City of New Iberia figures prominently in history of the DeBlanc family

By Truman Stacey

In 1762 His Most Catholic Majesty, King Carlos III of Spain, became the ruler of Louisiana through the terms of a treaty with France.

In order to bolster his new colony's defenses against the English, he was always intent on extending their territories in the New World, King Carlos and his ministers sought to plant new settlements of Spanish subjects in Louisiana.

One of these projects was headed by Don Francisco de Boulongy.

Don Francisco, born in Alicante, Spain, came to Louisiana with Governor O'Reilly in 1769.

INTRIGUED BY Louisiana, he returned to Spain to promote a plan for Spanish emigration to Louisiana. The Spanish ministers agreed to the plan, and as a result, in 1778, he brought about 60 men and women to Louisiana. These he had recruited from the port town and province of Malaga.

The newcomers settled along the Bayou Teche, and their settlement was named Nueva Iberia. This was the settlement that was to figure so prominently in the annals of the DeBlanc family.

The first son of this illustrious family to arrive in Louisiana was Cesar de Blanc of New Iberia, who came to Louisiana as a French official.

He married Marie de Doulier, sister Simone Juchereau de St. Denis, the daughter of the famed founder of Natchitoches. Cesar later became the second commandant of the Natchitoches Post.

His Son, Louis Charles de Blanc de Neville, was also a commandant under the Spanish regime of the Poste des Atalais at St. Martinville.

Louis Charles was married to Elizabeth Pompone Derbouville of Orleans, and their children intermarried with many other Spanish and French families.

When some of the Malaguenos at New Iberia wished to sell their land, Louis Charles purchased a plot in what is now the City of New Iberia.

Later, in 1802, he received a grant of 2,080 acres of land from the Spanish crown as a reward for his services. Eventually he owned most of the land between New Iberia and St. Martinville.

He was a man of outstanding ability, and his lands prospered under his care.

He built a sugar mill on the banks of the Bayou Teche, which was powered by water. This held a major advantage over previous mills, which had been powered by oxen.

One of Louis Charles' sons, Louis Cesaire de Blanc, married Marie Alcoida Olivier de Vezin. Louis Cesaire was the grandfather of Alphonse DeBlanc, who served as a lieutenant in the Army of the Confederacy.

One of Alphonse's sons was Louis Cyrus DeBlanc, born in New Iberia in 1788. He was a sugar planter and a co-owner of sugar mills in Delcambre and Loreauville.

ONE WAS destroyed by fire, which was a constant hazard in those days, and another was wrecked by an explosion which killed 22 people.

The other sugar mill was entered in 1878. He was a sugar planter and a co-owner of sugar mills in Delcambre and Loreauville.

He was born on October 17, 1914, at Maria Plantation. Six months after his birth, however, the plantation home was destroyed by fire, and the family moved into New Iberia.

Young DeBlanc lived the normal, carefree life of those days, with one exception. One day he was rolling a log and fell off. The accident almost severed his tongue and he was speechless for some months.

When he recovered from the injury, he stuttered.

All of the DeBlanc children attended Catholic schools, so when young Louis came of age he was entered in St. Peter College in New Iberia, and elementary and high school conducted by the Christian Brothers.

The Brothers gave him special attention with regard to his speech and helped him overcome his handicap.

In an interview, Monsignor DeBlanc recalled several of his elementary school teachers who assisted him.

"One thing I remember is that Brother Anselmon one occasion gave me two cents to buy some candy. That has stuck in my mind."

FROM THE beginning young DeBlanc was an avid athlete, being especially eager to play basketball and baseball with his elementary mates.

He was a basketball center and a pitcher on the diamond.

"Being a pitcher is good training," he recalled. "Being a pitcher puts you in charge. The other players look to you and make you responsible for much of the success of the team. They expect you to do your job and more."

The DeBlancs were members of St. Peter Parish, perhaps the largest in the Diocese of Lafayette at that time.

Young DeBlanc became an altar server as soon as he was old enough, serving daily Mass.

"WE LIVED ONLY a block and a half from the church," he said, "and I don't recall missing many Masses, even when it was raining."

The Pastor at that time was Monsignor Jean Marie Langlois, a native of France.

Born in 1868, he came to the United States in 1908. He was pastor of St. Peter Parish for 39 years, from 1908 to 1947.

He was Vicar General for the diocese, and was raised to the rank of Protonotary Apostolic by the Holy See.

"Monsignor Langlois exercised a great influence in my life," Monsignor DeBlanc said. "I was one of his altar boys and he always had time to talk to a young person in his parish."

"HE TOOK ME on trips with him and he taught me how to drive a car when I was about 11 years of age. He always talked about St. John Bosco and how the saint worked so diligently with youth of his day."

"Monsignor Langlois made me realize that young people are important. He taught me that everyone is important, and he taught me the meaning of commitment."

1938 – Year of ordination

Monsignor DeBlanc recalled that St. Peter Parish was an extraordinary one in those days.

"We had a number of outstanding priests and at one time there were 12 young men from St. Peter Parish in the seminary. A lot of that can be traced to the influence of Monsignor Langlois, who was an extraordinary priest," he said.

Because of his speech impediment the Christian Brothers at St. Peter College worked him in extra sessions of speech.

When he was seven years old he competed in an elocution tournament held at Mount Carmel Convent, and he was the winner.

The Most Reverend Jules B. Jeannard, Bishop of Lafayette, was a judge of the contest, and after the program was completed the bishop congratulated the seventh-grader and asked him if he had ever thought of being a priest.

"This was the first time that anyone had mentioned the priesthood to me, and I guess the suggestion stuck. When I was graduated from the elementary school, I decided to enter St. Joseph Seminary in Covington, which at that time had a high school division.

"IT WAS MY own decision and one that was not altogether popular with my parents. I was a mature 12-year-old, however, and ready to make my own decisions."

"I had been allowed to go alone by bus to places like Lafay-

Turn to Page 10
"Tanos Joseph of Franklin, who was later a State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus, would pick me up and drive me to the games. Baseball was highly popular in those days, and I guess there must have been a little betting going along on the side, because now and then I would be given a present.

"ONE TIME IT was $300 -- which in those days was a prodigious amount for a seminary student." Monsignor DeBlanc said he still remembers his initiation into the Knights of Columbus.

"L. O. Pio was in charge of the ceremony and I was much impressed by him."

In addition to sports, Seminarian DeBlanc enjoyed other extra-curricular activities.

He was a member of the Thespians, the seminary's drama club, and directed a number of plays. He began to write early, under the encouragement of the Benedictines, and became the editor of the seminary's student newspaper.

He was an avid reader, and even after lights were out he would pull the bed covers over his head, and read with the aid of a flashlight.

He is still an avid reader, but does not have to hide it.

"The discipline at the seminary was strict, but I think this was a big plus, because we were drilled in responsibility and the necessity to work together. I got a little homesick now and then, but never had any thoughts of leaving."

After four years at St. Benedict, the young DeBlanc was graduated and transferred to Notre Dame seminary in New Orleans, where he studied theology, canon law "and a lot of other stuff."

HE MAINTAINED his interest in sports and other extra-curricular activities, and was again editor of the seminary's student newspaper.

He did well in his studies once more and finished in the upper 10 percent of his graduating class. That class was one of the most remarkable in the seminary's history.

A dozen were graduated in the class of 1938, and all of them made names for themselves as priests.

In addition to Monsignor DeBlanc there were: Gerard L. Frey, who grew up to be Bishop of Savannah, Georgia and Lafayette, Louisiana; Monsignor Charles Marin, an outstanding pastor; Monsignor George Bodin, the founding pastor of St. Margaret Parish in Lake Charles; Monsignor Daniel Bernard, who came from Broussard; Monsignor Henry Bezou, superintendent of schools for the Archdiocese of New Orleans for many years.

Also, Monsignor Marquettes, Monsignor Moore, Father Charles Speaker, Father Pat Regan and Monsignor David Becnel.

The 12th member, Father Verbin LeFleur, was a chaplain in World War II and was killed on the battlefield.

About 10 members of this class banded themselves into a "secret organization" which they formed to better themselves as seminarians and as men.

They worked on improving their skills at evangelization and street preaching, as well as working on the principles of spirituality and leadership.

Monsignor DeBlanc recalls two among his Notre Dame faculty as outstanding instructors: Father Joseph Berkeley, S.M., and Father Tom Bolduc, S.M.

At one time during his seminary studies, Bishop Jean Mard offered to send him to study at St. Sulpice in Paris, France, but Seminarian DeBlanc decided to stay at Notre Dame, because he respected the faculty and the curriculum.

Finally, after 12 years of study, the day of ordination came -- April 2, 1938.

There was still a hurdle to overcome, however. At that time, 24 was the minimum age of ordination. The young DeBlanc lacked six months of being 24, so a dispensation was hurriedly sought from Rome, and arrived in time.

The ordination ceremony went on as planned in the Cathedral of St. John in Lafayette.

After ordination, young Father DeBlanc was assigned to St. Landry Parish in Opelousas, but asked his assignment to be switched to Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Ville Platte, where Monsignor Bourgeois, a friend, was pastor.

The training, the schooling and the preparing were behind him, and he was ready, as a newly-ordained priest, to take up what was to be his life work.
Second Age: from being a learner to being an earner

By Beattina O’Carroll

Upon his ordination as a priest for the Diocese of Lafayette on April 2, 1938, Monsignor Irving A. DeBlanc transitioned from the first age, that of being a learner, to the second age, that of an earner.

His first assignment as a teacher and principal at Sacred Heart High School and Associate Pastor at Sacred Heart Parish, in Ville Platte, filled him with great joy.

“I was working with youth, always a great pleasure,” Monsignor DeBlanc said. “And through youth, I was able to touch the whole family.”

He spent 10 very happy years there.

“We worked very hard to instill a quality of excellence in the students in both scholastic efforts and sports,” Monsignor DeBlanc reminisced.

A BASEBALL enthusiast, he carried these avocations over to his work with the youth at school.

He has always been concerned with the standard of excellence. He posed this question for his interviewers as one that has guided his life: “What do I do to become holy?”

It was because of this interest in the concept of excellence that he and some other friends at the seminary organized a group in which they tried to help each other to become better seminarians.

Not only did Monsignor DeBlanc teach at the high school level, he also began to teach at the college level during his assignment at Sacred Heart High School.

HE TAUGHT summer courses at Siena College in Memphis, Tennessee from 1946 to 1949.

While still at Sacred Heart High School, he also began work on his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science Degree at Loyola University in New Orleans and Louisiana State University.

He has always been an industrious student as well as a tireless teacher.

He completed his Master of Arts degree at Catholic University, while assigned in Washington, D.C. He completed his Ph.D., also from Catholic University, while pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Lake Charles.

His NEXT assignment was also with youth, but at the college level. From 1949-1955 he was Pastor and Chaplain at Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic Student Center, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

He said that every assignment that he has had was memorable, but he probably worked harder at USL because the transitory nature of the college population made it more difficult to reach the students and he wasn’t in frequent touch with the families of the students.

Family life is a theme that underlies his life’s work.

During his first two assignments for the Diocese of Lafayette, he also was named Director of Youth, Junior Newman Clubs and Sodalities for 15 years and Director of Family Life for eight years.

His post-graduate work centered on the family and his third assignment directly utilized the skills he was building.

In 1955, he was named National Director of the Family Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference in Washington, D.C.

He remained in this position for six years and in connection with this work traveled extensively in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, South America, and behind the Iron Curtain.

While in Washington, D.C. with the Family Life Bureau, he began his writing career.

DURING THOSE six years, he had a nationally-syndicated weekly column Making Marriage Click. His other publications include: Engagement: A Guide for Catholic Couples; Serving Your Family; Marry to Truth a life of Cardinal Newman; and A Study of the Father Role Concept and Some Practices as Found in a Selected Group of Catholic Fathers and Mothers.

He also edited a number of works, among them Sanctity and Success in Marriage, Together in Christ; A Preparation for Marriage, and was the founding editor of Catholic Family Leader, a national periodical.

Recognition for his varied work came his way during these early years as a priest.

In 1953, while still at Sacred Heart High School, he received the Papal honor “Domestic Prelate” with the title of Monsignor.

In 1956, he received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from Loyola University of the South.

Just prior to his assignment as Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish, Monsignor DeBlanc was hired as a technical advisor and Conductor of Counseling and Leadership Institutes for military personnel and chaplains in the United States and abroad.

“This was a very stimulating and rewarding experience” Monsignor DeBlanc stated.

His work resulted in a report to the armed forces about the effect of temporary duty away from the family on the morale and social life of the men and their families.

In 1961, Monsignor DeBlanc was appointed Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

His interest in youth and the family expanded with his duties as Pastor and his concept centered on the “Parish family.” As his “family’s” needs became apparent, a building program emerged. During the next 30 years under his leadership, the parish enlarged the rectory and administration building, a new convent, a day-care center for children of working mothers, a new Catholic school, a school for handicapped children (Regina Caeli), a 30-acre mausoleum and cemetery, a family community center, an additional parking lot for the Church, the Church itself, a diocesan-wide Catholic bookstore, and Olympic-sized aquatic center.

The ground for a retirement center has been cleared and building on this project may commence soon.

In ALL OF these buildings, Monsignor DeBlanc has emphasized the aspect of the beauty of nature as aElement necessary for the establishment of peace and serenity. Trees and plants surround each structure, even in the parking lots.

Each window in the church looks out upon a courtyard. Beauty is never far from one’s eyes.

In his chosen vocation as a priest, Monsignor DeBlanc has conducted many Cana conferences, retreats for priests, nuns,
Jaymen and women, and youth. He believes that his life-long experiences can help him, in his third age, continue to assist youth and families develop a strong Catholic culture.

“PARTICULARLY with the single-parent home is this type of cultural development important” he states.

He has served as Chairman of the Lafayette Diocesan Disaster Board, Diocesan Director of Catholic Cemeteries, he was twice delegate for the Diocese of Lafayette to the White House Conference on Youth and Senior Citizens, he was elected Dean of the Lake Charles Deanery of the Diocese of Lafayette, and Episcopal Vicar for the West Deanery of the Diocese of Lafayette, chairman of the Lafayette Diocesan Reconciliation and Arbitration Board, appointed Diocesan Consultant to the Bishop, Diocese of Lafayette, and a member of the Diocesan Senate of Priests.

WHEN THE Diocese of Lake Charles was created in 1980, he was appointed Vicar General. In 1982, he became the Episcopal Vicar for the West Deanery of the Diocese of Lafayette, chairman of the Lafayette Diocesan Reconciliation and Arbitration Board, appointed Diocesan Consultant to the Bishop, Diocese of Lafayette, and a member of the Diocesan Senate of Priests.

Honors continued to pour upon the unique leader as a result of his many accomplishments. He has won the John Henry Newman award; the Knight Commander of the order of the Fleur de Lis, Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus in 1970; was recognized in 1973 on the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Notre Dame Seminary as the Alumnus who best exemplified the role of “Pastor-Leader”; was made a Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1983; was chosen “Citizen of the Year” for the Diocese of Lake Charles in 1981; and given the “Brotherhood Award” by the National Conference of Christian and Jews in 1982.

HE RECEIVED the Papal Honor of “Protonotary Apostolic” in 1982; was honored by the Calsacia Area Council of Scouting for promotion of scouting; was named “Outstanding Citizen” by two Lake Charles mayors in 1983 and 1988; “Clergyman of the Year” in 1987 by the Msgr. Cranes 4th Degree Knights of Columbus; the “Eucumenical Service Award” from the National Council of Christians and Jews in 1988; and the “Distinguished Citizen award from the Calsacia Area Council of Scouting, also in 1988.

Monsignor DeBlanc states that one of the most important lessons he has learned during his lifetime is the importance of each individual, a concept he was taught by Bishop Jeanmard of Lafayette. “He was never too busy to listen to anyone,” Monsignor DeBlanc emphasized.

M S G R. D E B L A N C has served for 54 years as a priest. Thirty-two of those years have been as Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish. On October 17, the day of his 78th birthday, this community leader will be honored at the 5:30 p.m. Mass and with a reception following at the Family Life Community Center.

Msgr. DeBlanc will reside in a home in the parish just purchased for him, and will continue his work among us on various projects of interest.

His third age promises to be as active as his second.

1981 -- Msgr. DeBlanc holds Joshua Dore following the Baptism of Josnua.
Mr. DeBlanc prepares to enter his Third Age

By Bernadette Ponton

Reverend Monsignor Irving A. DeBlanc as priest is entering his Third Age.

I envision his beloved maple tree as a symbol of the three ages of this shepherd. The drawings of the maple tree depicted offer an encapsulation of the life of this servant of God, for his life has been prodigious indeed!

In his First Age, he was a learner, as the tree which begins to grow and is loved and nurtured by his family just as the "running water" which fed the tree and helped it mature in happiness and faith. It grew strong never forgetting its roots that gave him life.

But what are roots without water, the family, through which flows God's grace and light?

This is the age of early school and seminary, the age of clerical assignments, and arrival in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

The Second Age is shepherding with his flock, advanced degrees, and the age of building seen in the branches on the tree; the physical plants -- Our Lady Queen of Heaven Church, CCD Offices for Elementary and High School, Consolata Cemetery and Mausoleum, Crossroads Bookstore, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Elementary School, Monsignor Irving A. DeBlanc Family Life Community Center, Our Lady Queen of Heaven rectory, Villa Maria.

He networks among his friends and peers.

I think that this man represents the best blend of the heart of a shepherd, the mind of a businessman and the eye of an artist.

Few people possess these qualities with such powers to maximize what is and the envision what could be.

Awards, chaplaincies, and travel now fill his calendar but it is his sacramental activities which have so filled his life.

At OLQH Parish, these sacramental figures estimate -- Baptisms, 2,028; First Communions, 1,891; Confirmations, 1,921; Marriages, 1,187; and Funerals, 667.

This shepherd guards and leads his flock by writing from his heartfelt understanding the deep river of humankind's agonies, toils and strife.

But, he also writes of the joys of being good and doing the right thing, for eternity begins on this earth.

Monsignor DeBlanc has taught that we are the kingdom of God on this our holy ground made in the Father's image and likeness and so we live the motto as our own; we pray together, work together, play together, suffer together, love together, and hope together.

Monsignor DeBlanc's Third Age is beginning.

As this transition begins, we see how the fruits of his labors have already returned grace and blessing to those he set out to serve.

And now, in retirement he seeks "by His grace," to give back in humility.

The leaves appear in all their splendor and the role of the tree now becomes evident -- to shade, to stabilize, to give breath to the world, to filter, to give home to many, to be taken from for building, for fire to warm and illuminate, to fall to the earth and decompose only to be lifted back up into the very "home" it cycled from and give rebirth.

And, as seasons come so they must go, and the process begins again, and the tree is stronger than before.

Monsignor DeBlanc has expressed interest in many areas while embracing this Third Age.

His first love, family life, will receive his attention. He hopes to write and lecture on this area. Other interests include single parenting, pre-marriage instruction, and priest retreats which he finds especially gratifying.

He will make himself available for civic clubs to speak on these and other subjects important to Catholic faith.

Monsignor DeBlanc already has begun writing on the subject of grandparents. He is finishing two books and has been approached to do a documentary on the philosophy behind the architecture utilized in the award winning designs throughout Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish.

Finally, he is researching and corresponding with the Center for Creative Retirement at the University of Asheville in Asheville, North Carolina, in order to pursue the ministry of connecting all generations in our society.

This Special 8-Page Tribute To Monsignor Irving A. DeBlanc Was Paid For By OLQH Parishioners

Happiness is being a priest!

1988 -- Bishop Jude Speyrer offering congratulations to Msgr. DeBlanc on the occasion of his 50th anniversary or ordination to the priesthood. This is an especially appropriate third stage/activity.

For indeed, this is a man for all seasons, for all generations, for all ages.

Thank You, Our Angel!!
...Monsignor DeBlanc is one of the most devout priests I have ever known. He is always there when I need his advice or prayers. He and my husband are both from New Iberia and were very close friends for many years. Another tie between Monsignor and me is that we have the same birthday -- October 17th. May God bless him.

When spirituality is visible on anyone it is an inspiration for spiritual growth to the beholder. Monsignor DeBlanc is "the epitome" of the priesthood -- a beacon for our faith.

I am delighted that the parish is to do something for such a dedicated priest. May God bless you in this endeavor.

Monsignor DeBlanc has touched our lives in a most beautiful way. He has baptized all of the children in our family and is loved in a very special way by all.

My Dearest Monsignor DeBlanc: You are truly a man of God. It has been a pleasure to have you as my pastor. Your love for the Lord is in your actions. My friend you bring out the best in a person, and I thank you for that. You taught me that when a problem arises, go to the Lord, and do what He would do. You have enhanced my thoughts in all directions in a Christ-like way and made me feel the depth of my love from Christ in ways I had not comprehended before. Monsignor you live your life so close to the Lord that it makes me want to be a Holy person. I feel more deeply for others and want to give of myself to be a person of anyone in need. Our Lord has given you the enthusiasm and the originality of thoughts to help me and others to know the Lord Jesus. Your beautiful Christian approach to life has opened to me of the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. May the blessed Savior hold you in His loving arms each day of your life and enjoy a wonderful retirement you so richly deserve.

I am sure to miss Monsignor DeBlanc when he leaves us, but I'm glad he will be close to us. He's been very good to me. I could talk to him when I wanted to and he always had time for me. I also enjoy the trip I have been on with him when we go somewhere. He is a wonderful person. I wish him all the best in his retirement and I'm glad he is a part of my life, so we can see him when we want to.

It is very difficult for me to put into words the difference Monsignor DeBlanc has made in my life, as he touched my life in so many ways. Just to name a few -- he has been my pastor, friend, spiritual advisor and fellow traveler. He was there when I needed him -- some happy occasions and some sad ones -- like school and church activities, weddings of my children and baptism of my grandchildren. He was always there to comfort me when my husband died unexpectedly. It meant so very much to me. I'm sure that although Monsignor will retire soon, he will continue to be active and interested in O.L.Q.H. parish, and will keep on having a future instead of merely a past. He has been an inspiration to all of us, and we will never forget him.

"What Difference Monsignor DeBlanc Has Made in Your Life" I attended OLQH kindergarten through the 8th grade. I remember gathering in the pavilion every year for Monsignor's birthday. All the students would wish Monsignor a Happy Birthday and we would all be treated to ice cream. My daughter attends the OLQH Day Care Center, in May 1992 she came home talking about going to the Rectory and singing Happy Anniversary to Monsignor and getting candy and a hug from Monsignor. She talked about this for several days. This brought back many fond memories of my years at OLQH and the love that Monsignor DeBlanc has always had for the children of the parish.

Monsignor DeBlanc has given an inspiring example of the priesthood both in his personal life, as well as in his conduct of the parish. His devotion to Christ is an implementation of the words, I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. His devotion to the pro-life movement gives the last phrase a literal meaning. His influence extended far past the boundaries of his parish and scope of his pastoral work through the talks, which he so generously gave. The people of God who lived in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish can attest to the extraordinary care he has lavished on them. In his zeal to provide both spiritual and temporal care for all their needs, he has developed a parish that serves very many outside its boundaries. The list of parish organizations and institutions reads like a compendium of the matters recommended by the II Vatican Council. Monsignor DeBlanc has made a contribution to the Diocese of Lake Charles that goes far beyond the limits of the Diocese. The influence of his life in Christ has blessed many thousands in this life and in the next. With hearty congratulations and a pledge of my prayers, I remain Sincerely yours, Philip M. Hannan President, WLAÉ-TV Channel 32

...The moment I met Monsignor DeBlanc some 30 years ago, I sensed that there was something special about him. How right I was! His unique sense of vision, his devout love of People and his devotion to duty has been a guiding light for my family throughout the years. His ever-present, hard work, and unbounding ship allowed my family to have a positive Christian experience as we have evolved through stages of our lives. I am so grateful that we will miss him as our Pastor, but while Monsignor DeBlanc is retiring, I know he does not know the word "quit". I look forward to this remarkable man of God being with us in a special way for many years to come.

I am sure that Monsignor DeBlanc has been a remarkable man of God, and deserves every word of praise we can offer. He has been a true man of God, and deserves every word of praise we can offer. He has been a true man of God, and deserves every word of praise we can offer. He has been a true man of God, and deserves every word of praise we can offer. His life has been filled with countless blessings and he is a truly dedicated priest. I'll miss him.

I believe selfishly, that God sent Monsignor DeBlanc here to this Parish, especially for me and my family. If I don't get to Heaven, I will be the first to disagree. It is my desire to thank Monsignor DeBlanc and the parishioners for the many years he has given to his parish. He has given his love and devotion to each and every person who has walked through our doors. I am sure that Monsignor DeBlanc was a true inspiration to others as we join with the parishioners and friends in fraternal prayer and joy and gratitude. (Stanley Joseph)

---

'1988 -- Sharing the joyous occasion of the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood with Msgr. DeBlanc is Father Joe McGrath.'
Dear Parishioner:

A "Dear Parishioner" Letter from 1983 and a "Dear Parishioner" Letter, his second to last letter to his "Dear Parishioner" as pastor of OLOH dated Sept. 1, 1992.

26 December 1983

When a man on a long journey begins to falter and hesitate and feel nervous about his way, he climbs to some point of vantage.

He can then see the road over which he has come and the direction in which it is leading him. He studies the outstanding features of the landscape and compares them with his maps and charts.

We, too, should step aside at this time and explore our path and make sure we are traveling toward the city which means happiness. Be sure we are not hastening toward the city of failure and unhappiness.

Let us look at our landscape. First of all, our thoughts. Only too many are content if they are free from offense. But to the making of every evil action have gone hundreds of dangerous thoughts.

We listen to the Devil's orchestra before our feet beat in unison to the measures of his tunes. We are not afraid of literature or movies however immoral. We do not shrink from companionships however depraved. We are not ashamed to haunt places of doubtful reputation.

For better or worse, we are what we are thinking of. And then there are our words. If we use our words to make others feel bad or do harm to those too weak to enforce it if I am an employee, have I given equity, consideration and a fair wage to others?

If I am a mother, have I had an outgoing love and no reproaches, or have I neglected my duties to further my own ease and enjoyment?

And if I am a son or daughter, have I shown gratitude and reverence, or have I been arrogant, selfish and ignored the Fourth Commandment of God to honor my parents?

But God is much more interested about tomorrow — Let the dead bury the dead.*

Maybe that is why it is said, "Most get only 10 percent out of life."

The old clock story is a fitting one.

In a reader for early grades a clock was reminded that it would have to tick 31,536,000 times in a year. Astounded, flabbergasted it stopped ticking.

A close friend encouraged and persuaded the clock to tick just one tick at the time. It grudgingly consented but was amazed to find out it wasn't hard at all and went more ticking, one tick at the time, the whole year around.

We reach our goals one day at the time. Discouragement is straight from Hell.

Then, we realize there are no short cuts in reaching goals. Teenagers, for instance, cannot skip over the struggles of adolescence in order to become mature adults.

NOr can older adults avoid transitions into their third age. We learn from others; but the cocoon, unless there is a struggle getting out of the cocoon, it will never fly.

Cut open the cocoon to save struggle, out it comes moody, droopy and dies. Nature never makes haste, watch the rose bud.

We can learn, too, from the tiniest. Put a small obstacle in its path, maybe a hill or tiny valley of sand, and watch it just keep on going to its goal.

Patient perseverance makes the difference.

Serious prayer is absolutely necessary to do God's will, our goal.

This means being docile. Docile is from the Latin, "doceo," which means to teach.

In prayer we are teachable, docile, as Christ was in Getsemane. Prayer and solitude must become inseparable friends.

Our Getsemane Chapel for one hour a week is a tremendous spiritual experience. Blaise Pascal reminds us, "Men's miseries come from their inability to sit quietly and alone with God."

Pray with docility and we begin to live — not just pass the time away. Then we begin to enjoy our prayer. Third, the sound of a child at play, the gentle touch of a caring hand.

We are then capable of finding someone or something beautiful every day. We then serve with love every day, a goal.

Our Lord said, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer re-echoed the same thought, "The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will somehow find how to serve."

It is only when we serve that we bring out the best in others and ourselves. It is then mainly that we can turn weakness into strength.

Service is the golden chain that binds society, it unlocks the lonely prisons in which we live. We will never be alone. Life is a garden of opportunities. What we do, we do it, we serve, to return to us sooner of later.

Serve with joy and we will never again be strangers. We will then be "individuals." We will become community, We will become Church. We will become firmament. We will begin our Heaven here on earth.

* Tributes

Continued from Page 14

Ott Bishop of Baton Rouge.

... usually have little problem making pastoral decisions, but once I was facing a parish decision that needed extra wisdom. I made an appointment with Monsignor DeBlanc and shared with him my concerns as regards what to do about the situation. I knew he was older and wise, and that his own experience could be a good sounding board. He listened well, and shared with me some of his own experiences that related to my own, and gave me sound advice. I followed that advice with confidence, and all turned out well. (Msgr. Ronald Grandvoir, Bishop.)

... I remember very well the day when I gave the homily at the dedication of that very interesting, unique and beautiful church. I have also watched the great work you have done through all these years and the inspiration you gave me as priest and brother by the example of your life. (Most Rev. Warren L. Bou- dreux Bishop of Houma-Thibodaux.)

... Since coming to Louisiana in 1986, I have on every occasion been impressed by the affirmation that this man gives so willingly and generously. I have said and said on many occasions that I think it would be wonderful if every priest who is ever ordained could live and minister with Monsignor DeBlanc for about a year, just to find out how it's done. He is a man who has made a tremendous mark in the Church in the Dioceses of Lafayette and of Lake Charles. His influence will be felt for years and years to come to many yet unborn. (Most Rev. Harry J. Flynn of Lafayette)

Lastly, our deeds. If I am an employer, have I given equity, consideration and a fair wage to those too weak to enforce it?

If I am an employee, have I given a honest day's work or did I get as much as I could for doing as little as I could?

If I am a mother, have I had an outgoing love and no reproaches, or have I neglected my duties to further my own ease and enjoyment?

If I am a son or daughter, have I shown gratitude and reverence, or have I been arrogant, selfish and ignored the Fourth Commandment of God to honor my parents?

But God is much more interested in which it is leading him. He studies the outstanding features of the landscape and compares them with his maps and charts.

We, too, should step aside at this time and explore our path and make sure we are traveling toward the city which means happiness. Be sure we are not hastening toward the city of failure and unhappiness.

Let us look at our landscape. First of all, our thoughts. Only too many are content if they are free from offense. But to the making of every evil action have gone hundreds of dangerous thoughts.

We listen to the Devil's orchestra before our feet beat in unison to the measures of his tunes. We are not afraid of literature or movies however immoral. We do not shrink from companionships however depraved. We are not ashamed to haunt places of doubtful reputation.

For better or worse, we are what we are thinking of. And then there are our words. If we use our words to make others feel bad or do harm to those too weak to enforce it if I am an employee, have I given equity, consideration and a fair wage to others?

If I am a mother, have I had an outgoing love and no reproaches, or have I neglected my duties to further my own ease and enjoyment?

And if I am a son or daughter, have I shown gratitude and reverence, or have I been arrogant, selfish and ignored the Fourth Commandment of God to honor my parents?

But God is much more interested about tomorrow — Let the dead bury the dead.*

Maybe that is why it is said, "Most get only 10 percent out of life."

The old clock story is a fitting one.

In a reader for early grades a clock was reminded that it would have to tick 31,536,000 times in a year. Astounded, flabbergasted it stopped ticking.

A close friend encouraged and persuaded the clock to tick just one tick at the time. It grudgingly consented but was amazed to find out it wasn't hard at all and went more ticking, one tick at the time, the whole year around.

We reach our goals one day at the time. Discouragement is straight from Hell.

Then, we realize there are no short cuts in reaching goals. Teenagers, for instance, cannot skip over the struggles of adolescence in order to become mature adults.

NOr can older adults avoid transitions into their third age. We learn from others; but the cocoon, unless there is a struggle getting out of the cocoon, it will never fly.

Cut open the cocoon to save struggle, out it comes moody, droopy and dies. Nature never makes haste, watch the rose bud.

We can learn, too, from the tiniest. Put a small obstacle in its path, maybe a hill or tiny valley of sand, and watch it just keep on going to its goal.

Patient perseverance makes the difference.

Serious prayer is absolutely necessary to do God's will, our goal.

This means being docile. Docile is from the Latin, "doceo," which means to teach.

In prayer we are teachable, docile, as Christ was in Getsemane. Prayer and solitude must become inseparable friends.

Our Getsemane Chapel for one hour a week is a tremendous spiritual experience. Blaise Pascal reminds us, "Men's miseries come from their inability to sit quietly and alone with God."

Pray with docility and we begin to live — not just pass the time away. Then we begin to enjoy our prayer. Third, the sound of a child at play, the gentle touch of a caring hand.

We are then capable of finding someone or something beautiful every day. We then serve with love every day, a goal.

Our Lord said, "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant."

Dr. Albert Schweitzer re-echoed the same thought, "The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will somehow find how to serve."

It is only when we serve that we bring out the best in others and ourselves. It is then mainly that we can turn weakness into strength.

Service is the golden chain that binds society, it unlocks the lonely prisons in which we live. We will never be alone. Life is a garden of opportunities. What we do, we do it, we serve, to return to us sooner of later.

Serve with joy and we will never again be strangers. We will then be "individuals." We will become community, We will become Church. We will become firmament. We will begin our Heaven here on earth.