

Bishop decides not to re-build mission at Sabine Pass, Texas

Bishop Curtis Guillory, SVD, announced Oct 21. that after much prayer and consultation he has decided to close the Catholic mission at Sabine Pass, known as St. Paul Mission, and not rebuild the small church which was destroyed by Hurricane Ike after being rebuilt following Hurricane Rita.

“It has been a full year since Hurricane Ike ravaged the Mission – just nine months after it had reopened from repairs and renovations following Rita. During this period, I have reflected often on the future of this small Catholic community and just recently decided that the only wise and prudent decision for me to make was not to rebuild,” said Bishop Guillory in making the announcement.

Bishop Guillory said his decision was obviously not made hastily but came only after prayer, consultation with the mission’s pastor and the Presbyteral Council (priests advisory council), study and observation.

“When the mission was established in 1955, it numbered 60 families, probably no more than 180 individuals. When I celebrated Mass in Sabine Pass in August of this year, only 10 persons attended. As the population has shifted, it has become apparent that St. Paul is no longer viable or sustainable,” Bishop Guillory said.

Bishop Guillory pointed out that during its history, the mission has had to rely heavily on support from the local churches of St. John, St. Mary and St. James in Port Arthur to which it was entrusted, as well as the Diocese of Beaumont.

Bishop Guillory said that when the mission was rebuilt after Hurricane Rita, he and the Catholics in Sabine Pass hoped that the Mission would revitalize and prosper. “Though the Mission may not have grown and prospered and though the population may have shifted, I know the faith of those few families in Sabine Pass has remained strong,” said Bishop Guillory.

“They will be welcomed by the nearby parishes of St. John, St. Theresa, the Little Flower of Jesus, and St. James – all of which are just 15 or 16 miles away. I wish I could have a Catholic Church in every small area in Southeast Texas, but that is not possible,” said Bishop Guillory.

“However, we are one community in Christ and these neighboring parishes will welcome our Sabine Pass brothers and sisters with open arms.”

The closing of the mission will be effective Monday, November 2, 2009.