



Society of the Sacred Heart
United States – Canada

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Alligators to Zydeco Event in New Orleans Raises Awareness

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While Tropical Storm Debby swirled in the Gulf of Mexico, members of the Healthy Waters Roundtable made airport runs to pick up participants from New York City and San Diego who were gathering at Duchesne House for a week long immersion in the culture and ecological reality of the Gulf Coast. In all, nine people, including five Religious of the Sacred Heart, two associates and two friends took part in some or all of the “Alligators to Zydeco” events which included a tour of a decommissioned oil rig used for training purposes, an overnight stay on Grand Isle, a pontoon boat ride in the Gulf of Mexico (during which we and our cell phones and cameras got soaked by an unexpected surge of sea water from the wake of a huge supply boat), a tour of the Atchafalaya swamp in a tiny six-passenger motor boat and an explanation of the work of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation’s successful effort to clean up the once polluted Lake so that it is once again available for swimming and fishing. And yes, on the last day, we did go out dancing to Zydeco music!

While there was no denying the fact that we were having an amazing amount of fun, we also took time to reflect together at night on the beauty we had seen and on our responsibility to do what we can to protect it and to find some practical ways to help. We spent several hours volunteering with the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and we decided to seriously think about ways the Religious of the Sacred Heart can lend their name to the Atchafalaya Basin Keeper’s struggling yet astonishingly successful efforts to take legal action against those who want to clear cut the few remaining stands of cypress to make mulch.

This event was an example of our commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation being lived out in joy and while we will certainly plan something similar next year, we also encourage others who are passionate about something or someplace to invite members of the extended Sacred Heart Family to join them in a similar, prayerful learning experience.

~ Diane Roche, RSCJ

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Society of the Sacred Heart, United States - Canada

Address: 4120 Forest Park Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63108

Phone: 314.652.1500

Fax: 314.534.6800



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