



333 TWIN OAKS DRIVE, RACELAND, LA 70394 | 985.537.6002

July 15, 2022

Dear Parish Family,

We have much to celebrate and be grateful for as we reflect on the work that God has done and is continuing to do in our parishes of Saint Hilary and Saint Anthony. In particular, I wish to take this time to highlight our youth formation programs since this aspect of our parishes is a vital part of who we are as a faith community. The youth in our parishes are not only the future of the Church; they are the Church now, and as members of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth they deserve our intentional pastoral care.

Over the years, Saint Hilary and Saint Anthony have enjoyed the privilege of boasting in what the Lord has done through past youth ministry experiences and opportunities. Many have expressed to me the fond memories that they have from the mission trips to Saltillo, Mexico, the Youth Rallies and the Steubenvilles on the Bayou, the youth Way of the Cross production, summers of Vacation Bible School, and at the heart of it all, the space for our youth to socialize within their own age groups while growing in their faith—together. We are truly blessed to have had such a strong youth formation program! Covid and Ida have taken a toll on much of what we once held dear—including these programs, but as faith-filled people, we look toward the future with greater hope in what is possible.

After spending two years here as your associate priest and listening to the needs and desires of our parishes, I now wish, as your shepherd, to give further direction and more focused attention to the youth of our parishes. You will recall that in my first letter addressed to our parishes, I expressed my desire that we be a bridge for greater unity between our parishes of Saint Hilary and Saint Anthony since many of our resources are shared in the community and in our church parishes.

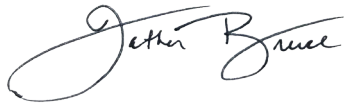
Through much discernment and consultation, in keeping with this vision of unity, and in recognizing that in the past our youth formation experiences have been most fruitful when our parishes have had someone employed in youth leadership positions, I have decided to place the responsibility of leading our two youth formation programs under the direction of Mrs. Sarah Salinas, who is currently the coordinator of youth formation at St. Anthony. Over the years, Sarah has exemplified extraordinary leadership in forming our youth and leading our mentors in growing closer to the Lord at Saint Anthony. Working alongside her, I have witnessed the great love and zeal that she has for our youth. I have the utmost confidence that she will bring that same energy to the parish of Saint Hilary as she takes on this added responsibility.

I wish to make it clear that while the parishes and youth formation programs will continue to operate separately, this appointment will help in building greater unity and focusing our attention and shared resources on the needs of both parishes' youth as we move forward together.

I want to take this time to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have been involved in teaching our youth, in particular Mrs. Diane Melancon, who directed our youth formation program at St. Hilary for sixteen years from 2005 to 2021, and Mrs. Angel St. Pe, who worked with our youth last year and graciously lent her time to our program as a volunteer coordinator. As most of you know, Mrs. Diane transitioned last year into a new role as the Executive Director of Administration for our parishes. As a result of her prior experience, Mrs. Diane has agreed to aid Sarah as she transitions into this role, for which I am most appreciative.

It is my pleasure to welcome Sarah into this added role which will take effect on August 1, 2022. Our formation program for both parishes will resume in September. Communication regarding the 2022-23 formation year will be sent out in early August. During this interim period, questions or concerns may be directed to me at the parish office. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you need anything. I ask for your prayers and support for those undergoing this transition and most importantly for the youth of our parishes. May they be formed after the image and likeness of Christ who is our salvation.

Your Parish Priest,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Father Bruce". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name "Your Parish Priest,".