



aloysius alive

Vol. 36 No. 3

January-February 2021

Fall to winter

Seasons of celebrations at the Child Care Center

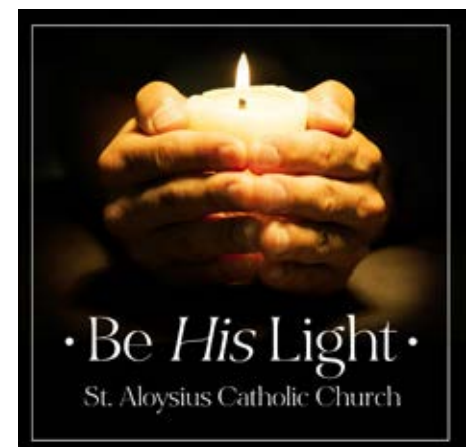
Nothing could stop the festive fun this year at the Child Care Center. Families participated in the center's Thanksgiving holiday tradition by decorating paper turkey feathers to put on display in the lobby. Children brought in their creations and shared with their friends what they were grateful for this year.

In the spirit of gratitude and blessings, families of the center then generously donated food and resources to purchase Thanksgiving meals for seven families. This nearly doubled the families we have provided for in the past.

Other fun November activities included learning "food," "family," and "Thanksgiving" in Spanish and making "Thank You" cards on Veterans' Day for the men and women who served and are serving our country. On Hat Day, the children donned their favorite caps, and on Mickey Mouse's birthday, we celebrated by wearing variations of the world's favorite mouse.

After the Thanksgiving break, the children walked into a dreamy Winter Wonderland. The rotunda was transformed into Santa's shop, including a Candy Store, snow, presents and treats, a giant sled, and a life-size Santa. Each student took a picture with Santa and was gifted a book. The teachers' and administrators' creativity knew

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Stewardship of offering

Make a testament of faith in tough times

By Michael J. Acaldo

Even during a pandemic, our St. Aloysius faith community does such an outstanding job with all phases of stewardship – prayer, ministry and offering – and as you see each phase of stewardship in action, you are witnessing the fulfillment of our parish vision of being the living body of Christ on Earth. This year's stewardship theme is: *Be His Light*.

We are a vibrant parish because so many of our parishioners look at stewardship not as a responsibility, but as an opportunity to share His light with our parish, community and world.

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Father Ryan on his spiritual journey – and fancy footwork

By T. MacDougall Womack Jr.

Father Ryan Hallford joined St. Aloysius in December of 2019 as the new parochial vicar. He kindly agreed to answer several questions about his life, vocation and hobbies.

Father Ryan grew up in Slidell, received his first sacraments at St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church and attended the local public schools. "I

had a kind of stepping away from the faith," he said. "In junior high I was agnostic or, at the very least, a weak atheist. I got more involved in the Christian faith my freshmen year in high school by going to a lot of different Protestant Bible studies and youth groups." He expressed gratitude for "the kind of community that helped me learn to love God and scripture."

Father Ryan admitted to having

an anti-Catholic phase until, at the end of his sophomore year, he began learning about the early Christian church. "I felt myself being drawn to the Catholic faith...and choosing that for myself, embracing that," he said.

Father Ryan moved to Baton Rouge to attend LSU, but before graduation he entered seminary for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. "I didn't know a lot about the seminary," he said. "I

didn't know a lot about the priesthood because I didn't really learn that growing up. I didn't go to a Catholic school, so it was a great time of learning about the faith and myself."

And then he left. "I just kind of came to the point where I said, 'oh, maybe I don't want to be a priest,' and I left with the intention of never returning. I've never regretted that de-

Continued on page 4



Fr. Ryan

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Giving Tree changes lives: Here's one success story

The 2020 Giving Tree was a success despite the pandemic. While our Giving Tree collections started off slowly, St. Aloysius parishioners responded to our call for help.

Through your generosity, we were able to provide wrapped gifts for 14 children of prisoners and 40 children who requested gifts through the GBR Federation Holy Grill. Fourteen men from our diocese studying at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and St. Joseph Seminary College (St. Ben's) in Covington were each given \$170 in gift cards to Walmart, Chick-fil-A, Barnes and Noble and other places. We also delivered needed items to several programs run by St. Vincent de Paul, several crisis pregnancy centers, people living with developmental disabilities, nursing home residents, and men recently released from prison. Parishioners also made monetary donations directly to Habitat for Humanity. All of these groups expressed their gratitude to those of us who dropped off donations and made clear to us how much these items mean to the people they serve.

Thank you again for your generosity and please take the time to read the following suc-



cess story sent to us by a staff member at Joseph Homes:

Ron was discharged from a state prison at the age of 49 after serving seven years for possession of heroin. He first went to prison 32 years earlier; it was a 'revolving door life'--in and out of prison for decades due to a life of crime and substance abuse. Luckily, Ron had an awakening during his last few years of his incarceration: He knew he would need a marketable skill for employment when he got out of prison and he recognized the need to maintain a

sober lifestyle. So, he did two things: He enrolled in a prison air conditioning and heating program, and he volunteered to participate in a series of substance abuse classes.

Ron was determined to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for a successful re-entry to society from prison. But more importantly, he had a desire to change his criminal thinking and maintain sobriety.

Knowing he would be homeless upon his release, Ron contacted Catholic Charities and the Joseph Homes program three months prior to his discharge date. Ron was discharged from prison at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. When he arrived in Baton Rouge, he contacted the JH staff and was moved into an apartment immediately. He was anxious to find employment, applying his new-found skills and knowledge. However, he was only able to get hired with a landscaping company. Ron was disappointed, but after working the landscaping job for several months, he was hired as helper in the HVAC field.

Living at Joseph Homes has allowed Ron and the other

residents an opportunity to re-establish themselves back into the community after years of incarceration. Obtaining stable employment is just one of many major challenges encountered by the residents. Opening a bank account, reuniting with family, learning necessary life skills to cope with society, and maintaining a sober lifestyle are vital components in achieving a successful re-entry. Ron has overcome many obstacles, including transportation. After a few months, his family helped him obtain his driver's license and a vehicle.

Ron expressed his gratitude on many occasions to Catholic Charities, Joseph Homes and especially to parishes like St. Aloysius for giving him a chance by providing him with basic needs upon discharge: shelter, food and clothing along with case management, support group meetings and individual counseling sessions. His next major step will be to

locate permanent housing. We feel confident that Ron will continue to be successful. And when life throws him a curve ball, his faith, positive attitude and determined spirit will help him prevail.

Joseph Homes exists primarily due to a handful of St. Aloysius parishioners who over 32 years ago recognized the need for safe housing for homeless men coming out of jail. They approached Bishop Stanley Ott with their idea, and he proceeded by reaching out to Catholic Community Services (Catholic Charities) to execute a plan of action.

Stories such as this one are evidence of the positive effect ministries such as Giving Tree have on the recipients. St. Aloysius parishioners reap the benefits as well when practicing Corporal Works of Mercy in graces received. From Pope Francis: "A bit of Mercy makes the world less cold and more just!"

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Please join us for Mass on Ash Wednesday as we begin our Lenten observance. Masses will be celebrated **at 6 AM, 8 AM, noon and 6 PM.**

The 8 AM Mass will be live-streamed via our website at alloysius.org/livestream and on our Facebook page.

Stations of the Cross

Each Friday of Lent: 7:15 AM (before the 8 AM Mass) and at 5:30 PM.
To respect social distancing, we ask that you pray the stations from your pew without walking to each station.

Regular Mass Schedule

SATURDAY

*Vigil 4:30 PM

SUNDAY

7:00 AM, *9:00 AM, 11:00 AM & 5:30 PM

DAILY MASSES

Monday & Wednesday, 6:00 AM

Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday 8:00 AM

This * denotes Mass is livestreamed via our website at alloysius.org/livestream or on our Facebook page at facebook.com/StAloysiusCatholicChurch

CONFESSIONS: Monday and Wednesday after 6:00 AM Mass; Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 7:30-8:00 AM; Saturday 3:30-4:30 PM (when the adjacent Mass is celebrated).

FUNERALS: Please contact the Parish Office prior to scheduling with the funeral home. If after hours, follow directions on voicemail.

PARISH SCHOOL: For information, phone 383-3871, 8:30 AM- 3:30 AM

NURSERY/CHILDCARE CENTER: For information, phone 343-1338, 7:00 AM -5:30 PM Monday through Friday.

BAPTISM: Please contact the Parish Office during early months of pregnancy. Baptismal preparation is required.
SPONSORS: Baptism & Confirmation sponsors must be confirmed practicing Catholics in good standing in the Catholic Church, and if not St. Aloysius Parishioners, must provide a letter of good standing from the parish where they are registered.

MARRIAGE: Couples are asked to contact the priest at the beginning of the period of engagement at least six months prior to the projected date of the marriage.

CARE OF THE SICK: The Eucharist is brought to the sick weekly and hospital visits made weekly. Families of the sick are encouraged to notify the Parish Office.

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St. Aloysius parishioners prepare emergency supplies to be sent to the Lake Charles area in September 2020.

Thanks from our friends in Lake Charles

In Gratitude...

The funds collected through the Hurricane Laura and Delta Relief Efforts have been fully disbursed. St. Theodore and Sacred Heart churches were the recipients of the drive. These thank you notes were received by Father Randy earlier this month after the disbursement.

Dear Parishioners of St. Aloysius Church,

On behalf of St. Theodore Catholic Church in Lake Charles, I want to thank you for your generous donation. Our parish sustained major damage from the two hurricanes of Laura and Delta. With limited assistance from insurance and FEMA, your gift will help us to begin repairs and rebuilding. More importantly, your care and concern for us has lifted our spirits with hope and gratitude. United in faith, we return to our prayers of thanksgiving.

May the Lord Bless all of you.
Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, Pastor
St. Theodore Catholic Church
785 Sam Houston Jones Parkway
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70612

Congregation of St. Aloysius Church,

Thank you for your generous donation to help Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church after Hurricanes Laura and Delta devastated our parish.

May the peace of Christ be with you.
Fr. Richard Uche Adiukwu, Pastor
Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church
1102 Mill Street
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70601

Pope Francis proclaims 2021 Year of St. Joseph

On Dec. 8, Pope Francis solemnly dedicated the coming year to the patronage of St. Joseph. This proclamation, issued in the Apostolic Letter "Patris Corde," celebrates the 150th Anniversary of Pope Pius IX's proclamation of St. Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

In his Apostolic Letter, Pope Francis reminds the faithful that each one of us "can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble." While Joseph's role in the Gospels is much more modest than that of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Joseph reminds us that "those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all."

In Joseph, we witness a father who is beloved, tender, loving and obedient. He accepted strange and difficult circumstances with courage and creative resolve, devoting himself to his family and his daily work as a gift and calling from God.

Pope Francis concludes "Patris Corde" with a reflection on the meaning and purpose of sainthood, reminding us specifically to implore Joseph's intercession and to imitate his virtues and his zeal.

A beautiful resource and devotion to consider during this Year of St. Joseph is Father Donald Calloway's *Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of our Spiritual Father*. This 33-day consecration is very similar to 33



Days to Morning Glory, a popular consecration to the Virgin Mary by Father Michael Gaitley. The consecration devotions highlight many of St. Joseph's titles, privileges and saintly virtues.

Participants will spend 20-30 minutes each day on a short exposition of one of the invocations in the Litany of St. Joseph, a reading on his life, and the recitation of the Litany. The consecration is typically planned to culminate on a feast of Joseph or Mary and may be done individually or in groups. A limited number of copies of the text are available through the parish office.

More information about the consecration and additional copies of the text are available through the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception's website: www.consecrationtostjoseph.org. Or contact Mark Christian through the parish office at mchristian@staloyiusparish.com.

Come, Lord Jesus! Program to guide Easter preparation

Prepare for our Easter celebration with a spiritual journey that will renew your faith and transform your life. Consider joining a Come, Lord Jesus! Bible Study program during the holy season of Lent. Participants will meet for seven weeks to study and meditate on the Sunday Gospels, following the spiritual model at the heart of the Come, Lord Jesus! Program.

For more information about how to join an online Zoom group, contact Mary Carlin (mary_carlin_1@hotmail.com), Cindy Ristroph (cindy.ristroph@outlook.com) or Marianne Hebert at the Come, Lord Jesus! office (337-233-6277) for booklets or further information. You may also visit their website at www.comelordjesus.com



Offering, From Page 1

Just think of how St. Mother Teresa exemplified stewardship – sharing herself unselfishly with others. She once said that at the end of life we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by how we have shared the light of Christ with others.

Today, more than ever, there

is a need for the bright light of Christ in our lives. During these difficult times, members of our faith community are challenged every day to examine how we are investing in our own stewardship, which is not just a gift to God, but also a gift to ourselves and an important part of our spiritual growth. We all need to grow closer to God more today than ever before! Giving – no matter what form of stewardship it takes – is truly a blessing.

After being involved with the promotion of Stewardship of

Offering in our parish over the last two decades, I have grown personally as I have witnessed stewardship in action. There are so many unsung heroes in our parish who quietly and capably perform God's work, giving generously of themselves and their resources, living their faith in a powerful way and expecting nothing in return. When the pandemic hit, my wife and I were so glad that we signed up years ago to do offering through automatic bank draft, so our giving continued even though the church was closed. Automatic

bank draft is simple to do by going to the parish website or calling the parish office. It may be something you wish to consider doing this year.

Stewardship is truly faith in action. I learned early on that stewardship of offering is not fund development or fund raising: it's an expression of our personal relationship with God, and each phase of stewardship enables us to grow spiritually.

Our faith community asks you to prayerfully reflect on all the many blessings in your life and how you can *Be His Light*

through all phases of stewardship. During this reflection, you may want to ask yourself, "Where am I in my own spiritual journey?" How we answer this question is so important as each of us grows spiritually.

On behalf of Father Randy, the parish staff and all our parish leaders/servants, thank you for sharing your blessings with our faith community and our community at large. Your stewardship of offering is an extraordinary testament of your faith which is so needed during these difficult times.



Christmas flowers donations

In Memory of:

- Kent and Jan Hendrickson by Dwayne Fontenot
- Father Hubert Brou by Bill and Mag Wall
- Father Than Vu by Bill and Mag Wall
- Sister Katie Brogden by Bill and Mag Wall
- Deceased members of the Bill Wall Family by Bill and Mag Wall
- The Ktena Family by Christina Riquelmy
- The Riquelmy Family by Christina Riquelmy
- Mark Gremillion by Brenda C. Gremillion
- Col. Joseph Gerace by Norma F. Gerace
- Laura Cotton by Norma F. Gerace
- Warren and Necia Waggenspack by Joni and Warren Waggenspack, Jr.
- Tricia Nutter Planche by David Planche
- Cecil L. Hebert by Jerline Hebert
- Cecil L. Hebert by Marvin and Lauren Ragland



Celebrating Mardi Gras in 2020.

Fr. Ryan, From Page 1

cision; I think that was the right decision at the time."

Father Ryan graduated from LSU with two degrees: one in philosophy and another in literature. He spent a year in California volunteering with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, where he taught at a middle school and joined a community devoted to living simply. He returned to Baton Rouge, where he got a job teaching at St. Joseph's Academy. "I was still teaching at St. Joseph's, and that's where I...fell in love with serving youth," he said.

Having found a calling, Father Ryan went to work at St. Michael the Archangel High School, where he taught for four years. "I think in the process of doing youth ministry, campus ministry, teaching high school students, and really investing my life in the formation of others I really felt the Lord calling me to spend my life serving the church," he said.

A pilgrimage to Spain, where he walked part of the Camino de Santiago, granted him a feeling of freedom and an invitation to return to his priestly formation. Father Ryan had an experience of God calling him to trust in Him and that the Lord would provide everything he needed.

"Meditating on the graces I received from that pilgrimage, that next year I felt invited and compelled to reenter seminary and discern for the Diocese of Baton Rouge," he said. Father Ryan was ordained a priest by Bishop Muench on May 27, 2017.

"I love celebrating the Mass," he said. "I really feel my priesthood being most lived out is in the celebration of the Eucharist and the ability to break open the

scriptures for people and pray with them as a spiritual family. I view all the sacraments in my priesthood as being tied to the spiritual family of the Church, and each of the sacraments is a way the Lord is empowering us to live out the mission of the family, which is love."

When he isn't administering the sacraments or in prayer, Father Ryan enjoys ballroom dancing. "Occasionally, I'll give dance classes, and I love going to wedding receptions and being able to dance," he said. "One of the things I offer when I do marriage prep is dance lessons, and I've had a few (couples) take me up on it."

"My other hobby," he said, "is Brazilian jiu-jitsu. I train at a gym and compete in tournaments."

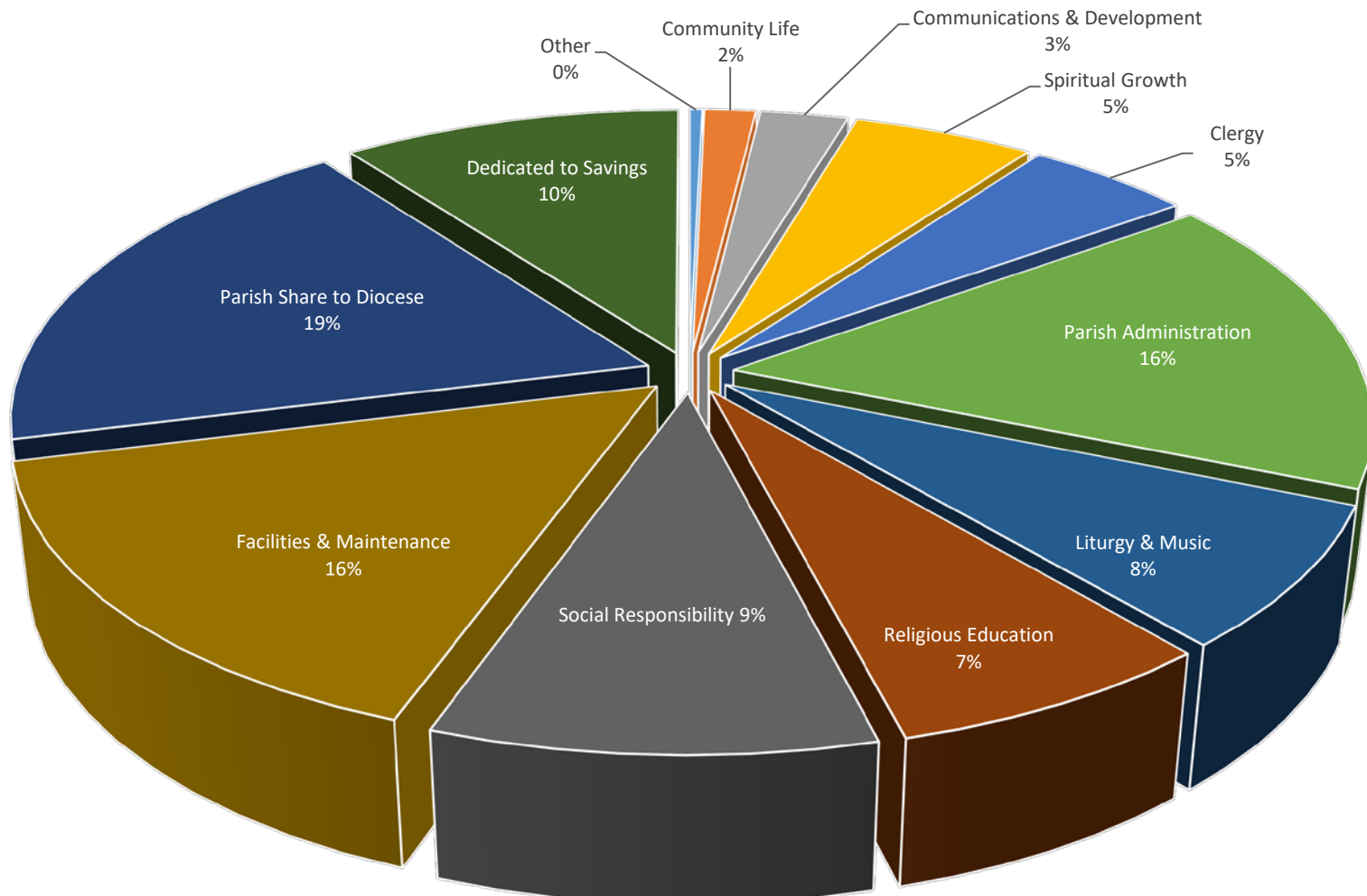
When asked where he'd like to travel, Father Ryan picked Japan. "I really enjoy Japanese cuisine and their culture. It seems like a neat place to go," he said. When prodded for a local sushi recommendation, Father Ryan suggested Sushi Masa on Essen Lane.

Father Ryan previously served at St. Margaret's in Albany, Holy Family in Port Allen, and St. Jude the Apostle. The end of his interview touched on his impressions of St. Aloysius.

"St. Aloysius has been a wonderful experience," he said. "The people have been very open to welcoming me into their lives and their homes. I've really enjoyed the participation of the school. I think there's a really good community. I've enjoyed going over there during lunchtime and visiting with the kids."

"In terms of ministry," he said, "I really love how active the parishioners are in terms of taking responsibility for their own formation and in finding different ways to serve each other (and) the Church at large."

Church Operating Expenses Fiscal Year 2019-20



CHURCH OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

INCOME	FY 2019-20
Offertory Collections	\$ 2,429,818 ¹
Interest Earned from Savings	47,897
Reimbursements, Miscellaneous Income	153,743 ²
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 2,631,458.44
EXPENSES**	FY 2019-20
Liturgy & Music	\$ 199,546
Clergy	
Pastor*	37,992
Parochial Vicar*	28,109
Stipends for outside priest assistance	3,885
Employment Benefits	25,129
Continuing Education, Household Expenses, etc.	36,492
Spiritual Growth	143,763
Social Responsibility	249,418 ³
Religious Education	187,900
Community Life	40,685
Parish Administration	427,474
Communications & Development	69,307
Facilities & Maintenance	410,700
Other	9,771
Parish Share to Diocese	492,424
Dedicated to Savings	268,793
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 2,631,388.63

¹Parishioner contributions to Stewardship of Offering for Church support only; Building, fundraising and special collection income and details are listed separately.

²Includes: ACTS Retreat registrations and donations, Special offerings and assistance, Bulletin rebate

³Parish tithe to Social Responsibility is 12.56%; Parish commits to 10% of its net operating income.

*Salaries set by diocesan scale.

**Lay salaries and benefits appear within the area of parish life to which they pertain.

CHURCH INCOME - BUILDING COLLECTIONS FY 2019-20

Building Fund, Capital Campaign, Memorials*	\$ 736,814
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CHURCH INCOME - FUNDRAISING EFFORTS	FY 2019-20
Parish Fair & Raffle ¹	143,764
Auction ²	182,889
Golf Classic	5,833
Total Fundraising Efforts*	332,486

EXPENSES**

¹Highest Parish Fair net proceeds on record.

²Highest Auction net proceeds on record.

*There were no building expenses in FY 2019-20. Net Income from Fundraising, Building Fund, Capital Campaign and Memorial donations were transferred into Building Fund Savings and continue to be devoted to fulfilling the goals of the parish Master Plan.

CHURCH INCOME - SPECIAL COLLECTIONS FY 2019-20

Agency Collections	Continuing Educa
Latin America	2,456
Home Missions	1,363
Catholic Relief Services	1,220
Catholic Communications	871
Peter's Pence	1,971
Central & Eastern Europe	3,148
Catholic University	3,722
Human Development	2,380
Retirement Fund for Religious	17,899
Black & Indian Missions	3,666
World Mission Sunday	3,262
Diocesan Priest Retirement	7,235
Total Agency Collections	49,193

Mission Collections

Special Mission Appeals	18,456
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*Salaries set by diocesan scale.

**Lay salaries and benefits appear within the area of parish life to which they pertain.

67,649

CHURCH CASH ASSETS 6/30/2020

Operating Checking	\$ 386,621
Operating Savings	691,627 ¹
Building Fund Checking	6,579
Building Fund Savings	3,064,328 ²

CHURCH ENDOWMENT PRINCIPAL BALANCES 6/30/2020

Parish Endowment	\$ 556,294
Parish Scholarship Endowment held at SAS	17,000

EXPENSES**

²Building Fund Savings includes the parish's deductible for a named-storm should the parish suffer severe damage due to a hurricane or tropical storm.



10 years as youth minister: All the reasons I'm thankful

By T. MacDougall Womack Jr.

On Dec. 1, 2020, I celebrated 10 years as the youth minister at St. Aloysius. I am so thankful for the hundreds of families who have supported me. I have learned and grown immensely from both the teens and parents of St. Aloysius.

My love for youth ministry began in high school, when Robin Beard restarted youth group and offered teens like me the chance to lead. My parents, Sheryl and Mac, were endlessly supportive and pushed me to be more involved when my teenage lethargy kicked in. I have tried to be just as encouraging to all the teens I've met.

Steven Brooksher welcomed me with his characteristic joy when I offered to volunteer with youth group after graduating from college. I loved working with Steven because our talents inter-connected so well. His creativity and flexibility helped push me out of my comfort zone.

I felt God calling me to apply when Steven announced he was leaving St. Aloysius. When Father Burns hired me it was a dream come true. I'm grateful to Father Burns and Deacon Johnny Veron for giving me the independence to chase my own goals within youth ministries.

I had no idea how much I would depend on Connie Planche when I started this job. Connie is one of the most generous and conscientious people I have ever met and was dramatically overquali-



Womack

fied to be my assistant. I enjoyed working through the details of hundreds of events with Connie.

The first question I was asked in my new role was if I would continue our mission trip with Our Lady of Peace Parish in Vacherie. I remember giving a hesitant "yes," but that mission became a vital part of youth ministry and taught hundreds of teens and me valuable lessons about service, race relations and God.

The mission took an army of selfless people to organize, including Pam Folse, Monice Oliphant, Margaret Brooksher, Judy Giordano, Andy Kimbrell, Francisco Gudiel, Alicia Perilloux and dozens of other parents who graciously gave a week of their vacation to teach teens how to paint houses and interact with elderly parishioners. Pam mentored me for seven years and completely changed my worldview.

In that mission, and in all of our ministries, our teens are the engine that makes it work. It is impossible for me to overstate how much they mean to me and how much they have given me. They are an intelligent, hard-

*"In all of our ministries,
our teens are the engine that makes it work.
It is impossible for me to overstate how much they
mean to me and how much they have given me."*

working, empathetic generation. We haven't had in-person meetings since March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and I miss interacting with them face-to-face. Online Life Nights and game nights are a joyful reminder of their passion. I will never forget them.

The friendship and help of the adult volunteers on our parish's Adult Core Team are precious to me. They have spent endless Sunday evenings with me serving pizza, giving talks, leading small groups and mentoring teens. I cannot possibly express the depth of my gratitude. Just a few of the longest-serving members include Josh Reed, Steve Brooksher, Mary Nell Pollet, Amanda Floyd, Meg Owen, Jen Trahan, Jena Cook, Donnie Miller, Mary Churay, Garrett Remson, LeeAnn Stevens, Paul Lewis, Susan Naquin, Mary Jean McAdams, Catherine Stewart and Monica Monroe.

I want to praise my wife, too. Jennifer and I met on the core team. It was delightful to volunteer with her and share our engagement and wedding with the youth group family. We've

been married since 2014 and have three boys: Thomas, Patrick and Charlie. We love them with all our hearts, and they have expanded my understanding of God's love for me. It is very hard to be away from my family for meetings, trips and retreats, but I know God has used the lessons I've learned as a father to better youth ministry.

One of the hardest parts of my job is preparing teens for the Sacrament of Confirmation. I relish the challenge of working with one of the largest classes in the diocese each year. I want each teen to feel connected to God and St. Aloysius Parish. My struggle is to put aside my rigidity and worry less about the strict religious education requirements. Father Randy has gracefully guided me through many of these situations. Thankfully, I've never had to lead Confirmation prep alone. Each year features 30 or more volunteers who host small groups and are the backbone of our program. I want to mention Johnny Dunaway, who is one of the best men I have ever met. Johnny answers the call each and every time I need help.

The credit for all our successes in youth ministries, as in our church, belongs to the innumerable volunteers who work continuously and quietly to provide opportunities for others. For 10 years, they have been the answer to my prayers for help and the embodiment of God's graces pouring into our programs. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I know that God will reward you all richly in Heaven.

I've learned to laugh about my many mistakes on the job, such as setting off all the smoke detectors on campus. It was a Sunday morning, and we were using fog machines in the girls' locker room of the gym to simulate purgatory for a Junior High Youth Group meeting. I didn't stop to think about the fire alarm until John Bennett charged into the gym like a runaway train. I had unknowingly interrupted the adult Confirmation happening at 9 a.m. Mass and made the whole congregation worry about a fire. It certainly wasn't a gold star moment at the time, but it's funny now.

My stories about youth ministry and gratitude for St. Aloysius could fill a book, but I remember the frequent advice of my teen and adult leaders to "land the plane." The last anecdote I'll share is my favorite, groan-worthy pun: What is red and bad for your teeth?

A brick! Don't eat bricks; that's a helpful tip from your youth minister.

Scripture inspires 'Keep Christ in Christmas' contest winners

Before the Christmas break, the Knights of Columbus sponsored a poster contest titled "Keep Christ in Christmas." Students of all ages submitted posters that illustrated the true meaning of Christmas, the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. The winners of each age category received a certificate and check for \$25. Their poster entries will go to the diocesan level of competition.

On Jan. 6, Father Randy Cuevas announced the winners during morning assembly. The winner in the category for ages 11-14 is eighth-grader Mary Hill Savoy. In the ages 8-10 category, the winner is fifth-grader Camille Gardiner. In the category of ages 5-7, the winner is first-grader Max Mautner.

Current COVID-19 safety protocols prevent students and faculty from gathering in the gym for

morning assembly, so the morning announcements and prayer come into the classrooms via the intercom system. All the winners said that their homeroom classmates were very supportive and cheered and clapped for them upon hearing the announcement. Following prayer, Max, Camille and Mary Hill reported to the school office to be presented their awards and take a photo with Father Randy.

After receiving their awards, the winners took some time to discuss their art work. First-grader Max Mautner titled his poster, "The Road to Bethlehem." He used poster paper and colored pencils as his medium. Max says he got the idea from the poster "in my mind." He says he gets his interest and talent in art from his mom. "She paints stuff and she helps her friend with decorating," he said.

Fifth-grader Camille Gardiner's poster "Jesus is Born" was created with poster paper and color pencils. She prefers color pencils to markers because "It's easier to blend with color pencil." Camille got her inspiration from the Gospel stories of Jesus' birth, the journey of the Magi, and the story of Jesus in the Temple when he was 12.

Eighth-grader Mary Hill Savoy also drew her inspiration from the Gospel stories of the birth of Jesus and the journey of the wise men. Her poster was illustrated using both paints and colored pencils.

All three students say they plan to save the prize money for future use. Camille is interested in saving the endangered Amur Leopards, the rarest big cat in the world, having only 84 surviving in the wilderness of Southeastern Russia and Northern China. She is



Poster contest winners, from left, with Father Randy Cuevas: First-grader Max Mautner, fifth-grader Camille Gardiner and eighth-grader Mary Hill Savoy.

considering adding her prize money to the total amount she and her neighborhood friends have raised for this cause.

St. Aloysius School is blessed

to have students with artistic talents and love of scripture. We especially appreciate their kind hearts and their desire to share their gifts with the world.

Davis Dawes honored to be SAS Student of the Year

The mission of St. Aloysius School is to “educate the whole child in the Catholic tradition for a life of meaning and purpose.” In the fall of the school year, students nominate fellow students who exemplify this mission statement. They nominate fellow eighth-graders who are well-rounded, hard-working and live out the teachings of Jesus. The administration and faculty review these nominees to select the student they feel is most deserving of this honor. This year’s Student of the Year is eighth-grader Davis Fourrier Dawes.

Davis works hard at his school subjects as reflected by his excellent grades and his status as an honor roll student. He was recognized by Duke University as an



“academically talented scholar.” Davis has been on the St. Aloysius Quiz Bowl team, which was runner-up in the Diocesan tourna-

ment in 2018 and 2019. In 2019, he was on the pre-algebra team that placed first in the CHS/SJA competition.

Davis enjoys many extracurricular activities including choir and robotics. He also plays soccer and runs cross country and track. In 2017, Davis made it to the state competition in the Knights of Columbus Soccer Challenge.

While school and sports take up a lot of his time, Davis manages to find time to give service to the community. He has been a volunteer with the Bella Bowman foundation and worked with his family in Prison Ministry. Davis is an altar server for St. Aloysius Parish. He is also a cantor for school Masses. In addition, Davis has volunteered with numerous ministries and parish events including the fair, Holy Smoke and Advent at Aloysius.

The Student of the Year

completes a portfolio of accomplishments, which is submitted to the diocesan competition. In his portfolio autobiography, Davis wrote, “I was so happy and honored and shocked that I was chosen Student of the Year, and I owe it all to God. One of the biggest and most important things to me is my relationship with God and my faith life.” Davis shares that his favorite quote is from author RJ Palacio in the novel *Wonder*, “When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind.”

It is easy to see why his classmates nominated Davis as an outstanding student. St. Aloysius School is very proud to have him represent us as the 2020-21 Student of the Year.

SAS third-graders send Christmas wishes to the troops

This is how third-grader Reese Landers describes her Christmas card she made to contribute to the program A Million Thanks: “I drew a Christmas tree and wrote some jokes. Then I wrote, ‘We’re praying for you,’ and ‘Merry Christmas.’”

A Million Thanks is an organization that provides support and appreciation to our active and veteran military men and women through sending letters. The program is year-round, but the third-graders at St. Aloysius wanted to send special wishes for the Christmas holidays. As Annie Kate Bourgeois explained, “We did it because soldiers couldn’t be with their families for Christmas. We wanted them to know we are thankful that they are giving up being with their family to protect our country.”

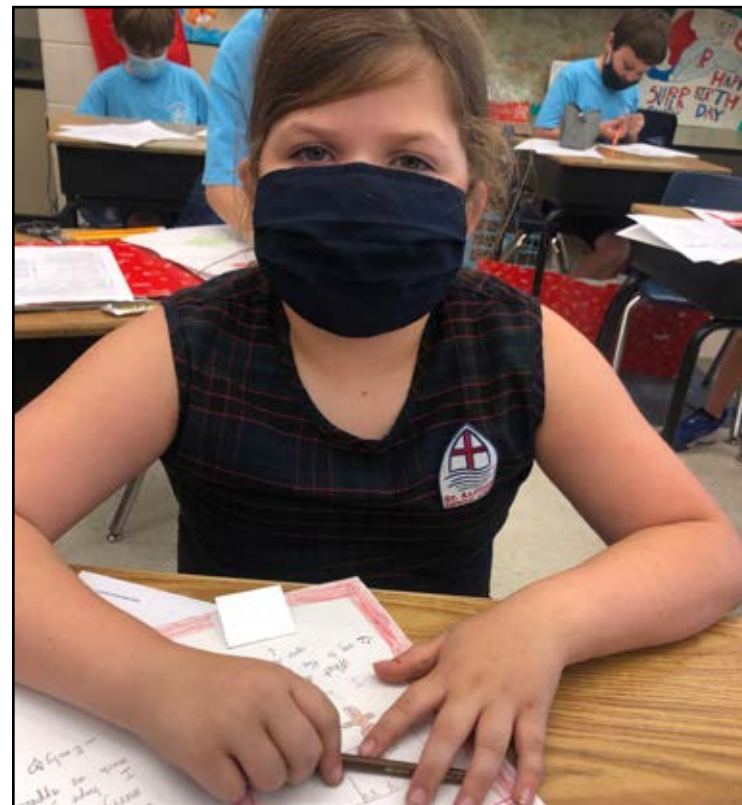
As with so many other things in 2020, the coronavirus protocols have impacted the writing of the letters. Because the letters have to remain in quarantine for 30 days, the students had to write their letters to the troops during the week of Veterans’ Day in early November. This made the experience even more meaningful for the students. Brooks Blanchard said, “I drew a picture of an airplane — like the Air Force, a battleship for the Navy and people in the Army...We’re making their confidence grow because we are remembering them.”

Owen Marcell said he wrote a couple of jokes and drew a couple of funny pictures, along with the sentiment, “Merry Christmas, Troops,” adding that, “I think it’s nice because we are not letting the soldiers feel alone. We are cheering them up.”

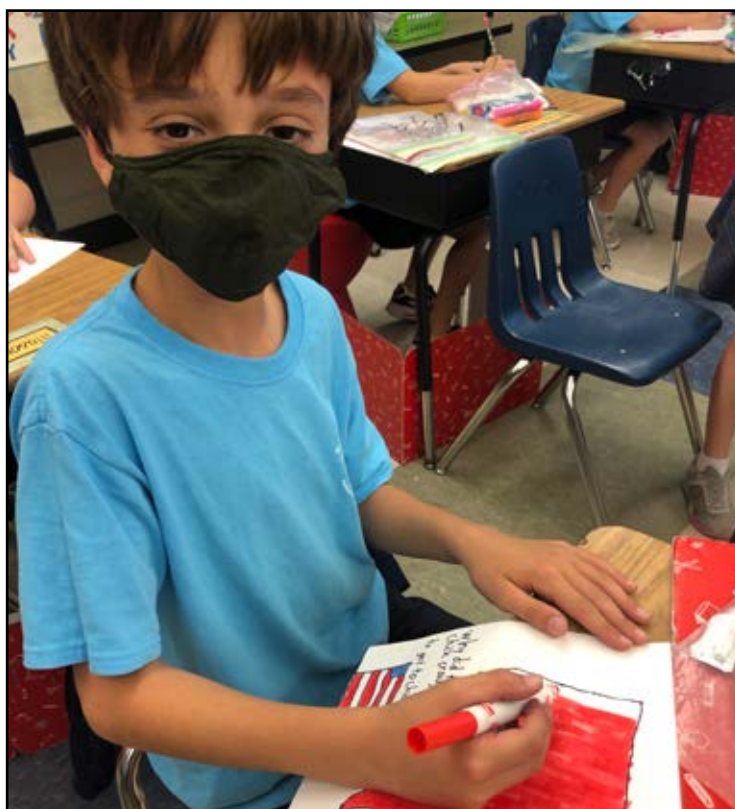
In addition to creating the cards and letters, the students report that they are remembering to include the troops in their prayers, even “when I say my prayers at home.”



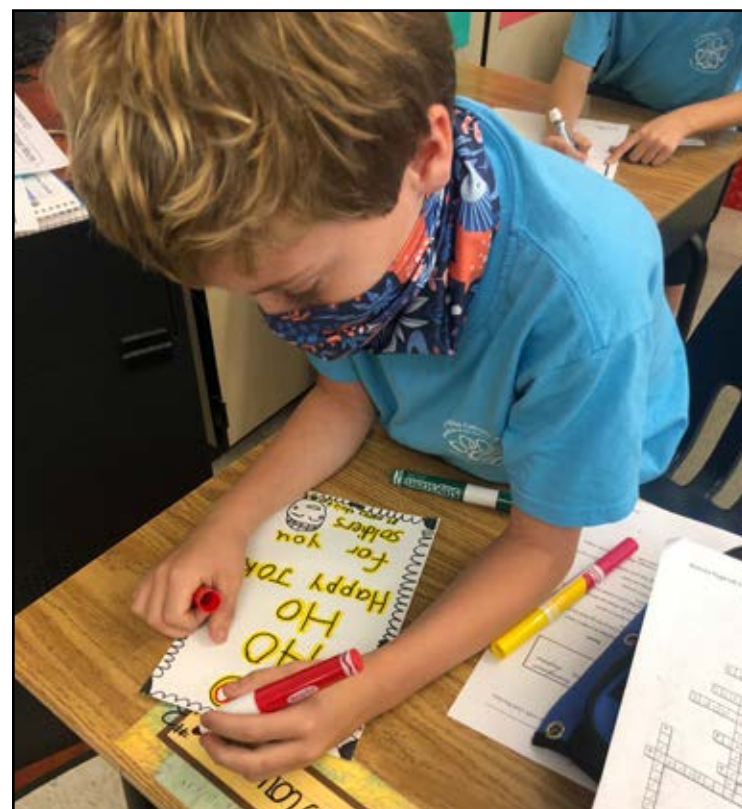
Camille Forman



Emily Roussel



Jack Kastanos



Micah Brousseau

Faithful church staffer Betty Jarreau dies at age 97

By Father Randy Cuevas

I remember the original rectory at St. Aloysius sat just to the east (across the covered walk) from where the school's new STREAM lab is located. It faced north into what was the plaza in front of the original church building. The priests' dining room was in the very back of the house. The dining room also doubled as the parish office, and at one end of the dining room was the pastor's secretary's desk and church file

cabinets.

The lady who sat behind the desk was Betty Jarreau.

The church office staff was Betty...that's it. She had come to work for Father Becnel (founding pastor) in 1960. Father Becnel retired in 1974, the same year I finished high school, and Betty left the employ of St. Aloysius in 1975, soon after Father Marcel became St. Aloysius' second pastor.

After Betty's husband, Lafayette Jarreau, died in 1978, Betty moved back to her parents' home

in McComb, Mississippi, where she had grown up, and cared for her mother. After her mother died, she resided for a few years with her brother in a retirement community in Arkansas, but returned home to McComb again.

Since I had known Betty in my days as a youth at St. Aloysius, it was providential that I got the call a few weeks ago from Amanda Jones, calling on behalf of Betty's family. Betty had passed away on January 4, 2021, in McComb at the age of 97, but not

before making clear her wishes that she be buried beside Lafayette at Resthaven in Baton Rouge, and that a priest from St. Aloysius conduct her graveside rites since she had worked here for 15 years.

I was happy to be able to provide those rites for Betty on Friday, January 15, 2021. Betty's mark remains indelibly etched in the records of St. Aloysius' archives, and St. Aloysius is indebted to her years of faithful and dedicated service! May she rest in peace!



Betty Jarreau



Offering, From Page 1

no bounds. Parents and children alike are very grateful to Ms. Sharon Mason and Sharon Couvillion and the teachers of the center for making sure the magic was kept despite a global pandemic. They truly went above and beyond.

Celebrations continued all month long, making sock snowmen and learning about the Nativity story and "Merry Christmas," "Jesus," and "baby" in sign language and Spanish. The Christmas tree was donned by ornaments created by our families. Mrs. Cindy Chenevert read "A Cajun Night before Christmas," and the classes made food for their future reindeer visitors. Christmas parties brought plenty of cheer, as the children celebrated with special art projects, some sugar and festive attire.

Keeping the true reason for the Christmas season, the children of the center made birthday cards for Jesus. The center also partnered again with Sanctuary for Life, a ministry of Catholic Charities, to help women and their newborn babies. Each class was asked to bring items such as diapers, washcloths, formula and toys to donate to this charity.

