

VISITATION of our Lady

March
2009

MARRERO, LOUISIANA



Ten Commandments For A Good Marriage

Most of you know I was married for 30 years before my wife, Kacky, died and I became a priest. I'd like to share with you this month ten of the reasons why our last years together were fabulous. I hope these "ten commandments" will make your marriages fabulous as well.

- **Turn Annoyances Into "Endearing Qualities."**

Kacky and I wrote down everything about the other that we found annoying. And, from that point on, we not only accepted them, we laughed about them. Don't sweat the small stuff, and it's mostly all small stuff.

- **Get a "Broccoli Barometer."**

A "Broccoli Barometer" is a *perspective* device. No one *hates* broccoli. Some *dislike* it. If dislike of broccoli is less

than "1" on a 0-100 scale and the Holocaust is a 92, where does our current problem fall? If the problem is between 1-10, we laugh about it; 10-20: we deal with it today only, then drop it; 20-30: we deal with it up to a week, then drop it. We deal with it on an ongoing basis only if it's above 30. Despite my wife's death, the only thing that ranked above a 30 were the problems Kacky and I had in the middle of our marriage.

- **Understand and Live "Life's Priority List".**

1) God 2) Family 3) Work 4) Church & Charity.

- **Learn to Fight Fairly.**

Differences can help us grow, and God expects us to grow throughout our lives. But arguments will help us grow only if we are willing to fight fairly. We fight fairly when we NEVER attack our spouse PERSONALLY and when we are always willing to COMPROMISE, except on matters of true principle.

- **Sacrifice for Each Other.**

On everything but matters of principle (they always deal with God). Look for ways to sacrifice what you want for what your *spouse* wants. To work, this must be a two-way street.

- **Forgive All.**

Forgiveness is a *willed* act. Forgiveness is not *emotions*. Forgiveness is praying that someone who has harmed

you gets whatever he or she needs to get to heaven; and it's treating them with common courtesy, despite negative feelings.

- **Pray Together.**

- **Go to Mass Together.**

- **Celebrate Often.**

Celebrate on the following days. First date. Engagement. Marriage. Your Baptisms. Your Children's Baptisms. Christmas. Easter. Your Saints' Feast Days. ADD AT LEAST TWO MORE.

- **Commit to Growth.**

Go to counseling, spiritual direction and whatever else can help you become a better person. EVERYONE needs counseling and spiritual direction. We shouldn't stop learning at eighteen, twenty-one or any age. We need to know HOW to know ourselves and become all we can be. Anyone who says "I am who I am!" is a coward. God requires we become better all of our lives. And becoming better requires growth. And growth requires help.

May God bless your marriage abundantly.

Father Mike

Inside

Confession: Crossing the Border of Fear 2

Worker Bees Buzz over Fish Fry 3

A Disciple's Last Supper 4

VOL Cajun Fest 6

Melissa Blanchard 7



Confession: Crossing the Border of Fear

Are you familiar with the words “sacramento de la reconciliación?” Most of our parishioners probably would say those words are *foreign* to them, but unfortunately the English translation, “sacrament of reconciliation” is foreign to them as well. We tend to shy away from things that are foreign to us, sometimes because of fear, ignorance, or indifference.

Christ Himself gave us the gift of Reconciliation. Yet few Catholics accept it. His words to the apostles were clear in John 20:23. “If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.” Why would we NOT want to accept this gift? There are several reasons. Let's see if any of them are familiar to you.



“No recuerdo cómo a hace eso.” Doesn't ring a bell? How about “I don't remember how to do that.” Rest assured you won't be denied entrance in the confessional if you don't remember how to go. The priest will walk you through it. Your part is to make an examination of your conscience and have sincere contrition for your sins.

“¿Por qué necesito confesar mis pecados?” Can't figure it out? Certainly you've heard someone ask, “why do I have to confess my sins?” Sin weakens the link in our community chain. It's not just between you and God. It effects our community. Weak link = weaker community.

“Me desconciertan.” The words may look strange, but you've probably said “I'm embarrassed” many times. Certainly all of us have been embarrassed at one point in our lives. Remember that priests are bound to the Seal of Confession. Not only can they not reveal your sins, but they cannot reveal the fact that you even went to Confession.

How about “el sacerdote me juzgará.” That one sound foreign, too? Many Catholics admit that they are afraid that “the priest will judge me.” Priests are sinners, too. They are in no position to judge. Most priests hear so many confessions that they could never remember

individual sins, so we have nothing to worry about if we happen to run into them out in public.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a “regalo hermoso,” a beautiful gift, from Christ Himself. It allows us to be reconciled with those against whom we have sinned. It clears our consciences and makes us feel better both mentally and physically. And it strengthens our souls and acts as a deterrent against future sins.

Visitation of Our Lady offers Confessions 30 minutes before each weekend Mass and by appointment. If you haven't been to Confession in a long time, why not go this weekend? Sorry, you can't use one of the above excuses!

It's time that Confession isn't an “idea extranjera” (foreign idea) to you any longer. No matter how you say it, Christ died for your sins. His love for you is perfect in all languages.

Top 10 Reasons to go to confession

1. Confession is “Vitamin C” for your soul
2. Confession relieves depression
3. Confession rebuilds the bridge to God's grace
4. Forgiveness is contagious
5. Confession helps gain indulgences for those who have died and will wash away temporal punishment due for their sins
6. As St. John Vianney said, “When you go to confession, you ‘un-nail’ our Lord.”
7. Oxy Clean doesn't work on your soul
8. You can be “absolute”ly sure your sins are forgiven
9. What happens in the confessional stays in the confessional
10. God 4gives and 4gets



Worker Bees Buzz Over Fish Fry

Worker bees are vital to the survival of a bee colony. Without them many crucial tasks would go undone, causing the end to the colony. One of the main duties of a worker bee is to feed its community. The Men's Club at Visitation of Our Lady has imitated worker bees by serving up some mouth-watering seafood at the weekly Fish Fry.

This year the Altar Society has decided to "leave the hive" of the weekly Lenten Fish Fry, and the Men's Club gladly stepped up to keep the hive alive. "We didn't want to see it go, and we wanted to raise some money for the new kitchen we are furnishing in Padre Hall II," said Neil Duplessis, Fish Fry Coordinator. Benefits of the weekly Fish Fry are twofold. They not only help to finance supplies for the new kitchen, but they also help to build community.

Walk in to the Cafetorium on any given Friday in Lent, and you'll witness 60+ worker bees buzzing around without missing a beat. Customers place their orders with Men's Club wives who collect money. Orders are filled by both the Men's Club wives and their teens. Other teens have pitched in to help as well.

Just as worker bees gather pollen to carry back to the hive, members of the Men's Club gather and organize fish, shrimp, and oysters; batter them; and carry them to the fryers outside of the cafetorium. There, other worker bees carefully monitor the oil temperature and fry the tasty seafood to a golden brown.

Other worker bees (members of the CYO and adult volunteers) sell drinks and desserts donated by the generous members of our "colony," our parents and parishioners.

One of the great things about the Fish Fry (other than satisfying your pallet)



Men's Club wives Dawn Este, Brenda Galle, and Rebecca Brown collect money and take food orders at the fish fry.



Men's Club members Tony Sepulvado and Dennis Boudreaux fill orders



Mike Cortez works with Gina Duplessis, the "Etouffé Queen," at the Fish Fry



CYO Parent volunteers Lisa and Gary Chartier sell desserts and drinks

is to watch the 60+ volunteers work together to serve the community. Everyone seems to be in constant motion, smiling and laughing as they work. Yet these worker bees don't think of this task as work. Rather, it's an opportunity to greet the many other members of our "hive," including those they have never met.

In addition to the past menu of fried fish, fried oysters, baked fish and baked potatoes, the Men's Club has added some new menu items. Now our VOL community can enjoy delicious fried shrimp and fried fish covered with home made crawfish etouffé, made by Gina Duplessis, wife of Neil Duplessis.

A few weeks ago the Men's Club prepared a new menu item. "It was supposed to be for just one week, but it was such a hit that we decided to keep it on the menu," Neil says. The succulent "Seafood Stuffed Baked Potato" is a big favorite among customers. A piping hot, fresh baked potato is split open and covered with well-seasoned crawfish etouffé, then smothered with crispy fried shrimp. It's like nothing you've ever tasted!

Business is good for these worker bees. Neil estimates that they sell an average of 550 dinners and 85 po-boys weekly! Not only are their customers enjoying a delicious dinner, but they are also helping to take the "sting" out of the cost of supplies for the kitchen in Padre Hall II.

VOL is truly blessed to have such a great "hive" and terrific worker bees. The Men's Club is open to men 18 years and older. To learn more about the Men's Club, or to join, call Sal Dimarco at 340-8255.

So, we just have one question: to bee or not to bee?

A Disciple's

Earlier today the Teacher sent us to have the upper room prepared for our Passover meal this evening. The room seems large enough for us to be able to recline comfortably and have freedom to move about. Although we've shared many meals together, this one will be different. Even the stone walls seem to possess a knowledge that has been kept from us. Perhaps this is why He chose it.

As my brothers enter and get settled, I wander over to the window. It is night now, and the sun has been replaced by a bright silvery moon and millions of stars. I look about the homes below us, wondering how others are celebrating this Passover Feast, but all is still and quiet.

The tables prepared for us were arranged in a "u" shape and covered with fine linen cloths. Great care was taken to be sure the cloth was unblemished and smoothed against the wood table. As we began to recline for our meal, it was evident that the table was not new; rather, it had been the cornerstone of many a family meal. It had a few tiny cracks through which a small amount of light escaped, and it creaked slightly when leaned on.

The walls in the room were arched so that the Teacher's voice would resonate throughout the room. This meant that all of us would be able to hear Jesus clearly, no matter our seating arrangement. I felt that He would speak to us tonight in words that would shake our very souls.

Our meal consisted of maror, charoses, beitzah, karpas, and zaroah; that is, bitter herbs, apples with nuts, roasted eggs, vegetables, and

roasted lamb. During our meal we spoke about how the dry season affected the wine and how the stray dogs needed more water to drink. We spoke about the little girl who loved to sing, and the little boy who caught insects and scared her with them. We spoke about everything, about nothing. The Teacher remained somber, taking in the conversation with his eyes.

Still conversing with each other, my brothers began finishing their meals. I became more of an observer, waiting for Jesus to share with us His special message. Perhaps the absence of hunger relaxed my brothers. Their conversations grew a bit louder, and for a moment they seemed to forget that the Teacher was at the head of the table.

He got up quietly and removed His outer garment. He walked over to a corner of the room undetected by all, except me. I saw him carry a basin filled with water and a towel back toward the table. I began to rise so as to help him with a task about which I knew not, but felt that this job was His alone. He could not accept any help.

Silently He brought the basin before me and tied the towel around His waist. I was confused when He bent down and placed the basin of water at my feet. He knelt at my feet, and slowly lifted His face so that His eyes matched mine. He spoke not a word. Nor did I. Carefully and methodically he loosened my sandal strap and released the tight grip of the leather around my foot. He gently lifted my foot and placed it in the basin of cool, clean water. Slowly he poured cups of water over my feet, washing away the sand and my

Last Supper

uncertainties. Somehow I knew I would one day understand.

After drying my feet well with His towel, He moved on to my brothers. Soon they realized the Teacher was no longer sitting, but serving each one of them. He cleaned the feet of everyone. “What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later,” He said. Everyone knew then that this meal was different. The tone changed. My brothers began to focus sharply on Jesus, as though each of them were alone in the room with Him.

“I have given you a model to follow,” Jesus said, “so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” My brothers did not understand, yet the spoke not a word. Each wanted to soak in every sound that came from the Teacher's mouth, as though their very lives depended on it.

He returned to the head of the table but did not sit. Jesus took the unleavened bread from the table, blessed it, and broke it, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” He passed around the bread, and everyone broke a piece off and ate it as He instructed.

Jesus did likewise with the cup, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” We all drank of His cup, anticipating His next words. He shared great wisdom and gave us a new commandment, “Love one another as I love you.”

Over the next several hours the Teacher was arrested, denied by His disciples, beaten, spat upon, kicked, mocked, and condemned to die. Iron nails tore through his flesh as he was nailed to a cross, blood spattering with each blow of the mallet. His wailing and blood-curling screams were too intense for some to bear, so they chose to leave and return to the comfort of their quiet homes.

Jesus hung from the Cross for hours, His arms nailed outstretched, causing Him great difficulty in breathing. His body ached from the beatings and burned from the many blows which tore open His flesh. The unceasing pain would have been far too much for me or any of my brothers to bear.

Hours passed. I could not look up at my Lord. My eyes remained gazed at the foot of His cross, covered with long drops of blood which had begun to dry. Then, it is finished. His soul leaves and returns to His Father.

Each year we celebrate the Passion of Christ on Good Friday. It is a solemn day of fasting when we remember Christ's suffering. Because it is a day of FASTING, we should eat the equivalent of one meal. And because it is a SOLEMN day, we should spend it in remembrance of Christ rather than seafood boils and large social gatherings. It is not appropriate for us to partake in frivolity on the anniversary of the death of a loved one. So why do we do it to Jesus?

On Good Friday, let us remember the great sacrifice Christ gave to us – His very life.



This year's Cajun Fest will be jam-packed with loads of stuff to do for every age group! As you can imagine, there are lots of things that need to be done, so every available hand is needed. Can you help with setting up booths on the Fairgrounds? Donate prizes for booths or for the silent auction? Have a business you'd like to advertise? Cook a meal for volunteers? Please call one of the Cajun Fest Chairs listed below today!



To volunteer, donate items, or for more information on the Cajun Fest, contact:

Jeff or Rebecca
Brown

347-4475 or 427-1902

Mark or Jackie Moore
915-0147 or 628-7927

Tommy or Stacy
D'Aquin

2009



ROCKIN DOPSIE & THE ZYDECO TWISTERS
FRI 8:00



GREAT FOOD • FUN & GAMES

TOPCATS
SAT 3:30



LIVE MUSIC • FREE ADMISSION

THE BLUE MEANIES
SAT 7:00



SILENT AUCTION • GIVEAWAYS

NO IDEA
SUN 2:30



CORNER OF BARATARIA & AMES, MARRERO

FIVE FINGER DISCOUNT
SUN 6:00





Melissa Blanchard

The Book of James tells us that “Faith without works is dead.” One parishioner who is a perfect illustration of this passage is Melissa Blanchard. Even though you may have never met her, chances are you've seen her work.

Melissa is the proud wife and mother of 3 children, ages 7-16. She grew up in Westwego and attended Catholic School, but was never able to really give back to her parish. “I always said that if I was ever given the chance to help out at church, that I would,” Melissa shares.

From her mouth to God's ears. He was listening. And He took her seriously. He made a path that would lead her straight to VOL, and for that we are very blessed. He provided a way to allow Melissa to be a stay at home mom and He gave her many, many talents. Most of all, though, God put the will and



desire to help others in her heart. Melissa has been following her heart ever since.

“I've always liked to help out,” Melissa says. When her children were younger, she volunteered her time at school with fundraisers, classroom parties, and other special events. Gradually she began feeling the desire to do more for the church. So one of the first ministries she joined was the Hospitality Ministry.

She has proven to be an invaluable asset to the Ministry. In addition to running errands, setting up for socials and serving food, she has also managed to obtain donations for special events to help offset costs.

During the last stewardship campaign, Melissa decided to join the St. Vincent dePaul Society and

the Dust Angels, two service-oriented ministries.

The St. Vincent dePaul Society is committed to helping the needy of the parish by maintaining the food bank and helping with other needs. “I enjoy listening to the stories of the other members,” she says, “and I love meeting new people.”

Dust Angels, a brand-new ministry, are a group of men and women who work at their leisure to keep our church clean and tidy. “Sometimes when we are not busy at St. Vincent, I'll grab a vacuum and clean the church,” Melissa admits.

Her faith plays an important part of her life, too. In addition to attending weekly Mass, Melissa devotes time to Jesus during the monthly 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration, and also belongs to a Rosary Group which meets weekly to pray the Rosary.

When she is not serving VOL, Melissa helps her mother with her sno-ball stand. She also likes to exercise, specifically weight training.

Why does a wife and mother of 3 devote so much time to helping others? Simple. Melissa knows that faith, without works, is dead. Thank you, Melissa, for all you do for our parish and our community!

“I always said that if I was ever given the chance to help out at church, that I would.”

Healing Way of the Cross

Wednesday, April 8 – 7 pm
Confessions 7pm – 9 pm

Holy Thursday

Thursday, April 9

Morning Prayer Service - 8:30 a.m.
(Chaplet of Divine Mercy follows)
Mass—7 pm

Good Friday

Friday, April 10th

Morning Prayer Service — 8:30 a.m.
(Divine Mercy Novena follows)
Living Way of the Cross – 2 pm
Solemn Service – 3 pm
Confessions 6:00 – 6:45 pm
Stations of the Cross — 7 pm

Holy Saturday

Saturday, April 11

Morning Prayer Service — 8:30 a.m.
(Divine Mercy Novena follows)
Candlelight Easter Vigil – 8pm

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 12

Masses – 8 & 10 am, 12 & 7 pm
(Divine Mercy Novena follows 8 a.m. Mass)



VISITATION of our Lady

3500 Ames Blvd.
Marrero, LA 70072
504-347-2203
www.vol.org

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Marrero, LA
Permit No. 27