

The Importance of Renewing One's Faith

Mr. Dylan Labrie – St. Agnes Parishioner

Re-new-al

- 1. the act or process of renewing something, or the state of being renewed**
- 2. something that is being or has been renewed**
- 3. the rebuilding and revitalization of an urban area**

It is important when facing the prospect of renewing one's faith to begin with the very definition of what renewal is. I could not help noticing the relevance in this definition to my life and the events that are going on around us during Lenten season and in our own St. Agnes Church.

The source of my own spiritual foundation began in a small central Louisiana community called LeBeau. It is the birthplace of my father, Will Labrie and was the one time home of my grandparents, Harrington and Ernestine Labrie. LeBeau is one of those "blink and you'll miss it" towns. Actually to call it a town would be generous, what LeBeau simply is not is a city, town or even a village, it is a small community made up primarily of the ancestors of a former colony of freed slaves.

My own spiritual foundation grew with each visit to my grandparents in LeBeau. This is where I experienced Saturday evening Mass at the "LeBeau church" with my immediate family and grandparents. The church was too small for a choir, but a bass guitar, percussion ensemble, and a vocal group of parishioners more than made up for the lack thereof. The sounds of the "soul" ensemble and the songs sung by the parishioners in their southern Louisiana patois nearly elevated the church off its foundation. Immaculate Conception's liturgy also took on a distinctive ness as it was accentuated by the local flavor. Through it all, this became the anchor of my spiritual foundation.

Over the span of my life, my spiritual journey has taken many twists and turns, and an occasional lapse. One such lapse occurred in 2001 after my family and I arrived in Cincinnati. With a newborn in the household, we were not efficient in finding a church home. It was not until I was talking to Waldo Jeff at work one day and he mentioned the kinte cloth robed choir of his church. My spiritual renewal had begun.

Since 2002, my family and I have found a source of spiritual renewal by way of the St. Agnes Church in Bond Hill. This renewal has grown as I not only have become more immersed in the liturgy, but also in time spent getting to know my fellow parishioners, taking advantage of spiritual education opportunities, and the opportunity to volunteer my time. For me personally, this is not only a renewal of spirit, but it is also a renewal of a foundation that began in the LeBeau church. My last visit to the little church on the bayou was my grandfather's funeral in December 1995. In time, I will make a return pilgrimage to reacquaint myself with all the LeBeau church has to offer and if I time it right, I will visit during "Trail Ride" week so I can experience the "best backbone dinners in town." In the meantime, not unlike the LeBeau church, St. Agnes Church offers a since of community, a renewal all its own.

Every Sunday, as I hear our three priests and our deacon speak with a reverence of relevance, and our choir and musicians resonate reverberations of heartfelt spirit, I too at times, still hear the echoes of that little church on the bayou and feel a renewal in my soul. We can all experience our very own renewal in faith by making a choice to begin with "baby steps" to become more involved in everything our church has to offer.

Feel free to take a virtual visit "down on the bayou" to the Immaculate Conception Church via the church website: lebeauchurch.com.

Office of African American Catholic Ministries