

"The Lord is enthroned above the flood." — Psalm 29:10

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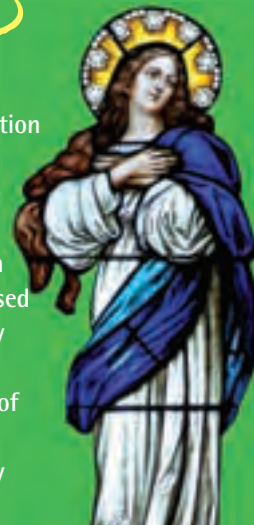
GRACE IN ACTION

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™



celebrate August

- 6 Transfiguration of the Lord
- 8 St. Dominic
- 11 St. Clare
- 15 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 20 St. Bernard
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modern disciple

Seeing gifts in the midst of loss



Three years ago this month, Hurricane Katrina caused the largest natural disaster in the history of the United States. Dr. Brian Bertucci was and still is the corner of St. Bernard Parish, just outside New Orleans. His heroic efforts have been cited by a number of Catholic and secular organizations. Bertucci attended to

both the living and the dead, and personal losses at his home.

"People ask what it was like, and I tell them it was like when you go out to start your lawnmower, but it doesn't start; and somebody stole your automobile; and your house burned down; your business went bankrupt; and all your friends and family died or moved away. Not a single aspect of life was left intact," he said.



Hurricane Katrina desecrated Immaculate Heart of Mary Church

James Baca photo

"People ask, 'How could you stand to lose all those things?' and I say how blessed I was to have things in the first place to lose. Everything you have in life — possessions, friends or family — is a gift from God. We have these gifts only temporarily. God will take them back. In Katrina, God took back everything on the same day."

What sustained the doctor in the face of such profound adversity? "Little things — like the joy of getting a toothbrush and toothpaste again," he said. "In my yard, all the trees were dead; the grass was all brown, but there was this little runt of a sunflower growing up — bright yellow and green. To me the sunflower was a gift, so you focus on the flower. God always seemed to give us a gift when we most needed it."

Most physicians left the area, but Bertucci remains, committed to building a hospital and restoring medical care in St. Bernard Parish.

A graduate of Jesuit High School in New Orleans, Bertucci, at one time, aspired to be a Jesuit. He prescribes spiritual healing along with ministering to bodily health. "I like to give prayer cards to patients," he said. "I think maybe I've touched as many lives as a doctor as I would have as a priest."

faith fact Oldest U.S. cathedral

Despite a reputation for voodoo and Mardi Gras merrymaking, New Orleans is home to a strong and long-standing Catholic identity. The city's Cathedral of St. Louis, King of France — a minor basilica established as a parish in 1720 — is the oldest Catholic cathedral in the U.S.



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The fleur de lis long has been a symbol of New Orleans, linking the city to French royalty and providing for Catholics a symbol of Mary. Interestingly, the Louisiana flag depicts a pelican, which since ancient times has served as a symbol of the Catholic Church. The pelican, often depicted in Church art and architecture — especially in association with tabernacles — represents Holy Mother Church because the bird has a reputation for self-sacrifice, connected to the legend that it is willing to wound itself to feed blood to her young. ✿

"No man has a right to lead such a life of contemplation as to forget in his own ease the service due to his neighbor."

— St. Augustine (Aug. 28)

Color your world with hope

“Refracted through the prisms of countless individual vocations, this way of life embodies and expresses the one mission of Christ: to do God’s will.”

— Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response
U.S. Catholic bishops’ stewardship pastoral

In Genesis, following the great flood, a rainbow appears as a sign of hope. When we do our best to embody and express God’s will, we can better weather winds of change. When we discern and fulfill our individual vocations, we can walk in the sometimes stormy world as living signs of hope. Whatever our vocation, we color our surroundings.

How do you embody the mission of Christ? How do you express God’s will?
How might you acknowledge and encourage individuals in their vocations?

Mea culpa: In our May issue, in *Sowing Seeds*, we mistakenly cited the fruits of the Holy Spirit as gifts. Thanks for reading so closely.

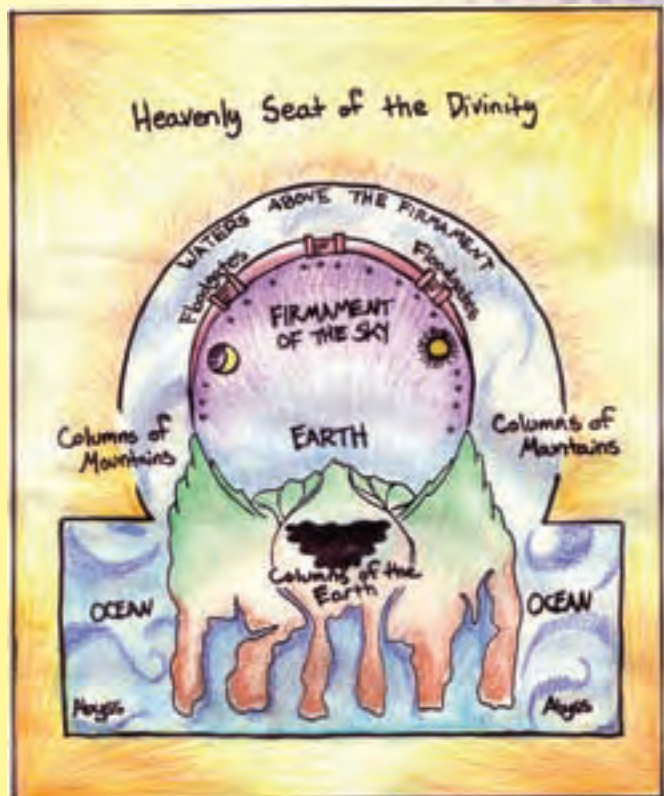


Illustration by Quincy Benton

Ancient Hebrew Universe

kidscorner You and the universe

In ancient times, the Hebrews, our spiritual ancestors, formed a simple vision of the universe. Today, science and technology help us better understand God’s creation and our role in it. Science can prove many things, yet many parts of God’s natural world remain mysterious. As Catholic stewards, we do our best to do what’s best for all of God’s creation. Your actions affect the universe!

the way we pray

The fruit of faith

“People are often unreasonable, irrational and self-centered.

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

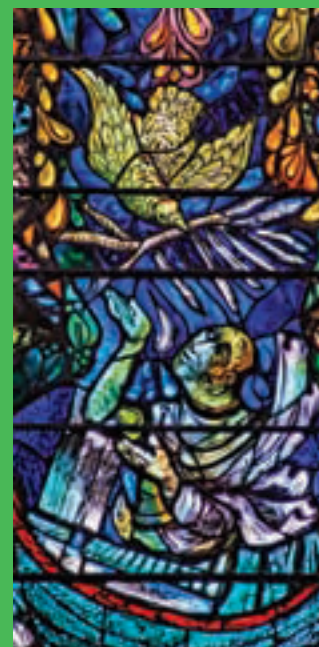
Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.”

Found written on the wall in
Blessed Mother Teresa’s home for
children in Calcutta, India



Noah and the flood

try this Bless the St. Bernard Project

The St. Bernard Project, a nonprofit, began in 2006 to help families rebuild their homes destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. After the hurricane, 100 percent of houses in the county were deemed uninhabitable. After decades of paying premiums, 75 percent of families in the parish no longer had flood insurance when the hurricane hit, since insurance companies had declared the area outside the floodplain. About \$10,000 of raised and donated money and 8-12 weeks of volunteer labor will rebuild a home that has been gutted to the studs. More than 100 homes have been successfully completed.

Visit the website
www.stbernardproject.org to donate or volunteer, or send your check payable to the St. Bernard Project/IH Center, 8324 Parc Place, Chalmette, LA 70043.

