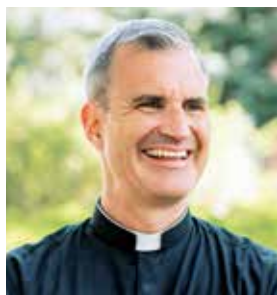




# Our Lady of Wisdom

## THE RAGIN' CAJUN CATHOLIC

Serving the Community at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Since 1923 · 2020 Spring Newsletter



### PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Students, Parishioners, Benefactors, and Alumni,

During the week of March 9, information regarding the spread of COVID-19 and subsequent

safety measures changed at warp speed. As soon as we developed a mitigation plan it had to be adjusted. Before we knew it, we were lamenting postponements and cancellations of liturgies, traditions, activities, ordinations, and fundraisers. Canceling public Masses and reposing Jesus after being able to offer exposition for the first week of the Stay at Home mandate was particularly heart-wrenching.

Our dynamic staff responded quickly to bring you Wisdom Virtual Ministry. Now Mass, Bible studies, small groups, confirmation and RCIA classes, and short teachings and reflections are available online and through live-streams on our website and social media pages.

There have been many silver linings. Our Parochial Vicar, Fr. Pellessier remarked that it is encouraging to see students use this time to really think, to get outside of their normal box, to be creative with their time, and be adventurous with activities like kayaking or hiking, which are naturally socially-distanced. Indeed, this time of quarantine reminds us that we can find great solace

in spending quality time with family and friends and a renewed sense of gratitude for gifts like the beautiful weather we have experienced this past month.

Despite changing circumstances, the human heart doesn't change. I still meet with students (virtually now!) to support and guide them in their spiritual lives. What I take from them is that they, like all of us, continue to long for and find hope in the Lord. Quarantine presents us with a unique opportunity to learn to relate to Jesus, as St. Edith Stein describes, "purely from within<sup>1</sup>." I pray that the fruit of this experience for all of us is a renewed and more trusting relationship with the Lord.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

Rev. Bryce Sibley

*<sup>1</sup>"So far there has been no Mass and Communion; maybe that will come later. Now we have a chance to experience a little how to live purely from within"  
- St. Edith Stein. Written from Westerbork transit camp, August 1942.*

## — WISDOM VIRTUAL MINISTRY —

Wisdom serves during Stay at Home orders and lays the groundwork to thrive when we return to in-person ministry.

### Virtual Ministry Quick Links

Live Stream Masses  
[ourladyofwisdom.org/mass](http://ourladyofwisdom.org/mass)

Fr. Sibley's Homilies  
[soundcloud.com/fathersibley](https://soundcloud.com/fathersibley)

Fr. Pellessier's Homilies  
[soundcloud.com/fr\\_rene-pellessier](https://soundcloud.com/fr_rene-pellessier)



# – MINISTRY RESPONSE –

Our goal is to continue to serve you while we cannot be together physically.

## COLLEGE STUDENT MINISTRY

### Girls Groups

Robin Hebert, Spiritual Director & Wisdom Marriage Ministry Coordinator, shares quotes from the girls she meets with weekly. These college women reflect on sheltering at home:

- ✦ *“I am continuing to read Time for God by Fr. Jacques Philippe and I relate it to my life even more now because mental prayer is keeping me going at this time since I’m not in direct contact with my faith community.” - Casey*
- ✦ *“I think Jesus is using this really strange time to reveal more of my wounds to me in a space where I have ample time to process and start asking for, and allowing in, the graces to start healing on a deeper level.” - Julia*



*Robin Hebert, pictured with her Girls' Group*

- ✦ *“I’ve been praying more than I normally do, which has been great! Especially because I normally struggle more when I am back home, and away from my college community... When I find myself growing anxious, I go to Him and He takes that anxiety away almost immediately and replaces it with peace. And He has provided me this opportunity to be with my family, for which I am extremely thankful.” - Emily*

### FOCUS Fellowship of Catholic University Students

In addition to leading their regular small groups and Bible studies by video conference, our campus missionaries are leading a daily rosary with students. John Bradley, first-year campus missionary, said, “It’s a great way to stay connected with the students, pray together, and have a regular source of community. It has been a real gift to check-in with one another and chat as if we were all just hanging out in person before and after we pray.

It is our hope that this provides a source of light in the darkness and a place where we can all come together to be strengthened and refreshed.”



*Campus Missionaries leading the daily Rosary*



*Mercedes, a Campus Missionary, and her freshmen Bible study gather in the park, before COVID.*

### Adult Formation

Beginning in the fall of 2018, we began one-on-one college student sacramental preparation to better meet the needs of the UL Lafayette community. Adult



*(L to R): Alea Cocke, Alanee Broussard, Alexis Roy, Stone Duvernay*

candidates who were supposed to receive their sacraments at this year’s Easter Vigil eagerly await being brought into the Church and reuniting with the community that provided them with a spiritual home. Katie Austin, Adult Formation Coordinator, is continuing to mentor the candidates through their online classes. At Pentecost, there will be 5 candidates baptized, 5 confirmed, and 3

*Continued on Page 4*



# – FINANCIAL RESPONSE –

Since the emergence of COVID-19 and Louisiana’s Stay at Home order, our method of connection changed but our ministry has not stopped. Whatever the world looks like after the mandate, we want to be ready to make that transition.

## Our Commitment:

- ✦ To provide the Sacraments, community, and formation for UL Lafayette students.
- ✦ To maintain the highest level of ministry and programming for our dynamic community.
- ✦ To maximize the gifts of our staff and those who serve our Ministry with fervor and love.
- ✦ To continue our Mission: To Form Lifelong Disciples of Jesus Christ

## To follow through on our commitments we need to be financially strong, and we have taken the following steps:

- ✦ Wisdom’s Finance Council approved budget cuts and adjustments to reduce this year’s budget by \$96,235.
- ✦ Our team is using creativity and ingenuity in planning for our 2020-2021 academic year, which begins July 1, 2020.

## You Can Help

*We need your continued support to carry out our mission.*

Now more than ever it is vital that we come together as a community of parishioners, benefactors, and alumni to ensure the presence of Our Lady of Wisdom as a shelter for students on campus and as a nurturing home in the midst of chaos. There are various channels from which to give. Every gift in any amount is needed and will benefit Wisdom during this emergency period and, God willing, into the next academic year, which begins July 1, 2020.

## CARES Act Tax Incentive Provision

A provision of the CARES Act provides that any individual who makes up to a \$300 charitable gift, will **lower their taxable income** by the amount of their gift.

*Consult your tax advisor for details and consider a \$300 COVID emergency gift to Wisdom.*

## How to Make a COVID Emergency Gift:

Your gift provides immediate support for Wisdom’s operating fund. There are four channels in which to give:

### Give Online:

[ragincajuncatholics.org/donate](http://ragincajuncatholics.org/donate)

### Venmo:

@ragincajuncatholics



Scan QR Code to Give

### Text to Give:

- Text \$ amount to 337-242-3522.
- Enter your information during your first gift and you will be set for future gifts.
- Save this number to your contacts as “Wisdom Text to Give.”

### Mail a Gift:

Our Lady of Wisdom  
Attn: COVID Emergency Gift  
PO BOX 43599  
Lafayette, LA 70504

## Budget Overview

**Original Budget** (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

**\$1,359,782**

**COVID-Adjusted Budget** (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

*Original budget reduced by \$96,235*

**\$1,263,547**

**Budget Expended** (as of March 31, 2020)

**\$987,933**

**Total funds needed through June 30, 2020**

**\$275,614**





College Student Ministry continued from Page 2

brought into full communion with the Church. Of the 13, 11 are UL students ranging from freshmen year to graduate school! The fall college student group included 15 Confirmations, 1 first Communion, 2 Baptisms, and 2 brought into full Communion!

### JOHN 15

John 15, the program launched in fall of 2019, is made of small co-ed groups of about 7 freshmen. Groups are led by a co-ed pair of upperclassmen who mentor the freshmen and serve as a bridge in their adjustment to college. These small groups become like family, and the bonds created in the fall are still strong today! The entire John 15 group met virtually to process this unprecedented time of quarantine. Fr. Sibley was their guest speaker.



*Catherine Richard lets her grandmother in on the fun for the JOHN 15 reunion with her Family Group and Fr. Sibley!*

## WISDOM YOUTH MINISTRY



*Youth Group Retreat in February*

College students get real-world ministry experience leading Wisdom's Youth Group. Since COVID-19 upended our routines, youth group leaders Joseph Kokenge and Gillian Pierro shared their relationship story with the Wisdom High School Youth Group via ZOOM. Joseph recently proposed to Gillian on the Feast of St. Joseph, and they shared their beautiful experience of virtuous Christian dating with the high schoolers. She said yes!

### SOLA South Louisiana Giving Day

*Help build the teams who make Wisdom's ministry possible.*

**MAY 7, 2020** • [southlouisianagivingday.org/RCC](http://southlouisianagivingday.org/RCC)

On May 7, we invite you to give in support of Wisdom's Ministry. Every gift will be matched dollar for dollar. Your gifts will help to strengthen the foundation of our ministry and build the teams who make ministry possible.



*Top (L to R): Noah Deshotels, Dylan Allen, Grant Young, Joseph Kokenge, Seth Ransonet, Fr. Pellessier, Mathew Ardoin. Bottom (L to R) Alaina Andry, Olivia Hebert, Brenna Murphree, Abby Ponthier, Abby Bourque*

### FOCUS Missionary Team

Our campus missionaries invite students to participate in and lead Bible studies, mentor students in living out the Gospel of Christ, and challenge students to prayerfully discern their vocation. They dedicate 100% of their time to student outreach, and inviting new students into a life with Christ.

### Campus Ministry Team

The Catholic Student Center integrates the Sacraments, formation, retreats & conferences, music ministry, leadership & evangelization, and vocations discernment to help form the whole person in a life with Christ. The foundation of our ministry is built on the personal relationships we form with students.

### Let's Keep in Touch!

#### Administration

[jeane@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:jeane@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Campus Life

[mathew@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:mathew@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Communications

[jori@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:jori@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Development & Giving

[mary@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:mary@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Marriage Ministry

[robin@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:robin@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Parish Life

[veronica@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:veronica@ourladyofwisdom.org)

#### Formation/RCIA

[katie@ourladyofwisdom.org](mailto:katie@ourladyofwisdom.org)

### Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic Church & Catholic Student Center

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