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Register online at sjasc.edu

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SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA UNIVERSITY CHORUS, CONCERT CHOIR AND WOMEN'S CHORALE WITH THE NORTHSHORE CHORAL SOCIETY - SUN., APRIL 30, 2:30 P.M.

Abbey Church Free and open to the public

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON SUN., MAY 28, NOON

OBLATES DAY OF RECOLLECTION - SAT., JULY 15

Visit www.saintjosephabbey.com/oblates for more information.

DEO GRATIAS 2017 - SAT., OCTOBER 28

For up-to-date information about these and other events at SAINT JOSEPH ABBEY AND SEMINARY COLLEGE please visit our website at:

saintjosephabbey.com

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JINARY COLLEGE

ABBE

SAINT JOSEPH

Opportunities

Giving

ABBEY IS A SPECIAL PLACE FOR THE JEANSONNE FAMILY

In 2015, Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College initiated the S.H.I.P. program. Named after the four pillars of priestly formation used in teaching our seminarians to lead a life in God's service: Spiritual, Human, Intellectual and Pastoral, it was the Abbey's first-ever national corporate invitation.

Before the program went on hiatus following the flooding last March, the Abbey was fortunate to partner with Causeway Shuttle, which provides vanpool services for Northshore residents who commute across the lake every day. For owner Richard Jeansonne, Sr., the Abbey has been a part of his and his family's lives for nearly four decades.

Around 1980 his wife Lynda was recruited to be a nurse at Camp Abbey. For the next 15 years, the couple, along with their five sons, was part of the camping team as well.

"During that time, we were privileged to meet so many of the priests, monks, and seminarians. These were special times in our lives, and the wonderful memories are still treasured and talked about by our entire family," said Mr. Jeansonne.

Although the status of the Abbey and its ministries immediately following the flood were uncertain, what Jeansonne did know for sure was that he could help.

"The flooded cars at the Abbey were totally destroyed. The cost of removing these damaged vehicles posed a significant expense to the Abbey and the seminarians. Causeway Shuttle was able to provide the equipment and the manpower to remove the damaged vehicles and properly dispose of them at no cost to the Abbey," said Mr. Jeansonne.

Nearly a year later, the numerous flooded vehicles that dotted the Abbey grounds are now a distant memory. Thanks to the commitment of

friends of the Abbey like Richard and Lynda Jeansonne, the future of Saint Joseph Abbey is looking brighter with each passing day.



Richard and Lynda Jeansonne

ABBEY VOICE

VOLUME 38 • SPRING 2017



This past summer one of our Oblates visited the Abbey of Monte Cassino founded by Saint Benedict in 529 A.D. She, like many visitors to the mountaintop Abbey, was amazed at how it was rebuilt to its exact former splendor following its total destruction during the Second World War. In fact, the ancient Abbey is no stranger to destruction and rebuilding. In 581, about 40 years after the death of Saint Benedict, the Abbey was destroyed by the Lombards. In 884, it was again sacked and then burned by the Saracens. In 1349, it was destroyed by an earthquake. In 1799, it was sacked by Napoleon's troops. Finally, in WWII, it was bombed on February 15, 1944. It is no wonder that at some point in its

Abbot Justin Brown, O.S.B.

ABBOT'S LETTER

colorful history the monks adopted the motto — "Succisa Virescit" — which translates as "having been cut down, it flourishes." The Abbey's history reminds us that after destruction rebirth is possible.

The witness of the history of Monte Cassino and its motto have been very much on my mind since March 11, 2016, when Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College was devastated by a flood. For we certainly have felt cut down by the flood, but at the same time we have experienced through the providential hand of God re-birth and new life. The prayers and generosity of you our alumni, Oblates, friends and benefactors of God's loving presence among us, make this rebuilding possible. We are most grateful to all of you for the spiritual and financial assistance you have given us.

With 150 seminarians, several young men interested in monastic life, and major reconstruction projects that have already begun at the monastery and Seminary College, the motto of Saint Benedict's monastery is today ours as well. In fact, everywhere there are signs of re-birth: Saint Joseph Woodworks and Abbey Art Works have been operating for months, the Pennies for Bread program reopened last October, and the Abbey Gift Shop reopened after Thanksgiving. Of course, our greatest moment of re-birth has been the reopening of the Abbey Church in June. Plans are also underway for the renovation of the Christian Life Retreat Center scheduled to reopen later this year.

Please continue to pray for us and also the monks and nuns of Norcia, the birthplace of Saint Benedict and Saint Scholastica, as they rebuild following a series of devastating earthquakes in the Fall of 2016. We all find hope in the words Saint Benedict's monks adopted long ago—"Succisa Virescit" — "having been cut down, it flourishes."

+ Justin Brown O.S.B

RECTOR'S LETTER



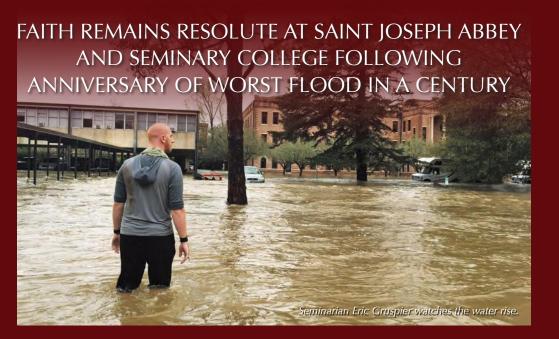
President-Rector Gregory Boquet, O.S.B.

The 2016-17 school year began once more with another record enrollment of 150 seminarians this past August. The floodwaters of March 11, 2016, could not hold back the enthusiasm of so many being called to discern God's will for their lives. Indeed this flood can be seen as transformative of the entire campus in that it's creating a path toward the future that points us in a direction beyond the confinement of time and space. The buildings are being restored and modular housing and classroom buildings have been assembled. Our progress points to a desire to say we are here to stay and continue the work of

God in preparing young men for leadership as future priests. The spirit of Saint Ben's is not in the buildings, but in the young men that occupy these structures.

This flood of 2016 only made us stronger with a resolve that God's will, will be accomplished. We continue to recover and are still looking for support to meet the challenges that lay ahead. The spirit of the seminarians is very high and the support and generosity of so many have played a great part in helping to ensure that this valued ministry will continue.





The day had begun like many days in southern Louisiana. Heavy rain before dawn on Friday March 11th had dissipated by morning prayer for the monks and seminarians at Saint Joseph Abbey and Seminary College. Although the rain had stopped, the Bogue Falaya River continued to rise.

By 11 a.m., Fr. Jude Israel, O.S.B., dean of students at the time, had begun asking students to begin moving cars from the flooding back parking lot. Within hours, the entire campus would be under several feet of water.

Seminarians and monks on ground floors began to scramble to higher ground.



Thankfully, nobody was hurt, but 31 buildings took on water, including the basement of the Abbey Church, damaging electrical and air conditioning systems crucial for maintaining the integrity of the murals by artist Dom Gregory de Wit. Cleanup started immediately the day after the flood, with two 75-person crews working around the clock to limit additional damage from mold. The total cost of the three phases of recovery—cleanup, repair and reconstruction—is estimated to exceed \$35

President-Rector of the Seminary College, Fr. Gregory Boquet, O.S.B., says the students and the monastic community have come together stronger than ever as a community

"Years from now, these young men probably won't remember the football game they won, a bad grade they received on a paper, or the sleep they lost studying for finals. They'll remember how this flood brought them closer to their fellow brothers and gave them the opportunity to learn how to become not just a better priest, but a better

man," Fr. Boguet said.

Seminarians left campus a few days after the flood and returned after Easter. They doubled up in dorm rooms and used makeshift classrooms on the second stories of various buildings so they could complete the semester. Thanks to the hard work of faculty and staff, the seminarians completed classes and exams on time. While some classrooms and dorm rooms have yet to come back online, modular units were brought onto campus over the summer to provide necessary space. A new outdoor basketball court has been installed and the gym has been brought back to life.

MARQUIS

NOVITIATE

SIMON ENTERS

When he was just six years old,

Marguis Simon knew that there

religious life. He loved going to

was something very special about

mass with his grandmother and was

his faith. His admiration and respect

always eager to learn more about

sparked his interest in discerning a

religious vocation. Initially setting

Simon eventually found his home at

Early on Sunday morning, last July

10th, in a private ceremony held

in the Monastery Chapter Room,

Novice Marquis entered the next

stage in his life to becoming a monk

Novice Marquis was accepted

into the novitiate, a year which will

be marked by a separation from

the world and an acclimation to

one's new life in the monastery.

monastic history and spirituality

and contributes to the life of the

community in prayer and work.

After a year in the novitiate, the

the end of which I will be found to

SHOP REOPENS

The Abbey Gift Shop has

resumed normal operating

hours in its original location.

Call 985 867-2227 or visit www.

saintjosephabbey.com/gift-shop

have truly sought God and His will,"

The novice takes classes in

profession of vows.

Novice Marquis said.

ABBEY GIFT

for more information.

for the priests he knew is what

out to become a priest himself,

Saint Joseph Abbey.

at the Abbey.

There are other signs of progress as well. The Abbey Church re-opened to a full house in June. Saint Joseph Woodworks was operational just three weeks after the flood. The Gift Shop and Pennies for Bread have reopened. Renovations on the Christian Life Retreat Center are scheduled to be completed in late 2017. Also, administrators are pleased to announce construction on a new Rouquette Library building should be complete in the first half of 2018.

To date, SJASC has gratefully received a total of \$5.4 million for recovery efforts from private donations. Much, much more will be needed however to cover all costs. Gifts to support recovery efforts can be made by mail or online. For more information, please visit helptheabbey.com.

"The outpouring of support has been a blessing," said Abbot Justin Brown, O.S.B.

"Even as others are still dealing with their own issues from the devastating effects of this flood as well as the flooding last summer across the state, many people still have asked how they can help. It's truly a testament to how strong the bond is between the Abbey and the community," added



ENROLLMENT DOUBLES AT SEMINARY COLLEGE



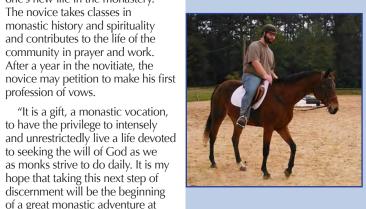
Saint Joseph Seminary College welcomed a record 150 seminarians for the Fall 2016 semester, double the enrollment from just six years ago, when 75 seminarians enrolled.

The seminarians this year represent 22 dioceses from seven states across the Gulf South region, including two dioceses new to the Seminary College this year: Brownsville, Texas, and Nashville, Tenn.

In the midst of unprecedented growth plus the March flood, Fr. Gregory Boquet, O.S.B., President-Rector of the Seminary College, was determined to ensure the campus would be ready for the seminarians' return last fall. While some classroom and dorm rooms have yet to come back online, modular units were brought onto campus over the summer through the kindness of

"The commitment I have to making sure that these young men continue their education uninterrupted is only matched by their willingness to rise to the challenges we have encountered. I have faith that they will eventually, if not already, view these challenges as an integral part of their formation, preparing them to be a spiritual leader in their parish," said Fr. Boquet.

NOVEL HORSEMANSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES DUE TO GENEROSITY OF LOCAL **COUPLE**

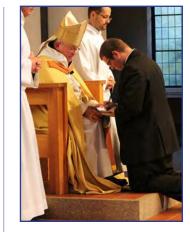


Seminarian Adam Fenstermaker during one of the classes at the Highlands Riding Center in Fall 2015.

A generous gift to the Horsemanship Program at Saint Joseph Seminary College, which provides opportunities for seminarians to learn responsibility, build confidence and improve team building, will help ensure the program continues for years to come.

Now known as the Fr. Gregory Boquet Horsemanship Program, the class, which began in the Fall of 2014, will carry on thanks to a donation from Gail and Jimmie Martin. In the program, horses are used as a medium by which seminarians consider their roles as future priests. Complemented by their studies and formation, the course serves to reinforce and strengthen relationship-building skills.

"As a parish priest a man is responsible for pastoring many diverse personalities and will need gifts of caring, humility and confidence. If he was fortunate enough to be a seminarian at Saint Joseph Seminary College and be part of Fr. Gregory's Horsemanship Program, the seminarian has a head start to an effective Christ-like priesthood. We are honored to be a small part of this rewarding program," said Ms. Martin.



ABBEY AND SEMINARY NEWS

BROTHER JEROME AUBERT PROFESSES FIRST VOWS

On Sept. 29, during Vespers at the Abbey Church, Chad Aubert professed temporary vows, committing himself to three years as a Benedictine monk at Saint Joseph Abbey. In the presence of Abbot Justin Brown O.S.B.,

the monks of Saint Joseph Abbey and the seminarians, he publicly committed himself to obedience, stability and fidelity to monastic life. He was given the name Jerome and will now be known as Brother Jerome Aubert.

As a novice, Br. Jerome, a native of New Orleans, has spent the last 12 months acclimating to his new life in the monastery, a year marked by a separation from the world. Despite the ensuing chaos after the Abbey was flooded with two feet of water last March, Br. Jerome has reaped the benefits of the peacefulness of the Abbey. He believes his first year as a novice provided a solid foundation for being a contemplative monk.

"This year of simply living the life of a monk, without many significant jobs and social experiences outside of the monastic community, has been teaching me to know myself individually as a beloved son of God without needing emotional experiences and the importance of lifestyle to keep me steadfast in my certainty of God's love. I am coming to see that the most important thing I can do as a monk is to be silent and trust in God's love, not to try to affirm my own goodness to myself or anyone else through some kind of activity," said Br. Jerome.

Loneliness, the routines of daily life, and the overuse of technology can be distractions for those considering a monastic life. An adjustment to this new, and what some may consider, unconventional lifestyle, takes time, not just for the young men, but also for their families as well.

According to Br. Jerome's mother, Vickie Brown, he really came into his own as a student at Lovola University where he was involved with ministry activities, including what she thinks impacted him the most, Awakening Retreats and a Pro-Life walk.

Past activities notwithstanding, Brown, like any concerned parent would, had reservations about his decision to become a monk.

"I was not thrilled to hear the news in the beginning. I said, 'Why not teach?' 'Why rush?' 'You are too young to be making this decision for life.'" said Brown.

But after visiting the Abbey and meeting several of the monks, she got all her guestions answered and became at ease with her son's decision.

"I think it was Abbot Justin that won me over with his warm smile! The church and grounds are so beautiful and peaceful. It is a wonderful place with wonderful people, and I am blessed that my son has been accepted in this community," Brown added.

To learn more about a monastic vocation at Saint Joseph Abbey, visit www.saintjosephabbey.com/vocations-home.



UPDATE ON CHRISTIAN LIFE RETREAT **CENTER**

Prior to the March 11th flood, the Christian Life Center (CLC), which has hosted retreats for men, women and married couples for more than 50 years, was preparing for its first major renovation of the bedroom wings.

Although the flood delayed the intended renovations, now the whole facility, which serves as a venue of Benedictine hospitality and spirituality for over 2,000 guests each year, is in need of a complete renovation.

"The serenity and tranquility of the monastic lifestyle at Saint Joseph Abbey serve as the perfect backdrop to alleviate the everpresent discord in our daily lives. Retreats at the Abbey help people of all faiths not only create a stronger bond within themselves. but also with God," said Deacon Mark Coudrain, Director of the CLC

As the CLC helps support the health and wellness of the monastic community at Saint Joseph Abbey, its reopening in late 2017 is a top priority for the monks. For information on making a contribution to the rebuilding of the CLC, contact Coudrain at clc@ sjasc.edu or 985-892-3473.



PENNIES FOR BREAD **REOPENS**

This past October, Pennies for Bread and the Abbey PBA), which provides nearly 1,000 loaves of bread a week to the needy on both sides of the lake, officially reopened for the first time since the flood.

"Much like the monastic community's determination to follow our mission of service that led to the establishment of PBA over 25 years ago, so was our resolve to reopen the bakery so that we can once

again distribute bread to more than 20 charitable organizations throughout the metro area," said Abbot Justin Brown, O.S.B.

The bakery, which is housed in what used to be a small milking parlor, has acquired new equipment and supplies, none of which could have been replaced without the prayers and generosity of the

"I want to also thank Fr. Killian Tolg for his unwavering dedication to getting PBA off the ground again. I know he, as well as the many volunteers who help slice and bag the bread each week, is excited to have PBA back online, a welcome sign of progress at the Abbey," added Abbot Justin.



GENEROSITY OF LOCAL PARISHES **HELPS ABBEY YOUTH FEST LEADERS LOOK TOWARDS FUTURE**

For the first time in its 16-year history, last spring's Abbey Youth Fest (AYF), scheduled a day after the March 11th flood, was canceled. Even as crews were still assessing the damage, many of the over 5,000 registered festival attendees asked how they could lend a hand.

One such group, St. Bernadette Church in Houma, La., was the first to donate their registration funds back to the festival.

"We felt it was important because it was the right thing to do. You don't kick a man when he is down. You help him back up. Our teens did not hesitate when asked if they would like to donate or receive a refund. Every one of them said, 'Please donate my portion. It is the least we can do.' Then they immediately asked, 'They will have Abbey Fest next year right?" said Becky Landry, Youth Minister for St. Bernadette.

Indeed, Christine Kelly Baglow, the Abbey's Event Coordinator for AYF, is diligently preparing for this year's festival, scheduled for Saturday, March 25, 2017.

"The faithfulness, kindness, generosity, and passion of the youth never cease to amaze me. My warmest regards and thanks go out to each and every one of them," said Baglow.

The annual AYF provides young people ages 13 and up an opportunity to experience a day of prayer and faith formation with an exposure to the Benedictine tradition. Its focus is evangelization and vocational discernment by means of the sacraments, liturgy, prayer, worship, music and catechesis. Visit www.abbeyyouthfest.com for more information.

NECROLOGY

Please Help Us Pray For Family and Friends Who Have Passed on into Eternal Life

Dr. George C. Battalora, Jr. DEACON JAY BERGERON DAVID A. BOE, SR. GERALD P. BOUDION, SR. JULIET MAY CARRIGEE ELMORE CHAUVIN '61 JOSEPH P. CONWAY, JR. '71 WAYNE COUSINS '65 IEAN M. DIAZ DOROTHY MIREMONT DUPUY MERLE ALICE RAYNER FIELDS HUDSON ANTHONY FOLSE WILLIAM J. GEARHEARD, SR.

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CHENEY C. JOSEPH, JR. BARBARA CARUSO KUPER MSGR. GERALD M. LEFEBVRE '50 CHARLES LIBBEY '65

J. Paul Nader, III

Donald G. Pechon

REV. MSGR. FRANK JOSEPH LIPPS, JR.

LELA L. WESCHE VERNON M. MATHEWS

Correction: The Spring 2016 issue inadvertently listed the Rev. Wayne Payssee as deceased. We apologize for

REV. JOSEPH TU TRAN '94

CHARLES JOHN PIQUE, SR.

CHRISTOPHER RATLEY

DAVID A. RATLIFF

JOYCE READINGER

CHARLENE SHELTON

BEVERLY SINOR

BETTY VAVASSEUR

Joan Ruiz

AL SEEGER

ABBOT PATRICK REGAN, O.S.B.

Abbot Patrick Regan, O.S.B., retired abbot of Saint Joseph Abbey, died peacefully at the abbey on February 8, 2017. He was 79 years old. In 1958 he was received into the novitiate of Saint Joseph Abbey, and he made profession as a Benedictine monk in 1959, when he was given the name Patrick. He was elected the fourth abbot of Saint Joseph Abbey in 1982. The accomplishment for which he is most well known locally is the renovation of the Abbey Church, which began in 1996 and culminated in the Church's dedication in 1998. Visit www.saintjosephabbey.com to read his full