



The Ragin' Cajun Catholic

Serving the Community at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Since 1923

2016 - 2017

ANNUAL REPORT

& FALL NEWSLETTER



INSIDE: HIS EMINENCE, TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN, VISITS WITH THE RAGIN' CAJUN CATHOLICS

Shepherding the “iGeneration”



During my time as Pastor & Chaplain at Our Lady of Wisdom, I've seen many changes on campus and in the culture. More recently, I came to the realization that I've also witnessed a generational transition. In 2010 when I arrived on the UL Lafayette campus, the students were all considered millennials, but now a vast majority of the students belong to what one author calls “iGen.” They are the generation born after 1995 who never knew a world without the internet or smartphones.

In her recent book, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, psychologist Judith Twenge makes several arguments about the impact of technology connectedness on young people. She concludes that “iGen-ers” desire safety - as we have seen expressed in the recent push for “safe spaces” and “trigger warnings” on certain college campuses. They are more tolerant than previous generations, often embracing moral relativism. Most significantly, they are highly influenced by technology, smart-phones, and social media. This has radically changed the way they relate to each other and has led to an increase in depression and other psychological ills.

I have a unique opportunity, being among my flock of students on a daily basis, to observe this new generation. While I've observed many of the traits Ms. Twenge mentions in students on campus, I remain hopeful. As you read about these students in our current newsletter, I believe you will also be inspired by their stories. One group of students founded a missions company, another started a young alumni giving initiative for our *Wisdom for Every Generation* Capital Campaign, still others are upholding the sacredness and dignity of all human life through their work with Catholic Relief Services. The students I've encountered are more tolerant, and this leads them to be more caring and compassionate to others. They desire safety, and Wisdom's Catholic Student Center provides the welcoming environment they crave. They are highly influenced by technology, and use their knowledge to spread the Gospel to others in creative ways.

The work we do at Wisdom with this new generation certainly offers challenges, yet these students are making a positive impact on today's and future generations.

Thanks to the prayer and support of so many alumni, benefactors, and parishioners, we are able to bring the truth of the Gospel to many young people, and they never fail to delight in His truth and be transformed by it. This is a sign of great hope for me: that the Lord will continue to raise up leaders and saints in every generation.

In Christ,

Rv. Bryce Sibley

Fr. Bryce Sibley



“This is a sign of great hope for me: that the Lord will continue to raise up leaders and saints in every generation.”
Fr. Bryce Sibley

BRILEY HIGGINBOTHAM

“Serving with the Catholic Relief Services Student Ambassadors has given me a global mindset because CRS serves people on “the basis of need” alone. We often serve people who have different beliefs than we do. This has changed my interaction with others on campus in that I have come to the realization that love comes first and dialogue about differences comes later. This has allowed me to be bold about my beliefs when I see an opportunity to share the gospel.”



KIMBERLY SELLERS

“I find Wisdom to be friendly, social, academic, and prayerful. When you’re here you get your coffee, ping-pong, study time, and most importantly, Jesus, all within 30 seconds of each other. It is so much like a home that if I don’t come here I feel disconnected from my family. It doesn’t matter what your background is, here you will always be welcomed with a hot cup of coffee and growing friendships”



JOSEPH KOKENGE

“While our generation’s dependence on technology has a bad rap, today we are using it as a bridge to invite, announce, and pray for one another. I am currently developing an app for Wisdom that ties in the use of the older app while adding new modern communication. This will help people to stay up to date with events such as retreats, 501 Student Nights, and Wisdom Wednesdays. This new app is geared to be a “social media” for Wisdom. It is important to meet my peers where they are at and the way that I am trying to help with that is by using a typically secular method to pull people closer together.”





Forming Virtuous Men

Fr. René Pellessier, Parochial Vicar

“A man of prayer is capable of everything”
St. Vincent de Paul

When Bishop Deshotel assigned me to be the new parochial vicar at Our Lady of Wisdom, I was both humbled and a little scared because of one question: What would I have to offer such a vibrant Catholic community? The honest answer is nothing. I am a poor earthen vessel with less than three months of priesthood under my belt! Everything I have done well has been a pure grace from God, of which he has poured out an abundance upon me.

Since school has begun, I've devoted much of my efforts to encouraging the male students to grow as campus leaders. This fall, we have been blessed by an increase in men's small groups, bible studies, and fellowship events. The guys we have here are excited, and I share in their excitement. I think we can continue with this momentum throughout the year, especially if we have your prayers and support.

I truly believe that with your help and by the grace of God, Our Lady of Wisdom can be known as a place where college boys become virtuous men. Thank you, in advance for partnering with us in our mission, and please remember to pray for me.

Fr. René Pellessier



We are delighted to announce that, God willing, these four men pictured with Fr. Sibley and sponsored by Our Lady of Wisdom, will be ordained to the holy priesthood on June 23, 2018.

L-R Deacon Kyle White, Blake Dubroc, Fr. Sibley, Deacon Brent Smith, Deacon Andrew Schumacher

College Missions Company

Students Launch Mission Company to Share the Love of Christ



To be a missionary is to be the hands and feet of Christ in the midst of those who are physically and spiritually impoverished. Missionaries are challenged to share the Joy of the Gospel with those most in need, while being rooted in prayer, humility, and love of neighbor. Unfortunately, the expense of a mission experience is often a roadblock for many college students.

Moved by their own mission experiences and by the leadership formation received as Ragin' Cajun Catholics, Janson Delaney (UL 2017) and Hunter Mansour (UL 2019) saw the need to make mission trips more affordable and accessible to college students. The pair decided to take action, forming College Missions Company, a 501c3 Corporation.

College Missions Company is a 100% volunteer based effort that keeps expenses down by focusing on domestic mission locations and partnering with local religious communities like the Little Sisters of the Poor for housing and onsite support.

Like any startup, the road to success was not always easy. The first mission Janson planned failed, as only two students signed up. Despite that discouraging turn of events, he persisted, inviting Hunter into the leadership. In Summer 2016, College Missions Company launched their first mission to Gallup, NM, with 15 student missionaries! By the Summer of 2017, they expanded to four mission sites: 2 in Alaska (Kotlik and Alanukuk) and 2 in Gallup, NM, making it possible for approximately 75 students to experience missionary life!

College Missions Company currently has a team of 14 UL Lafayette & Wisdom alumni and current students in their leadership and are aiming to bring 75-100 students on mission in 2018. They plan to return to their Alaska and New Mexico mission sites, and are working on expanding to Chicago.



"Our Lady of Wisdom continually invested in our lives. It wasn't one man or one retreat, but the continual investment in us. So we adopted that same model with the company--to continually invest in the mission sites we go to, and bring them the love of Christ." - Janson Delaney

"What we have found is that mission is pivotal to the spiritual growth of the individual. When students retreat from their distracted lives, they encounter God and experience the full embrace of the Love of the Father."

- Hunter Mansour

Young Alumni Embrace Stewardship

One of our goals for student formation at Our Lady of Wisdom is to instill a love of stewardship and a passion for supporting projects and organizations that they hold dear, whether that be through giving of their time, talent, or treasure.

The Class Gift initiative is a unique opportunity for seniors to give back to the Ragin' Cajun Catholics in a way that impacts both the annual fund and the Newman Endowment. Graduates are invited to make a pledged gift that coordinates with their graduating year (for example, a Class of 2017 Graduate might make a total pledge of \$2,017, or a \$20.17 monthly gift over 4-5 years). Ninety percent of the pledged gift supports the Ragin' Cajun Catholics Annual Fund, while the remaining ten percent is allocated to the Newman Endowment, which provides a lasting impact for future Ragin' Cajun Catholics who will walk through our Student Center doors.

The classes of 2015 and 2016 responded with incredible generosity to the Class Gift Initiative, and the class of 2017 was no different! The senior class wowed us with 29 pledged gifts, totaling \$54,197.50! Thank you, Class of 2017!



Time



Serving at the Boilin' Bash and An Evening for Wisdom with Timothy Cardinal Dolan



Treasure



Over the last 3 years of the Class Gift Initiative, 71 Ragin' Cajun Catholics graduates have pledged over \$115,000 in gifts back to the student center. What an inspiration to us all!



Talent



Sharing the Gospel with students at the Greek Retreat

Are you interested in joining the
Ragin' Cajun Catholics
Class Gift Initiative?

Contact Emily Broussard in the Office of
Advancement to pledge your gift or to become
a "Class Captain" for your graduating year.

emily@ourladyofwisdom.org



His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan

Visits Our Lady of Wisdom & The Ragin' Cajun Catholics!



On Wednesday, September 20, 2017, His Eminence, Timothy Cardinal Dolan visited Our Lady of Wisdom and the Ragin' Cajun Catholics. Fr. Sibley shared how Cardinal Dolan has influenced his priesthood: "I've had a number of influences on my priesthood: my parents, my parish priest growing up - Fr. Floyd Calais, but the truth is the one person who has had the biggest influence on my priesthood is Cardinal Dolan. I am one of several hundred priests who were blessed to have him as our rector for our entire time at seminary. During the course of my five years at the North American College, his daily priestly example was the model I used to form the priest I wanted to become. From his engaging rector's conferences, his roaming the halls to talk to the guys and check out the 4th floor bulletin board, to watching him pace the halls while praying his rosary - Cardinal Dolan gave me and so many other priests the example of what it means to be a priest and to live among those you serve."

This pastoral influence was the impetus for Cardinal Dolan's visit where he experienced a full day in the life of Ragin' Cajun Catholics. He learned how to make an iced latte in Campus Grounds Cafe, celebrated noon Mass, took a turn at the "Ask a Cardinal a Question" table - a take on Fr. Sibley's "Ask a Priest a Question" - and enjoyed several Cajun dishes with the students! But most importantly, the Cardinal spent time being with "our flock" and sharing his love of the Church with our community. It was a day that the Ragin' Cajun Catholics won't soon forget!

Wisdom Has Built Her House

By: Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York



CARDINAL DOLAN DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT AN EVENING FOR WISDOM BENEFITTING THE CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER & THE WISDOM FOR EVERY GENERATION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT:

I've been fascinated by the name Wisdom, so when you all invited me to come two years ago, I said, "Boy, that's kind of a refreshing and appropriate name for a Catholic ministry on campus. What is this about Wisdom?" I know when I was a student, one of our professors of whom I was particularly fond, Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, who was a great church historian, he would begin every class by saying, "Look, students. If you lack wisdom, God can give it to you. If you lack knowledge, I can give it to you. If you lack common sense, nobody can help you." I appreciated very much that distinction between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom. They're both essential. They're both kind of different.

Are you familiar with the writer today, David Brooks? ...[He] just had a wonderful book out about two years ago where his theme was this: There's a big difference in life between what he called "resume virtues" and "tombstone virtues". He says, "Usually, people stress resume virtues. Things that are productive. Things that are useful. Things that'll get you ahead. Skills." That's kind of knowledge. Knowledge. He said what's really essential and important in life is what he called "tombstone virtues." What are they going to say about you when you die? Of course, then you get gifts such as loyalty, love, sacrifice and friendship. Those are what he called tombstone virtues. My contention to you all this evening is that is what we mean by Wisdom.

Think about the difference for a minute, will you? Knowledge and Wisdom...

*Knowledge teaches us what we can do.
Wisdom teaches us who we are.*

*Knowledge emphasizes where we've been and it does. It's history.
That's my field. Wisdom emphasizes where we're going.*

*Knowledge will help you get a job.
Wisdom will help you get to heaven.*

*Knowledge will prepare you with life skills.
Wisdom will prepare you for happiness.*

*Knowledge describes very well, especially science,
creation and created things,
while wisdom will awaken us to the creator of them all.*

*Knowledge, what to say.
Wisdom, how to pray.*

*Knowledge, how to win friends.
Wisdom, how to keep them.*

*Knowledge, what to know.
Wisdom, how to think.*

*Knowledge, earth isn't the center of the universe.
Wisdom, neither am I.*

*Knowledge, what we can get.
Wisdom, what we can give.*

*Knowledge, what I can reap.
Wisdom, what I can sow.*

*Knowledge, what I can see and touch and verify, stuff that is visible.
Wisdom, ah! what's important is what's invisible.*

*Knowledge, what I can prove.
Wisdom, how I can trust.*

*Knowledge, what do I need to do to get through.
Wisdom, what do I need to do to get better.*

*Knowledge, what is empirically evident.
Wisdom, what is true, good and beautiful.*

*We crave a sacred space on a campus rightly devoted to
knowledge, where Wisdom has made herself a home.*

Wisdom is so essential. Wisdom is so essential in the Bible, it's so important to the people of Israel that the Bible actually personifies wisdom. Wisdom was with God when He created. Wisdom, the Bible tells us, is next to God, as He sustains creation. Wisdom, for us as Christians, wisdom for us as Catholics, is indeed incarnate in the One we call Jesus Christ: The Way, The Truth and The Life. She who gave him a human nature is venerated as Mary. The Seat of Wisdom. Our Lady of Wisdom.

I submit to you folks this evening, that wisdom, that supreme virtue, incarnate in Jesus at the lap of Mary and alive in the church has made herself a home on the campus that we love nearby, in this center called Our Lady of Wisdom.

Today when I had the honor of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the students, to see that chapel filled and then to spend time with them visiting and chatting. Then to have about an hour and a half with them as they asked questions, as I looked out at those young men and women, I just naturally love them. They just inspired me. When I looked down at them, I said, "What do they say? What do I see in their faces? What do I see in their presence here?"

It reminded me very much [of] this story about what happened from June 1st to June 10th in 1979. Those days have been called by historians, not necessarily religious, "Nine Days that Changed the World." You might remember, it's when John Paul II went home to Poland and two-thirds of the nation turned out to see him. On the last day, do you remember? Have you heard this? On the last day, he had mass in his beloved Krakow, for two million people. Do you remember what was going on then? Russian bayonets, hundreds of thousands of them were lying at the border ready to go in. John Paul II goes to Poland and he galvanizes the people. Solidarity was born. Mikhail Gorbachev would say that was the beginning of the end. Henry Kissinger would say John Paul did for Poland in those nine days what Winston Churchill did for England in the Second World War.

Do you remember what happened the last day? In the middle of his Homily, two million people began to chant three words. What do you think the three were? Was it "Russia, go home?" Was it, "Down with Communism?" No. Three words, two million people, "We want God. We want God." It went on for 30 seconds. It went on for two minutes. It went on for

five minutes. Two million people chanting that at the top of their voice. After five minutes, Monsignor, in a way that they will send a master of ceremony, came over to John Paul, who was just standing there and said, "Holy Father, perhaps you want to quiet them down so you can continue the Mass." He looked at him and said, "Are you nuts? This is what I came for, all right?" We want God. We want God.

After the Mass, when the archives of the KGB were opened, after the Mass they found a telegram from the KGB in Poland back to the Kremlin saying, "It's over. It's over." We want God. You know what? That's what I sensed in those students this morning. That's what I sensed in those young men and women in Mass. That's what I heard in those questions that were asked. I heard a generation saying, "We want God. We need God. We love God. We want to be in the company of people who share that faith and that deep hunger and thirst for God." That's who you've got at Wisdom everybody. We happen to call it the Church. Wise. Wise is the one who would come to Wisdom for that, and wise are the people who support it – and count me among them. Thank you and God bless you.

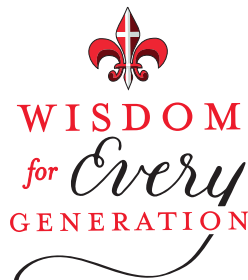


The New Our Lady of Wisdom Church & Catholic Student Center



Thank you to all of the UL Alumni, Students, Parents, Friends of the Ragin' Cajun Catholics, and Parishioners of Our Lady of Wisdom Church who have pledged a 5-year gift or made a one-time gift to the *Wisdom for Every Generation* Capital Campaign. As of October 10, 2017, the total of pledged and one-time gifts for the project, including a \$5 million lead gift from the Diocese of Lafayette's Centennial Campaign, is \$9,114,911!

New benefactors are joining in support of the building project every day. We invite you to pray for the campaign and pledge your gift today.



To Learn More and Pledge Your Gift:

Mary Hernandez, Executive Director of Advancement,
mary@ourladyofwisdom.org

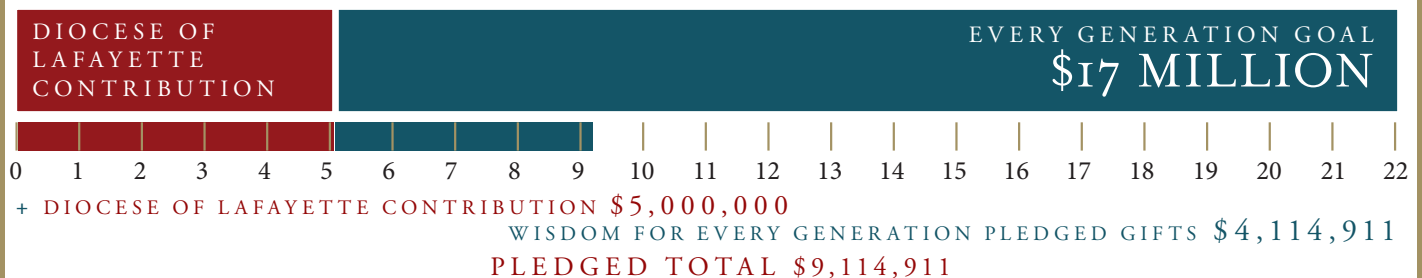
New Student Center Features:

- Bible study areas
- Large atrium and cafe
- Collaborative pods perfect for study & leadership development
- Expanded commercial kitchen
- Dining area for community meals
- Redesigned Jeanmard Hall suitable for speakers & conferences

New Sanctuary Features:

- Traditional cruciform layout with a long central aisle
- Entry vestibule leading to main entrance
- Expanded adoration chapel
- Enlarged choir loft
- Cry room
- Sacristy
- Bell tower
- Confessionals
- Expand seating to 600 (currently 450)
- Direct access to the sanctuary from within student center

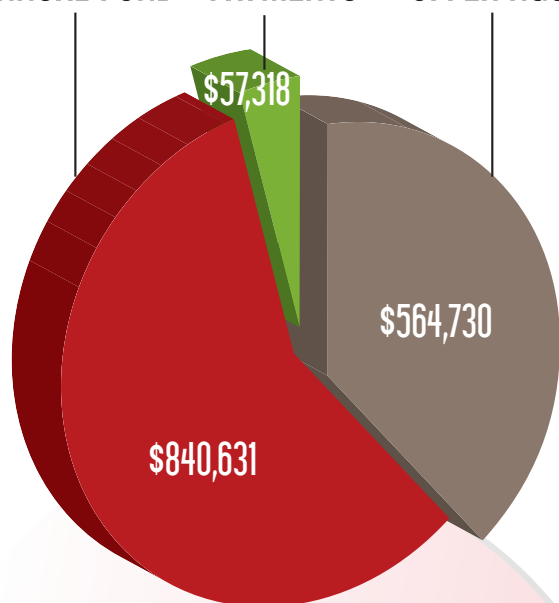
PROJECT GOAL \$22 MILLION



Our Lady of Wisdom Church & Catholic Student Center

2016-2017 ANNUAL FISCAL REPORT

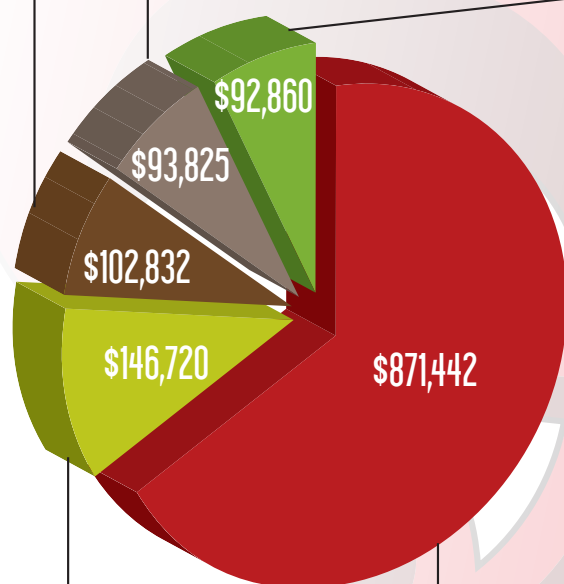
ANNUAL FUND PAYMENTS OFFERINGS



Income Total \$1,462,679

Income is up \$218,439 from the PFY

DEVELOPMENT SACRAMENTS & LITURGY PARISH ADMINISTRATION



Expense Total \$1,307,679

Expenses are up \$38,887 from the PFY

Receipts over Disbursements: \$155,000

FACILITY & MAINTENANCE CAMPUS MINISTRY

Savings Account

\$19 at the end of FY 2016-2017

\$98 at the end of FY 2015-2016

Newman Endowment

\$147,482 at the end of FY 2016-2017

\$140,406 at the end of FY 2015-2016

Ragin' Cajun Catholics Annual Fund Benefactors 2016-2017

Thank you to all who have contributed to Our Lady of Wisdom's Annual Fund which provides funding for ministry programming and operations throughout the year. We are able to carry out our mission with the level of excellence that has become a hallmark of the Ragin' Cajun Catholics Student Ministry because of your generosity.

CARDINAL NEWMAN

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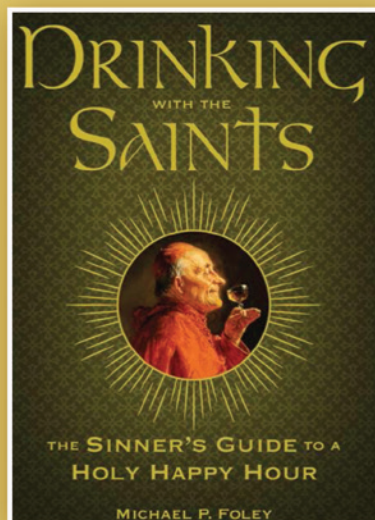
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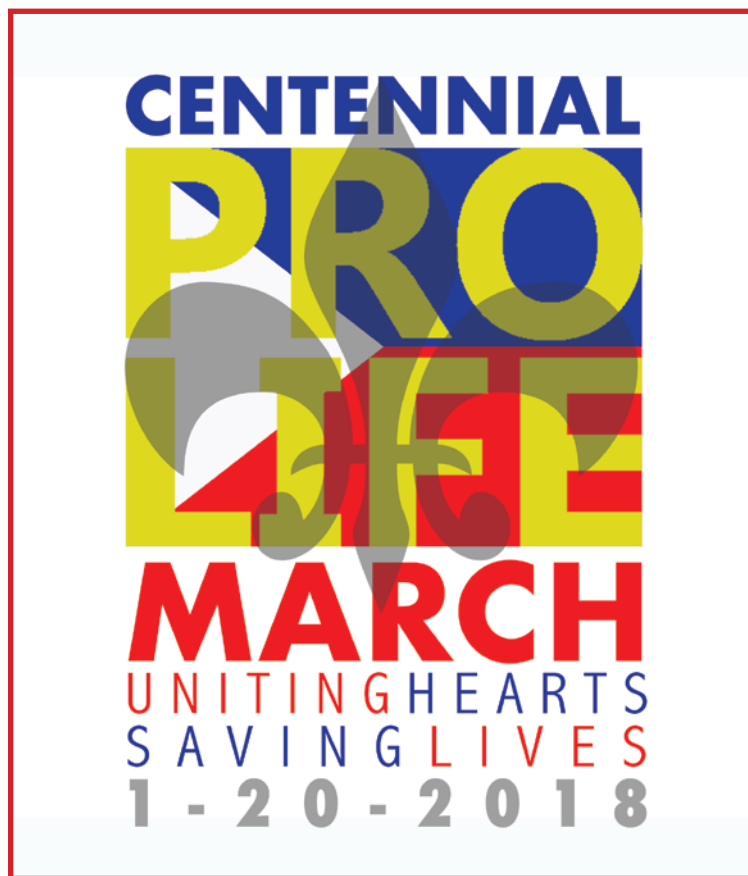


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