

Counselors'  
CornerSpirituality  
can be  
source  
of strength

A person's spirituality can be a tremendous source of support during difficult and stressful times such as these.

For some, this means practicing formal religion. For others, it is their belief and relationship with their higher power. For others, it means other things. Regardless of how you practice your spirituality, spirituality focuses on coming to peace with yourself, realizing that all of humanity is interrelated, and appreciating life. While living in a shelter you can rely on your spirituality in the following ways to help you cope with your situation:

- If you are a member of a church and practice a specific religion, find out from shelter volunteers where the nearest church, synagogue, etc. is and how you might attain transportation there.

- Ask shelter volunteers if priests, ministers, rabbis and other religious persons will be visiting the shelter and plan to meet with them when they do.

- If they are not scheduled, ask the volunteers to contact them and invite them to come.

- Spend at least a few minutes every day in silence focusing on your inner being and inner peace.

- Pray, meditate, or do whatever you feel comfortable doing.

- Integrate your spiritual and/or religious beliefs into everything you do and say, so that there is consistency in your values and behaviors.

- Appreciate your uniqueness and your connectedness to all of the people living with you in the shelter.

Submitted by University Counseling Center.

## THE WORD

The Word is a publication of the Nicholls State University Department of Mass Communication. It is a free distribution publication intended to meet the information needs of those housed in campus evacuation shelters.

## Staff

**Editors**  
Nicki Boudreaux  
James Stewart

**Staff Members**  
Christina V. Berry  
Kyle Carrier  
John Lee  
Raymond Legendre  
Chris Singleton  
Shelley Sparks  
Brandy Toups  
Michelby Whitehead

Moving ahead  
Gulf Coast rebuilding efforts get underway

Associated Press

A month after Hurricane Katrina roared in, political leaders are taking their first steps toward rebuilding New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region, but they are heading off in different – and possibly conflicting – directions.

The mayor of New Orleans is creating one commission to oversee the task. State officials say they are best suited to handle the reconstruction. And some on the Gulf Coast and in Washington want to see a strong federal role to coordinate the huge undertaking and guard against mispending or corruption.

“Right now, it’s just like our leaders were dazed during the disaster. I think they’re still a bit dazed with just the enormity of the situation,” said Rolfe McCollister Jr., publisher of the Greater Baton Rouge Business Report. “Normally, cities build over time. Now suddenly they say, ‘Where do we start?’”

The disaster’s scope has made it difficult even to bring federal, state and local leaders together to discuss the challenges, said U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon, a Democrat who represents a huge swath of southeastern Louisiana.

“Until you get the people back into the community, where do you meet with them? Who are they? Are they the same people that used to be, or is it a whole new cadre of people?” he said. “If I said I knew the answer, I’d be lying to you.”

Still, some efforts are moving ahead:

- Mayor Ray Nagin has appointed 18 local leaders – racially balanced, with Hispanic and Vietnamese representation – to a new Commission for



(AP Photo)

Construction workers Edwin Munoz, left, and Javier Pimeda hammer fasteners for a blue tarp on a roof top of a damaged home in the Garden District of New Orleans Wednesday.

the Future of New Orleans, said prominent developer Joseph Canizaro, who is on the commission.

- Gov. Kathleen Blanco is rumored to be exploring her own panel on rebuilding, several business leaders said. Her administration is gathering input from officials in the state and beyond, but no group has been formed yet, said Michael Olivier, the state’s economic development director.

- The Louisiana congressional delegation has called for \$250 billion in federal aid to rebuild flood-ravaged New Orleans and repair hurricane damage elsewhere across the state.

Others have floated the idea of a regional group that ties together the entire Gulf Coast. Some have cited as inspiration the government-driven

Tennessee Valley Authority of the 1930s that spurred development across much of the South.

U.S. Rep. Bobby Jindal, a Republican who represents New Orleans suburbs, suggested a public-private redevelopment authority that can integrate federal support with local needs.

“Every day we don’t get something like this in place, that’s another day of lost opportunity. I don’t think we can do this soon enough,” he said.

President Bush said Tuesday he is also considering how best to coordinate the recovery efforts.

“The vision and the element of reconstruction is just beginning and there may be a need for an interface with a particular person to help to make sure that the vision becomes reality,” he said.

Politicians, business leaders and urban planners all point to different challenges and questions facing the region, many of which are interconnected: how to keep a below-sea-level city safe from the water that surrounds it, how much of the city’s housing to rebuild, how to address the poverty endemic to the city.

Along with the urgency comes worries of political turf fights, no-bid contracts and Louisiana’s legendary corruption.

Some of that’s already happening, said Buddy Roemer, a former Louisiana governor and four-term member of Congress. “The majority thread I see, unfortunately, from the political forces, are the ‘let’s-serve-my-interests’ thread,” he said. “Now they see the cash cow of government and they see the prospect of getting

## Return to city begins

Associated Press

Streams of cars filled with business owners started to make their way back into newly reopened sections of hurricane-ravaged New Orleans on Thursday, some vowing to rebuild their city, some pulling out.

A month after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin invited business owners back into the city, and prepared to allow most residents to return over the next week.

For some, Thursday marked their first view of what was left. Others didn’t need a formal invitation to return. Those who had already slipped in were ready to welcome back their fellow business owners and patrons.

At Igor’s, a pub and coin laundry in the city’s Garden District, owner Halina Margan had returned after Katrina. She was ready to open for business on Thursday, and get ready for the influx of returning residents.

“Igor’s has never closed until this nasty little ... hurricane,” Margan said. “It’s lonely here. We need people.”

At precisely 7:20 a.m., a long line of cars began snaking down St.

Charles Avenue, the Garden District’s main thoroughfare, lined with stately homes and small businesses.

Mary Russo, of Jefferson, La., parked her car Thursday in front of Shanty Too, her niece’s boarded-up boutique on chic Magazine Street, and started to cry. The trash on the streets was the worst, she said through her tears.

Her niece couldn’t bear to come, so Russo and other relatives were there to bring what was salvageable to her other shop in St. Francisville, about 30 miles north of Baton Rouge.

The Magazine Street store will close down for good, Russo said.

“I just can’t believe this has happened to the city,” she said. “So much of this could have been avoided.”

At least in the early hours, the return seemed orderly and smooth, without massive holdups on the highways leading into the city. Thousands had come in by around 8 a.m., Police spokesman Capt. Marlon Defillo said.

“We’re experiencing no real difficulty,” he said. “Everybody’s cooperating. We see a great number of people coming in.”



(AP Photo)

In this aerial photo from Thursday traffic, stacks up on Highway 90 going into New Orleans on the day that the city reopened neighborhoods.