Our Lady of Rosary plans activities in celebration of 50th anniversary

By Karma Champagne

Members of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church have reason to celebrate on the weekend of April 15-17. The church will observe its jubilee anniversary with a full weekend of activities.

According to Elnora Rideaux, chairman of the event, the celebration will start with a Gospel Extravaganza on Friday at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, youth activities will continue through the day and end with an anniversary banquet at 7 p.m. at the Ward Eight Recreation Center. Guest speaker for the banquet will be Father Clifton Labbe, of St. Martinville, Notre Dame Catholic Church.

On Sunday, the 11 a.m. mass at Our Lady of Rosary will be celebrated by Bishop Harry Flynn, followed by a reception at the church hall.

Special invited guests includes former pastors: Rev. August Langenkamp, Rev. James Pawlicki, and Rev. Thomas Mullally, according to Rideaux.

The church has an impressive history dating back to 1944 when Father Cosmas Schneider, SV founded the church on the north side of Bayou Teche in the Jackson-town area.

He was given the assignment by Bishop Jules B. Jean-mard to begin taking care of the black Catholics in the Glencoe, Four Corners and Jeanerette areas.

Fr. Schneider and Fr. Godbout of St. John’s Evangelist Church began to hold meetings with interested black Catholics in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Jeanerette. Five meetings were recorded and it was decided that the 8 a.m. mass in St. John’s would be set aside for that group of Catholics.

Soon after, a generous offer from the St. Paul Bourgeois family was made to purchase a piece of property from a local lumber company located across the Bayou. The offer was accepted and the decree of erection of Our Lady of Rosary Parish was dated August 1944.

In June of that year, a fair was held at Canal Street School for the new parish, which generated $1,000. Elton Beaulieu gave the first donation of a $25 war bond.

A small house, across the bayou, where the bell tower now stands, was built. In 1945 the church was built and a rectory constructed for the pastor.

But the congregation received startling news on July 17, 1947. Their pastor was found dead in the early morning hours.

The second pastor, Rev. Father Arthur Haines, S.V.D. who had been a missionary in China, energetically began to build a Catholic Elementary School with the help of Thomas Derouen. By 1950, the first building was completed and children were transported to the new school by bus. At one point the number of students had reached more than 200.

The school thrived with its ups and downs from 1964-67 until the enrollment finally dwindled to 65 and the school had to be closed. Closing of the parochial school came due to the rising costs and too few students.

Since that time, other pas-

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