

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK:



My dear parishioners and friends,

When you read these words I will be far from you: I am on a ten-day pilgrimage with 32 other persons to the Holy Land. The trip is one of the periodic pilgrimages sponsored by the Stewardship Office of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Often the destination is Rome, or Lourdes, or some other great center of devotion in Europe, but this time we are returning "to our roots," as it were.

I have been to the Holy Land before, and I really do recommend that every believer do so at some point in life. That part of the world is sacred to Jews, Moslems and Christians; in a sense it is the homeland of everyone who believes in the One God who created us and reaches out to save us.

The chief benefit of any pilgrimage is spiritual: God rewards those who seek Him, and those who "go to great lengths" to find Him discover special blessings. To be able to pray where Jesus Himself prayed, to be able to study and learn where He Himself taught, to be able to be inconvenienced - we hope by no more than impatient bus drivers and tour guides! - where He Himself suffered so much more, all of these are opportunities to treasure.

One benefit I've also found is more practical: the Word of God in the Bible "comes alive" so much more when one can actually see the places where the events occurred. Much of the Holy Land still today is rural and simple: flocks of sheep and groves of olive trees are not far off. The grassy hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee, the dusty roads south to Jerusalem and Bethlehem beyond, and the green of the Jordan River valley nestled amidst arid desert are real places. I know my own "spiritual imagination" is encouraged by such sights. There I can almost see and hear the Lord walking and talking - and every so often looking at me!

Another impressive aspect of the Holy Land is found in its churches and sacred sites. Christians have been pilgrims to the Holy Land for almost 2,000 years now, and many places of worship have been built: these generally are testaments in stone to the faith of millions. Not all are in great shape, but in a sense they're all the more beautiful when their stones now are "worn down" from pilgrims' feet, or blackened by the smoke of incense over centuries. The shrines of the Holy Land themselves testify to the depth of faith of those who have visited there.

But as I gaze out over the Holy City of Jerusalem, you may be sure that part of me will be thinking of another "holy city," our own beloved Baton Rouge. People of faith live here as well, and worship here, and care for each other here. True, more people consider Louisiana a tourist destination for our food and sports and culture, but if they really knew us they would also come just to pray with us and enter into the mysteries of God with us. It is such a privilege to worship with you day in and day out.

So please pray for me and the other pilgrims from Baton Rouge on our trip. I will be doing my best to share with the group some of the historical and Biblical significance of the places we visit. The group too will be praying for families and friends back home, so that the graces of our spiritual discoveries won't have to wait for our return to be beneficial.

In the meantime, please continue to have a good Lent. May your extra prayer, fasting, almsgiving, mortification and self-discipline be constant and rewarding. And remember, even if you "drop the ball" in living up to your personal commitments - and who doesn't, sometimes? - all you need to do is try again! Go back to Mass the next day, give up meat (or alcohol or chocolate or whatever it was) another day, attend the Stations of the Cross or pay an extra visit to the Blessed Sacrament another day. As I like to say to schoolchildren, "God grades on effort, not results": it's not so much what you do, it's how hard you try!

One final note: elsewhere in the *Bulletin* you'll notice an appeal for new (and more!) choir members. Give some thought to this, please: your presence and voice can help! For years the Cathedral's been known for the outstanding music which aids our worship. This doesn't happen automatically: it takes lots of effort, practice and commitment. But there is a marvelous joy that comes from being part of a choir, and I want you to discover it. (I was part of the schola at St. Ben back in my college days, and not only is some of that music a cherished part of my prayer to this day, boy do I miss the "rush" one gets from cooperating with others to produce such wonderful sounds!)

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. Paul". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

SPECIAL BLESSINGS FOR THE SICK...The *Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick* will be offered this Sunday, Feb. 28, following the 12 noon Mass. It is accompanied by a **special blessing** with a relic of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos. Catholics over 7 years of age who are ill, handicapped, facing serious surgery or enfeebled by old age are eligible to receive this Sacrament and invited to take part. Invite others whom you may know are in need of the Sacrament to come with you.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS...This Sunday, Feb. 27/28, the annual appeal for **Black and Indian Missions** in our own country is taken up. Many Catholic communities on reservations, in rural areas and in inner cities here in the USA are poor and ask your help.

We take up only **ONE** collection during the Preparation of the Gifts at Mass. Your regular weekly envelope and **all** other donations may be put into it. On the first full weekend of each month (like next weekend, **March 6/7**) we ask for a special donation for **Cathedral Maintenance and Repair**. Please be generous.

FAST AND ABSTINENCE... The Church obliges all Catholics over 14 to **abstain from eating meat** on ALL FRIDAYS of Lent, and, with especially serious obligation, on Good Friday. If between the age of 18 and 59 all Catholics are also obliged to fast, that is, are limited to **only one full meal** (with no in-between meal snacks!) on Good Friday. Priests and deacons may dispense a person from these obligations for a very serious reason, but a grave responsibility for each Catholic to do some penance during Lent always remains.

EASTER FLOWER DONATIONS... Our décor is sparse during Lent, but donations are already being accepted to defray our Easter flower costs! Please help to provide a beautiful and prayerful environment for worship. An envelope is provided in your monthly packet for this purpose.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS... The Parish Food Pantry needs volunteer "Helping Hands" on Tuesdays. Donations, especially of cereal, grits, oatmeal, rice, spaghetti, noodles, sugar, and cooking oil, can also be dropped off at the Parish Office or on Tuesday mornings in the Parish Hall.

NEED A STATEMENT?... Remember, IRS regulations require a **statement from the church** or copies of your canceled checks in order to claim charitable donations made to us last year. If you need a copy of your 2009 contribution statement, email the Parish Office at office@cathedralofstjoseph.org or telephone 225-387-5928.

CATHEDRAL CHOIR... seeks committed singers to participate actively in musical/choral ministry at the Cathedral. The Choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings and sings on Sundays and other solemn feast days. If interested or in need of more information, contact the Parish Office at 225-387-5928 or email robbie@cathedralofstjoseph.org

BLOOD DRIVE... Parishioners and friends are invited to participate in our **annual Blood Drive** on Sunday, March 7. The OLOL Blood Bank's mobile unit and staff remain in our parking lot until the last participants have donated following the 12 noon Mass. Ladies of the Cathedral will be stationed after each Mass this weekend to set up donor appointments. Please consider participating. Our participation assures all of our parishioners eligibility to receive credits toward withdrawals from the OLOL Blood Bank. Please consider donating a pint – it truly is the "Gift of Life."

LENT AT THE CATHEDRAL

Lenten Masses

Monday through Friday at 12:05 pm

Saturday 4 pm

Sunday 8 am, 10 am and 12 noon

Lenten Confessions

Monday through Friday at 11:30 am

Monday afternoons from 4 until 5:30 pm

Saturday afternoons at 3 pm

Weekly Devotions

Stations of the Cross

Each Friday at 11:30 am

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Novena to our Mother of Perpetual Help

Each Tuesday at 11:50 am

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Prayers to St. Jude the Apostle

Each Thursday at 11:50 am

THE LIGHT IS ON FOR YOU... This Lent, Bishop Muench and the priests of our diocese are making a special effort to make the Sacrament of Reconciliation more available. On the five consecutive "middle" Wednesday evenings of Lent – Feb. 24 and Mar. 3, 10, 17 & 24 – confessions will be heard from 6 to 8 pm at 17 regionally-located parish churches. Many priest confessors will be available in these places to welcome and direct you. Helpful information is on the diocesan website www.diobr.org, in *The Catholic Commentator*, and in brochures in all churches. Regular confession times at the Cathedral still apply (see above), but sometimes people wish to confess to priests from other parishes, or at a more convenient time.

The churches in the city of Baton Rouge offering these special Wednesday-night confession times are Christ the King at LSU, Our Lady of Mercy, St. Aloysius, St. George, St. Paul the Apostle and St. Pius X.

Other churches not too far away are Immaculate Conception in Denham Springs, St. John the Evangelist in Plaquemine and St. John the Baptist in Zachary.

CENSUS... Remember to fill out the short **2010 Census** Questionnaire that you will be receiving next month, and return it in timely fashion.



ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL
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MASS INTENTIONS - Week of 2/27

Sat.	4:00 pm	M/M Richard Cointment
Sun.	8:00 am	Robert Fontenot
	10:00 am	For Cathedral Parishioners
	12:00 noon	Mary C. Morgan
Mon.	12:05 pm	Lillian Cline Koster/Benedict Cline
Tues.	12:05 pm	Cedric Aucoin, Jr., Dr. Stan Mintz, Bishop Donald Pelotte, Mary C. Morgan, Ernest Carriere Family, Ray Ewings
Wed.	12:05 pm	Drew Dodenhoff
Thurs.	12:05 pm	M/M Richard Cointment, Sr., Bishop Donald Pelotte, Robert Lee, Raymond Hollenbach,
Fri.	12:05 pm	Purgatorial List



WEEKLY PRAYER INTENTIONS...

Saturday:	For a greater spirit of evangelization in the Church
Sunday:	For couples preparing for marriage
Monday:	For the priests of the Diocese of Baton Rouge
Tuesday:	For those seeking Baptism or full Communion with the Catholic Church
Wednesday:	For a spirit of reconciliation in the world and in our lives
Thursday:	For missionaries and foreign missions
Friday:	For an increase in the virtue of humility

SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK...

Saturday	Dt 26:16-16; Mt 5:43-48
Sunday	Gn 15:5-12,17-18; Phil 3:17-4:1 or 3:20-4:1; Lk 9:28b-36
Monday	Dn 9:4b-10; Lk 6:36-38
Tuesday	Is 1:10,16-20; Mt 23:1-12
Wednesday	Jer 18:18-20; Mt 20:17-28
Thursday	Jer 17:5-10; Lk 16:19-31
Friday	Gn 37:3-4,12-13a,17b-28a; Mt 21:33-43,45-46

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE... The regular collection on Feb. 14 totaled \$7185.00 (130 identified givers offered \$6870.00, while unidentified givers gave another \$315.00). "God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything, and even a surplus of good works." Acts 17:25

GIVING TO THE CATHEDRAL...

We prefer that everyone be an Identified Giver, paying by check or using envelopes. This permits your generosity to be deductible in accordance with applicable tax laws.

Another option in giving to your Cathedral is by automatic direct bank draft transfer. Contact your bank and set up your regular donation made from your checking account to the Cathedral as often as you instruct them to do it.

The Cathedral also accepts gifts of stock or distributions from other funds. Call the Parish Office (225-387-5928) to arrange this.