

## PASTOR'S CORNER



My family and I evacuated from New Orleans to Baton Rouge in a caravan the day before Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005. The trip to BR took 7 hours in bumper-to-bumper traffic. The family home where we were to stay had 18 people, including a newborn baby. The reality of that scene didn't hit me until I walked into the house and saw the whole clan together. At that very moment, the phone rang. It was by seminary buddy, Fr. Tim Goodly, inviting me to evacuate to Lake Charles to his quiet rectory. Bye, Mom. Bye, Dad. Not even several more hours of bumper-to-bumper traffic could dissuade from saying yes to the offer. I remained with Fr. Tim in Lake Charles until Archbishop Hughes announced a plan for the priests of New Orleans. I ended up staying and working in Baton Rouge for four months, but I will never forget the kindness of Fr. Tim – and how he saved me from a close encounter of the wrong kind with my family!

Turnabout is fair play. Two Tuesdays ago, Calcasieu Parish issued a mandatory evacuation order ahead of Hurricane Laura. I invited Fr. Tim to stay at the SFX rectory instead of at a packed family dwelling two hours from home. He accepted. Laura hit and left a trail of devastation reminiscent of Katrina. As of this writing, basic services and utilities still are unavailable in Lake Charles. I told Fr. Tim he is welcome to stay at our rectory as long as he likes. Currently, he is spending most of his time on the phone with staff, parishioners, insurance agents and contractors – just like after Katrina.

The Lord invites us to be a shelter in the storms of life for our families, friends, neighbors and strangers: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink . . ." (Mt. 25) So, let's pray for all those impacted by Laura, let's contribute financially to help them, and let's ask Jesus about other ways in which we can be "shelter in their storm." It is time to be Christ to our neighbors and to remember: the next time, the one needing shelter in the storm may be us.

God bless,  
Fr. Joe