy of God, the fraternal love of other Christians and the church's solicitude for their salvation," and help such persons keep the "faith and raise their children in the fullness of the Christian experience."

The pope has said church law regarding marriage, divorce and separation is a topic that exemplifies a general need for mercy in the church today, and that it will be a subject of discussion at this October's extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the "pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization."

In his message to the Polish

bishops, the pope called for better pastoral preparation of couples engaged to be married, to highlight the "beauty of this union that, when well founded on love and responsibility, can overcome trials, difficulties (and) selfishness with mutual forgiveness, repairing what might be ruined and not falling into the trap of a throwaway mentality."

"The pope said pastors should serve as "authentic fathers and spiritual guides" to married couples, protecting them from the "threat of negative ideologies" and helping them to "become strong in God and his love."

Archbishop warns against 'cooperating with evil'

By Peter Finney Jr.

NEW ORLEANS -- Faced with the looming construction of a multimillion-dollar, regional abortion facility by Planned Parenthood Gulf South, Archbishop Gregory Aymond wrote an open letter Feb. 1 cautioning local Catholics and businesses they would be "cooperating with the evil that will take place" at the clinic if they participated in its preparation or construction.

In the letter, published on the front page of the Feb. 1 issue of the *Clarion Herald*, the archdiocesan newspaper, Archbishop Aymond said the caution extends to any person or business "involved in the acquisition, preparation and construction of this (abortion) facility."

The archbishop also indicated the archdiocese would not do future business "with any person or organization that participates in actions that are essential to making this abortion facility a reality."

"This policy applies to all businesses, regardless of religious affiliation or non-affiliation," Archbishop Aymond wrote. "Our fidelity to church teaching and our conscience necessitates this stance."

Planned Parenthood currently operates two clinics in Louisiana -- in New Orleans and Baton Rouge -- but does not perform abortions in the state. In its public statements about the proposed 7,000-8,000-square-foot facility on South Claiborne Avenue, located about five minutes from two universities and on a site easily accessible by public transportation, Planned Parenthood Gulf South indicated it would seek a state license to perform abortions.

There are five, free-standing abortion clinics in Louisiana -- in New Orleans, Metairie, Baton Rouge, Shreveport and Bossier City -- but Archbishop Aymond said the proposed regional abortion clinic will be "the largest of its kind in Louisiana."

Using information obtained from a construction permit that was approved by the city of New Orleans in December, experts have determined that Planned Parenthood could perform "upwards of 30 abortions per day," Archbishop Aymond said.

"This is a staggering increase in the number of abortions in light of the 3,496 abortions performed in 2012 in Orleans and Jefferson parishes," the archbishop wrote.

The archbishop's letter cited the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," saying the church since the first century has considered abortion "a grave evil."

"We cannot be silent in view of the grave injustice present-

ed by the abortions that will be performed at the proposed Planned Parenthood facility," Archbishop Aymond wrote.

He said there was "no justification, including economic hardship," that would make either a direct or indirect relationship with Planned Parenthood or any abortion provider "acceptable."

Archbishop Aymond added that any "affiliation or support" of Planned Parenthood by Catholics would be "a matter of serious scandal."

Benjamin Clapper, executive director of Louisiana Right to Life, praised the archbishop for the letter, saying his stance was "edifying and strengthens what we are doing."

"It should be a model for other religious leaders, not only in this state but in other areas," Clapper said. "Most of the time people expect the bishop to say things and to teach principles, but I don't believe most people expect a bishop to make this real-life, declarative statement that actually impacts the corporate world."

"When you have such a powerful institution in this city saying this, it makes people notice who Planned Parenthood really is," Clapper added. "Planned Parenthood is selling itself as one thing and they are another thing. He's technically not doing anything new -- he's just applying Catholic principles to a situation. We have a leader willing to go to the wall for this cause and give us the strength and the energy to stand for life."

Archbishop Aymond asked Catholics to pray "for those that are blind to the destruction caused by abortion," and he invited Planned Parenthood officials and supporters to "prayer and dialogue."

"There are many issues, from violence in the streets to poverty, which hurt this community," he wrote. "A regional abortion center will not solve our problems; it will only create more. This is not the future the New Orleans metropolitan area needs."

Peter Finney Jr. is the Executive Editor/General Manager of the Clarion Herald, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Reprinted with permission.

NEXT CATHOLIC CALENDAR

Publication of the next Catholic Calendar is Friday, March 21. Free copies are available at the Diocesan Chancery, 414 Iris Street; the Bishop Harold Perry Building, 411 Iris Street; and Crossroads Bookstore, 601 Prien Lake Road.



The small chapel in the Katharine Drexel Conference Center at Saint Charles Center is now home to a beautiful stained glass window, which represents Saint Katharine Drexel. The window, designed and created by Frank Thompson, was given in commemoration of the retirement of Father Don Piraro, the founding Executive Director of Saint Charles Center (1995-2010).

Special collections slated for March

LAKE CHARLES -- Two special collections will be held in the Diocese of Lake Charles during the month of March.

Operation Rice Bowl, which supports the work of Catholic Relief Services, begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5, and continues through Easter Sunday, April 14.

The annual Black and Indian Mission Collection, which provides funding for evangelization programs in needy U.S. home mission dioceses for African American and Native American churches, will taken up in all the parishes of the Diocese on March 8-9. Grants from the Black and Indian Mission collection directly benefit a number of church parishes in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Father Buller named temporary administrator

LAKE CHARLES -- Bishop Glen John Provost has appointed the Rev. Ruben Buller, Director of the Office of Liturgy and Master of Ceremonies to Bishop Provost, as Parochial Administrator of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church, effective Jan. 16.

Father Buller will serve in that capacity until March 21, when the Rev. Keith Pellerin, the church's pastor, returns from his sabbatical for ministry.

The appointment is according to the Code of Canon Law, canons 539-540.

Ecumenical Prayer Service for Christian Unity

LAKE CHARLES – Members of various church congregations and their clergy leadership came together on January 21 in First Presbyterian Church to participate in an ecumenical celebration of the Word of God and the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Rev. Dr. Norman Thomas, pastor/founder of New Life Church International, proclaimed the Gospel and preached a sermon dealing with this year's theme – "Has Christ Been Divided?"

Other clergy participating in the event included Rev. Charles Langford, University United Methodist Church in Lake Charles; Rev. Angela Bullhoff; Rev. Theron Watson, Calvary Baptist Church; Reverend Keith Bell, United Christian Fellowship; Rev. Archimandrite Herbert J. May, pastor of Our Lady of Seven Dolours Catholic Church in Welsh; and Rev. Connie MacIntosh, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Welsh. Members of the music ministry of First Presbyterian Church of Lake Charles and the Greater Saint Mary Baptist Church Praise Team provided music.

Sponsors were the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, the Lake Area Ministers Group, and members of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference. One of the principal ministries of the Order of St. Lazarus is the re-unification of all Christians, and, thus, the reason for the annual Ecumenical Prayer Service, according to Father May.

Rev. Thomas noted that the contemplated words of Scripture from 1 Corinthians when he thought of unity.

"For just as the body is a unit and yet has many parts, and all the parts, though many, form [only] one body, so it is with Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)," he said. "Unity is the outcome of something I want to use as a term to challenge our thinking tonight – functional unity, which is the outcome

of a functioning unit by all its parts that together make a unit function. The unit, for our purpose and focus tonight, is the body of Christ, the Church.

"The parts that must function in order that the Church may prove its worth are its members, that's you and I – individually and collectively," he continued. "But unless the members of this great body are fitly joined together, it is impossible for the unit to mobilize and to become the agent of transformation that she was destined to be."

He used St. Paul's writing to the Church in Ephesus to speak about working together.

"The emphasis tonight is that each part is working properly in all of its functions," he said. "So therefore, unity in its completeness ought to provide a strong, mature Church built on the premise of God's love toward humanity.

"We must define unity first by what it is not – not the mere collection and gather-

ing of parts to an effort to create a sense of harmony – synchronization," Reverend Thomas continued. "While it is true that we must gather before we can function, unity is the functioning parts that exist for the sole purpose of the advancement of the unit – the church, the body of Christ.

"We are not created to be an immobile, paralytic institution rendered incapable of completing the assignment that has been set before us," he said. "Jesus referred to us as the light of the world and we are the carriers of solutions for every rank of our society. I suggest to you tonight that the principal of unity yields a consistent return of empowerment. The power of functional unity engages the spirit of man and allows him to see what ordinarily would be impossible. I say whenever you get to a place where you can see what would ordinarily be impossible then you can do what other people ordinarily would not be able to do."



Rev. Dr. Norman Thomas



The Greater St. Mary Baptist Church Norman Praise Team provided the Meditation Hymn following the sermon by Rev. Dr. Norman Thomas at the annual Ecumenical Prayer Service, this year held at First Presbyterian Church in Lake Charles. The prayer service, the local event of the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, is sponsored by the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem, The Lake Area Ministers Group, and members of the Louisiana Interchurch Conference.

Michael James Mette concert at St. Martin de Porres will benefit Gabriel Project

LAKE CHARLES – Michael James Mette, a young national contemporary Christian recording artist, will perform a free, live concert in St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church, 5495 Elliott Road, on Thursday, Feb. 27, at 6:30 p.m.

A "love offering" to help support Mette's music ministry will be asked as well as information on the church's new Gabriel Project ministry at St. Martin de Porres.

The Gabriel Project seeks to save unborn babies and their mothers from the destruction of abortion. It is a parish-based "hands-on" program that aids in assur-

ing pregnant women that they will be provided assistance. St. Martin de Porres parishioners assist women in need through companionship and support by coordinating transportation for medical services, housing, food, materials and/or baby care. The church also provides pastoral support, offering hope, prayer, and the "face of Christ" in each Gabriel's Angel – the women and men that feel God's love and men that mothers.

Mette served in the U.S. Air Force and upon his discharge completed his degree in Theology, working 10 years

in Catholic parish ministry. During those years, he felt increasingly called to focus on beauty by sharing the Gospel through music. His debut album – Always What I Need – in 2010 encourages trust in God's providence. His second album – Bring Forth the Light (2012) – reflects a more mature view of the Catholic faith, exploring musical themes of human love, life and the afterlife. His music is brooding and spirited, full of lush guitars, piano, and haunting vocals.

For more information, call 337-478-3845.

PRO-LIFE

Continued from Page 1

kind of mom just stands there and watches another woman's child be murdered right in front of her face, and does nothing - me. I was that kind of mom.

"I don't believe that abortion has been legal for almost 42 years now in this country because of Planned Parenthood, because of other abortion providers, because of pro-choice lobbyists. I believe that abortion has been legal for so long because of one reason and that is apathy. Our apathy. Abortion is alive and well in this country, I believe, because of our silence. Our silence in our churches, our silence in the body of Christ."

Since that departure from Planned Parenthood, Johnson has written a book "Unplanned," embarked on a pro-life speaking career, and, in 2012, formed a ministry called "and then there were none" to get abortion workers out of the industry.

"In the past year we have helped 93 workers leave the abortion industry," Johnson said.

"I just think that we live in crazy society, when the people of this country are more concerned about the health and livelihood of animals in shelters than they are about our unborn brothers and sisters," she said. "It is a crazy time that we live in, but I believe that we can take it back. I believe that we can change the way things are going right now -

change our society. If I didn't believe that, there would be no reason for me to stand in front of you today. I believe I will see an end to legal abortion in my lifetime. If you don't believe that, there is no reason to fight. It will take every single one of us to be unabashedly pro-life."

The event helped to provide funding for several diocesan pro-life ministries – Rachel's Vineyard/Silent No More and The Gabriel Project – as well as aid in the expenses to send pilgrims to the National March for Life each January in Washington DC.

Rachel's Vineyard/Silent No More is a weekend retreat program offered to men and women who have been harmed by the abortion experience. It is a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion and the retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconcile painful post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing.

The Gabriel Project provides a 24-hour hotline staffed by volunteers as well as spiritual and emotional support for unwed mothers and those facing difficult pregnancies as well as babies that the ministry need.

For information on Rachel's Vineyard Retreats and The Gabriel Project or to make your contribution to aid in these important pro-life and post-abortive ministries, call 337-439-7400, Ext. 317.



The crowd of nearly 600 people begins to gather in the Buccaneer Room of the Lake Charles Civic Center for the January 14 Respect Life Dinner featuring Abby Johnson, a staunch pro-life advocate and once a Planned Parenthood director.

Diocesan Briefs.....

Hour of Prayer at Immaculate Heart of Mary

LAKE CHARLES – An "Hour of Prayer for the Spiritual Needs of Families" will be held from 5:15 to 6:15 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, following the 4 p.m. Vigil Mass.

The Hour of Prayer will consist of prayer, Scripture reading and singing. Everyone is invited.

Call Bertha Pappion at 337-439-9690, Equilla Brannon at 337-433-2114, or Theresa Lavergne at 337-433-0134 for more information.

Dominican Sisters to speak March 25

LAKE CHARLES – Two religious women from the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia Motherhouse in Nashville, Tenn., will offer a presentation on consecrated life for high school and college age young women at 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, in the Community Center of St. Henry Catholic Church, 1021 Eighth Avenue.

The sisters will answer questions about their lives and the beautiful fulfillment they find in being a bride of Christ. Dinner will be provided.

Our Lady's School Fall enrollment

SULPHUR – Enrollment for new students for 2014-2015 is ongoing at Our Lady's Catholic School.

New families may obtain a registration packet from the school office at 1111 Cypress Street. Enrollment is open for all grades from the school's three-year old pre-school program through eighth grade.

Contact the office at 337-527-7828 or go to olcs.org for more information.

Forty Hours Devotion schedule

LAKE CHARLES – Forty Hours Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, praying for an increase in vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Lake Charles, will be in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Sulphur from Monday, Feb. 24 through Friday, Feb. 28.

Times and locations are March 10-14, St. Philip Neri Catholic Church, Kinder, five hours a day; March 17-20, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church, Jennings; March 21-23, 10 hours daily, Immaculate Conception, Catholic Church, Jen-

nings; March 25, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, Jennings, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and March 26-7, St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, Oberlin, 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; March 27, 7 a.m.-4 p.m., March 28, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; and March 29, 7 a.m.-to 4 p.m..

March prayer breakfast, luncheon

LAKE CHARLES – The next Men's Prayer Breakfast with Bishop Glen John Provost is Friday, March 7 in Ave Maria Hall.

The breakfast is preceded by 6:30 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Women's Prayer Luncheon is Wednesday, March 19 in Ave Maria Hall.

Women should send a check for \$15, payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles, to Gaynell Carrier, P.O. Box 3223, Lake Charles, LA 70602-3223, and include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Black Alumni scholarships at McNeese

LAKE CHARLES – Applications are now being accepted for 2014 scholarships available through the Black Alumni Chapter of the McNeese State University Alumni Association.

Specifics of the program can be obtained by calling 337-475-5232 or e-mail: alumni@mcneese.edu. Applications must be received in the MSUAA-Black Alumni Chapter, MSU Box 90755, Lake Charles, LA 70609 by March 1.

"Holy Hour to Discern Vocation"

SULPHUR – The next "Holy Hour to Discern My Vocation," a ministry of "VOCARE" and the Office of Vocations, is Sunday, March 2, at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The program is designed for young men age 15 and older seeking to know God's will in their lives and intended to give them a united effort of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

The hour of adoration is followed by refreshments and fraternity.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat scheduled

LAKE CHARLES – A Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Weekend is set for Friday through Sunday, Feb. 28-March 2 at Tabor Retreat House of Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff.

This unique retreat allows participants to enter into the grieving process, identify effects the abortion has had and re-

lease deep feelings of anger, shame, and guilt that frequently accompany the abortion experience. It combines discussions, spiritual exercises, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a Memorial Service, and Mass of entrustment. Participation is strictly confidential.

Call Rachel's Vineyard of Southwest Louisiana at 337-439-7400, Ext. 317 or e-mail rachel.vineyard@lcdioocese.org for information.

Mass, Adoration for Healing on First Thursdays

HACKBERRY – Mass and Adoration for Healing is held on the First Thursday of each month, March 7 this month, in St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church with Father Rommel Tolentino as the celebrant. It begins at 5:30 p.m. with Confessions, a Rosary, and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. The Mass is at 6 p.m. followed by Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration with prayers for healing and deliverance, ending with Benediction.

Together for Life March 8-9

MOSS BLUFF – Together for Life, a weekend marriage preparation event by the Office of Family Life, will be Saturday and Sunday, March 8-9. Saturday's events are in Tabor Retreat House at Saint Charles Center and on Sunday the location changes to the Diocesan Chancery, 414 Iris Street.

Couples may attend the 11:15 a.m. Mass on Sunday in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and attend the program following.

For more information, call 337-439-7400, Ext. 301. A registration form is available at www.live.lcdioocese.org/forms.html.

Natural Family Planning Training

LAKE CHARLES – The incredible gift of Natural Family Planning is now available in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Three instructors certified in the Creighton Model Fertility(Care) System worked with the Diocese and Dr. David Darbonne.

For more information about training in the Creighton Method of Natural Family Planning or to schedule training contact Jackie Kron at 337-377-7953; Laura Hobgood at 338-480-1280; Bonnie Stewart at 337-540-8959 or the office of Dr. Darbonne at 337-474-3883.