

# CHURCH TODAY

Volume XLV, No. 11

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

November 17, 2014

## ON THE INSIDE

### **Archbishop Greg Aymond is elected secretary of USCCB during assembly**

U.S. bishops elected Archbishop Gregory A. Aymond of New Orleans as the new secretary-elect of the USCCB. The Conference of Bishops decided other issues as well during the annual Fall General Assembly in Baltimore. Read more on page 3.

### **Advent starts Nov. 30**

Advent starts Nov. 30. How are you preparing your heart for Christ this Advent? Go to page 5 for a list of things to do and resources to make this the best Advent ever!

### **St. Augustine Church - Isle Brevelle is put on National Historic Register**

St. Augustine Church and Cemetery in Isle Brevelle was officially placed on the national Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of Interior on Sept. 24, 2014. Find out more about how this happened and what it means to the community and to Louisiana, pg. 11.



2014  
HAPPY  
*Thanksgiving*

### **Thanksgiving Prayer**

Gracious Father, we thank you for Your great generosity to us throughout our days;  
You have created us and given us the gift of the human family.  
You have shared with us Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and have instilled in us a living faith in Him.  
Thank you for our homes, our families, and our friends.  
Help us to love and respect one another and to strive for the blessings of peace throughout the world.  
We thank you for all human rights that flow from Your creative power and providential care.  
Thank you for our health, our work, and our leisure.  
Help us to assist any who are hungry, sick, alone, or suffering - that we may share grateful hearts together.  
Bless, too, the food and the feast that we share on this Thanksgiving Day;  
all taken from your great bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

*by Rev. Stephen Scott Chemino, J.D., V.G. - 2014*



# Winter's early arrival challenges Iraqi Christians who fled militants

By Dale Gavlak  
Catholic News Service

AINKAWA, Iraq (CNS) -- Sister Habiba's kindly face is etched with sadness as she surveys the muddy field where dozens of tents sheltering displaced Iraqi Christians once stood.

Cold, punishing rains and blustery winds swept through the encampment Oct. 20, earlier than expected for winter, crashing down the tents in the dead of night. Shoes, slippers and toys were strewn about, stuck in the muddy mess, signaling the mad dash for safety.

The recent wintery deluge drove out families, adding to the woes for those who recently ran for their lives from the brutal Islamic State militant takeover of Iraq's historic Christian heartland.

"The tents quickly filled with water and collapsed. They were engulfed in mud. Some people had to be taken to the hospital. This happened at 3 a.m.," said the nun, one of four Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena providing the displaced with shelter, food, hygiene and water.

They, along with a lone priest, serve about 1,500 displaced Catholics from Mosul, Qaraqosh and Bartella, Christian towns in northern Iraq overrun by the Islamist extremists in early August. All were forced to flee rather than convert to Islam, pay a protection tax or be killed.

Now they shelter both inside and outside of a youth sports center on the outskirts of Ainkawa, a mainly Christian enclave that is part of the Kurdistan regional government's capital, Irbil.

Sister Habiba and fellow Dominican Sister Ban, both from Qaraqosh, said they never realized that the danger posed by the Islamic State's capture of Mosul



**SYRIAN REFUGEES REST WHILE COOKING MEAL AT AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON.** Syrian refugees rest while cooking a meal at an informal settlement in Bekaa, Lebanon, Oct. 16. Msgr. Giampietro Dal Toso, secretary of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, who just returned from a visit to Syria said "the humanitarian situation is worse than I thought." (CNS photo/Mohamed Azakir, Reuters)

in June would eventually reach their own predominately Christian town.

"We thought we would remain safe. But suddenly the situation changed," said Sister Habiba, who, along with the other women religious and clergy, requested that only their first names be used.

"There was shelling. In the morning, we discovered 3 bodies on the street outside our home. They exploded and body parts were in the air and on the walls. It was heartbreaking to witness such tragedy and the trauma all are experiencing," she said, suddenly choking up and unable to speak.

"What is this Islamic State that is frightening the world? More should be done to remove these militants who have caused great human suffering to our people," implored Sister Ban, director of one of Qaraqosh's Catholic schools.

"People have lost their homes and livelihoods," Sister Ban told Catholic News Service. "The children cannot attend school as many facilities are housing the displaced. The youth and men have no work. No one knows what the future holds."

The sport center itself is bursting at the seams with the displaced. Mattresses cover the floors of the two-story building like scattered dominoes; tall piles of colorful blankets fill corners. Families camp out helter-skelter within the facility's rooms, but there is no privacy because space is at a premium. What is left of their worldly possessions is contained in some small suitcases and plastic bags.

Babies cry as people talk loudly; silence is a rarity. A badly

traumatized woman wanders from room to room, muttering. But at least these people are living inside a building, rather than exposed to the elements outdoors.

"Our bishop has managed to get about 60 trailers, which are more stable to shelter against rain and the snow we later expect to get in January," said Syriac Catholic Father Bashar. The trailers can each hold seven family members and now house those whose tents were swept away.

"But we need far more trailers to house the many people coming for aid," he said. "They have run out of money and there is no safe place for them elsewhere."

Other displaced Christians have camped out in churches, unfinished buildings and parks scattered throughout the town. But the early onset of winter here has signaled yet another danger to those bereft of safe shelter.

At the unfinished Ankawa Mall, some 2,500 Christians are housed on three levels of roughly hewn concrete floors. Catholic, Orthodox and the Assembly of God churches are providing food, carpets, blankets and other basics to the families.

Children dart to and fro playing tag against the backdrop of washed shirts and socks strewn across makeshift clotheslines. Women complain of back pain with the constant hauling of water to wash dishes and clothes.

See, SYRIAN REFUGEES, pg. 2

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## Help Families in the Conflict-Torn Middle East

The CRS-supported Caritas Lebanon Migrants Center (CLMC) is currently providing assistance to thousands of Syrian families who have fled the extreme violence in their home country. As conflict worsens in the Middle East, millions of refugees and displaced people need our support.

- In Iraq, the deteriorating security situation has caused mass displacement: 200,000 people are living in collective centers.
- In Gaza, hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed, and the rapid escalation of violence has devastated current prospects for peacebuilding between Israelis and Palestinians.
- In Syria, more than 2 million people—mostly women and children—have sought refuge in neighboring countries.

With Caritas partners, we provide families with essential living supplies, support for safe housing, hygiene kits, medical care and trauma counseling. Please pray for the families affected by the terrifying violence. And please give generously to strengthen our response to the conflicts in the Middle East.

To donate, go to <http://emergencies.crs.org>



# U.S. bishops meet in Baltimore for annual Fall General Assembly

## Bishops approve items on liturgy, elect Archbishop Greg Aymond as secretary of USCCB

BALTIMORE—The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) approved several liturgical items, including revisions to the liturgy of the hours and a revision of guidelines for the celebration of the sacraments with persons with disabilities during their annual Fall General Assembly in Baltimore, November 11. The bishops also approved to pursue a revision of the section of the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health care Services” on collaboration with non-Catholic health entities, and advanced a cause for canonization.

The bishops voted on the following five liturgical items presented by the Committee on Divine Worship:

- A revised English translation of the ritual book, “Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar” was approved with 168 votes in favor, 6 against and 2 abstaining.

- The first official English translation of the ritual book, “Exorcisms and Related Supplications” was approved in a 179-5-2 vote.

- The bishops also voted 167-34-2 to approve modifications to the “Revised Grail Psalter” including improving the translation to facilitate easier proclamation and singing.



**ARCHBISHOP GREGORY M. AYMOND OF NEW ORLEANS**, center, listens to a speaker Nov. 10 during the annual fall general assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore. Archbishop Aymond was elected secretary of the USCCB during the fall general assembly. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

- An English translation of the “Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours” that includes prayers used for the feast days of saints who have been added to the General Calendar since 1984, was approved in a 210-2-0 vote.

These items, passed by two thirds of the Latin-rite bishops, will be sent to Rome for approval.

- The bishops also approved by a 207-1-1 vote, to begin the

work on updates and revisions to the 1995 document “Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities.”

- The bishops also voted 213-2-1 in favor of pursuing a revision of Part Six of the “Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health care Services” to incorporate guidance the USCCB received from the Vatican’s Con-

gregation for the Doctrine of the Faith last February. This action item was presented by the USC-

CB Committee on Doctrine.

- By a voice vote, the bishops also approved the cause for sainthood of Fr. Paul Wattson. Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York, sought this episcopal consultation, which is a step in the Catholic Church’s canonization process.

- Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Raleigh, N.C., chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations announced the release of “Guidelines for Receiving Pastoral Ministers in the United States, Third Edition.” The resource will provide information for dioceses, eparchies and religious communities to prepare international pastoral ministers for their service and the communities that receive them.

- The bishops elected Archbishop Greg Aymond of New Orleans as the new secretary-elect of the Conference and Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi of Mobile, Alabama, chairman-elect of the Committee on National Collections.

## Syrian refugees

From pg. 1

Partitions have been installed to ward off rain, wind and cold as well as provide some privacy to the families in the unfinished

building. The churches have also tried to improve safety by installing guard rails to prevent people from falling. But all admit that the conditions are less than ideal.

The United Nations has said that more than 800,000 Christians, Yezidis and other minorities displaced by Islamic State attacks in Iraq are especially vulnerable as winter has begun. It said that insulated mattresses, thermal blankets, warm clothes for children and food are needed.

Zerene Haddad, Middle East and North Africa regional communication officer for Jesuit Refugee Service, said aid agencies had just started preparations for winter in northern Iraq’s Kurdistan region, where families could face more than three feet of snow and temperatures as low as 5 degrees Fahrenheit.

Most families are living in tents, which are not warm enough, she told CNS.

“It could be a catastrophe there,” she warned.

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During the month of November the Church specially calls to mind those who have gone before us in faith and have completed their earthly journey.

Each year the month begins with two liturgical celebrations, All Saints on November 1, followed by the Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed the next day. Also, during November each year we invite all families who have lost a loved one during the past year to a special Bereavement Mass at St. Joseph Center.

Additionally, we have scheduled a special Mass in the cathedral for deceased members of fire departments and law enforcement agencies throughout the diocese.



## ONE IN THE LORD

Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog  
Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria

Invitation letters have been sent to each jurisdiction asking them to provide us with the names of their deceased and inviting them to send representatives to the Mass. Needless to say that each of these are a strong reminder of our ties to those who have died.

On November 23 we bring

our year of liturgical celebrations to its close with the solemn feast of Christ the King. A fitting way to conclude our liturgical year!

Here in the United States the fourth Thursday of November is Thanksgiving. While not a holy day in the formal sense, it is a marvelous way to acknowledge

our gratitude to God for so many blessings. It is a day worth celebrating. Many parishes schedule a special Mass that is often well-attended.

One the final Sunday of the month we begin our next cycle of liturgical seasons with the first Sunday of Advent.

By the time you read this I will have returned from the USC-CB's November General Assembly in Baltimore. The following week I will join many others for the installation of the new Archbishop of Chicago. One of the important responsibilities of the Chicago archbishop is as Chancellor of Catholic Extension. As you know we benefit greatly from

grants made to Mission dioceses by Extension.

Recently we had the formal bid opening for our Maryhill Expansion and renovation project. We hope the work can begin in early 2015. I hope you will assist us in this great continuation of what Bishop Greco began so many decades ago. The Church in Central Louisiana is alive and growing. Let us give thanks!

May the Lord bless all of you as we prepare to conclude this liturgical year and begin anew!

May the Lord continue to bless you,

# The key to unleashing the New Evangelization: the confessional

It is the key to unleashing the New Evangelization. It is essential to carrying out the gospel mission. What is the key? It is the confessional.

You might have expected me to say the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. That is true.

But I would assume that priests already carry out this part of their ministry with great faithfulness and devotion. My own parish has four Sunday Masses, daily Mass Monday through Saturday, and numerous other special Masses throughout the year.

And they come. People show up at every Mass.

But we are sinners. As much as we do not wish to do it, we fall back into sin – often. And so the net result is that many people are approaching the Eucharist while carrying the baggage of sin, perhaps even mortal sin.

That is a problem. Receiving Our Lord while in a state of serious sin only adds mortal sin on top of mortal sin. One cannot advance in holiness this way. Without holiness, we cannot be a people on mission.

In his papal address on the Sacrament of Confession in March of 2012, Pope Benedict XVI made it clear that, “the New Evangelization draws its lifeblood from the holiness of the children of the Church, from the daily journey of personal and community conversion in order to be ever more closely conformed to Christ.” Because personal holiness depends upon the Sacrament of Confession, Pope Bene-



## CATHOLIC BY GRACE

Denise Bossert  
Freelance -- Denisebossert.com

dict XVI went on to say that the new evangelization begins in the confessional.

While most parishes are incredibly accommodating in providing opportunities for Mass attendance, many are abysmal – tragically so – when it comes to providing opportunities for the Sacrament of Confession.

Some may say that nobody shows up for the scheduled opportunity – those fleeting fifteen minutes before Sunday Mass.

But this is what the one with venial sin thinks: I don't want to bother my priest before Mass because it's just a venial sin, and he's so busy right before Mass, and I would guess there are others far more sinful who need these few minutes more than I do.

This is what the one with mortal sin thinks: If I go to Confession right now, then my parents (wife, children, husband, friends) will know that I have mortal sin that I need to deal with. Who wants to open that can of worms? I'll just go another time.

But there is no other time.

That's it. Sunday before Mass – if you can find the priest.

And expect a whirlwind confession because the priest is

bound to have his mind on Mass and his eye on his watch.

Every parish should have one night a week set aside for confessions. The parishioners need to know that their shepherd is there, waiting. The people need to be reminded (often) that a merciful Lord is waiting for them. During Advent and Lent, the opportunities for Confession should be even more generous, highlighted by every means of communication.

Here is what will happen in the parish:

People will become holy. People will be on mission. The New Evangelization will come to your parish. The faithful will begin to discern vocations to religious life.

Here is what will happen in individuals:

They will be healed of mortal sin and lose their attachment to it. Then they will begin to address chronic sin. Jealousy. Gossip. Eating disorders. Bitterness & unforgiving spirits. Laziness. Then they will become stronger, more accustomed to walking in grace.

When I was a teacher, we used to talk about the hidden cur-

riculum. By hidden curriculum, we meant those things students learned that we did not set out to teach. When the scheduled confessions are right before Sunday Mass or at a time when most people are unavailable, we are teaching our parishioners that confession is a last-minute Sacrament, a kind of triage-only Sacrament, a rarely-needed Sacrament, a practically-unnecessary Sacrament.

While we do not believe any of these things – it is the hidden curriculum, the catechesis we did not intend to teach.

Reality check.

Some of the holiest people have availed themselves of the Sacrament of Confession weekly. If even two people in every parish decided they wanted to emulate that kind of holiness, the current confessional schedule would not be sufficient.

If evangelization depends on holiness, we need to throw open the doors on every confessional. We need to say, “Come soon; come often.” Let them know that Jesus Christ is waiting just for them.

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# 10 ways to prepare your heart for Christ this Advent

Advent (November 30) marks the beginning of the new liturgical year. It is also a season of great joy in preparing for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

During Advent, we are invited by the liturgical readings and our practices, to clear all that binds us and open spaces in our hearts, in our homes, in our relationships with others, and in our lives for this love we profess our Savior.

How are you preparing your heart for the birth of Christ this Advent?

Here are 10 things you could do to prepare your heart for the birth of Christ this Advent:

## 1. Increase your prayer life:

Attend daily Mass, spend time in adoration, pray the rosary daily or weekly, more often read the Bible or make a commitment to pray throughout the day.

**2. Do good deeds:** Volunteer at a place that provides food to the needy, visit the sick and elderly, or make a contribution to a local charity.

**3. Fast:** Abstain from your favorite food or daily meal, or a particular food, or a recreational activity.

**4. Evangelize:** Invite a friend to attend Mass with you or to a mission in your parish.

**5. Support companies** or organizations that use the word "Christmas" (Christmas). Today



Advent is the time to prepare your heart for the birth of Jesus Christ. Advent begins on November 30.

there is a tendency to be politically correct to say "Happy Holidays" and not "Merry Christmas." Support companies that are not afraid to use Merry Christmas in their ads or TV commercials.

**6. Prepare an Advent Wreath** at home and pray with your family every night. You can get prayers and meditations by visiting [www.usccb.org/advent](http://www.usccb.org/advent), or you can order a booklet of Advent prayers at any Catholic store.

**7. Reflect on 2014.** Thank God for all your blessings. Consider how you can improve in 2015, to be a better child of God and follower of Christ.

**8. Choose a book** that you can read through Advent to help you in your spiritual journey.

**9. Go to confession.** Advent is a time of preparation to celebrate the birth of Christ. It is also time to prepare for the Second Coming

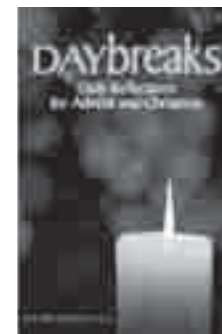
of Christ. Confession is an opportunity to do some soul searching, to confess our sins and receive absolution. Only in this way can we be prepared for the Second Coming of Christ.

**10. Rejoice:** "Serve the Lord with gladness, come to HIM with songs joy, know that the Lord is God, He created us, we belong to HIM, we are his people and the sheep of his flock."

Psalms 100: 1-5.

## Resources for Advent

**Coaching Parents for Advent: A Planning Guide.** Use this nine-page eResource planning guide to help parents pass on their faith at this special time of year. Free. Go to: [www.thepastoralcenter.com](http://www.thepastoralcenter.com)



**Daybreaks: Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas.** It takes only a few minutes to read and reflect on the short Scripture selections designed to enhance your faith during Advent and Christmas. \$1.99. Go to [www.liguori.org/daybreaks-advent-christmas-bergant.html](http://www.liguori.org/daybreaks-advent-christmas-bergant.html)



**Advent and Christmas Crafts and Activities for Children.** Check out these websites for a full list of things to do with children. Learn to make an Advent wreath, a Jesse Tree, an Advent calendar, an Advent Chain or just download puzzles, games, or pages to color. Free. Go to: [www.catholicmom.com/advent\\_kids.htm](http://www.catholicmom.com/advent_kids.htm) or [tercets.blogspot.com/2012/12/keeping-christ-in-christmas.html](http://tercets.blogspot.com/2012/12/keeping-christ-in-christmas.html) or check out ideas on Pinterest.

**Journey Through Advent: Liturgical Cycle A,** by Father Robert Barron. This is one of the many CDs available for Advent on this website. Check it out and see what interests you. CDs are \$3.50; MP3 files are \$2.50. Go to: [www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org](http://www.lighthousecatholicmedia.org)

Who has the time (or energy) to make Advent into a fruitful time of spiritual anticipation and preparation for your family?

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- Make family memories as you explore Advent Traditions and Feast Days together!
- Get more out of the Mass with "Mass prep" activities for each Sunday of Advent!
- Learn the 'big picture' of Salvation History through the daily "Jesse Tree" activities!
- Fall in love with the Rosary. Pray a "decade-a-day" and get "rosary certified" this Advent!



## Founder of CMIs is elevated to sainthood

Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the founder of the first Indian religious Order for men, the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), will be canonized in Rome as a saint Nov. 23, by the Holy Father Pope Francis. He will be elevated to sainthood along with four others; including Blessed Euphrasia, an Indian nun of the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel, a religious Order founded by St. Chavara.

St. Chavara was born Feb. 10, 1805 in Kerala in India. He joined the diocesan seminary at an early age and was ordained a priest at the age of 24 in 1829. Soon he was noted as an ardent and exemplary priest in the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church in India, founded by the Apostle St Thomas. On January 3, 1871, at the age of 66, he was called to his eternal reward and his mortal remains are venerated in St. Joseph's Monastery Church in Mannanam, the Mother House of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate.

St. Chavara had three great devotions in his life. The first was his devotion to the Holy Eucharist which was the source of his spirituality. He spent many hours before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration and is well known for



**Blessed Kuriakose Chavara, CMI**

introducing and spreading the 40-hour Eucharistic Adoration in Kerala.

The second was his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which he had inherited from his pious parents Mary and Kuriakose. He was instrumental in the spread of the rosary, the scapular and the special May devotion to Mary.

Third was his special devotion to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph which was a motivation in his spiritual life.

His spirituality was born out of the great need for spiritual renewal of the local Church of his times, and that gave him the vision to establish two religious Orders, one for men and the other for women.

The religious Order for men,

the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), founded in 1831 and officially formed as a religious Order in 1855, is the largest religious Order to start in India. The Order ministers in 30 different countries of the world with more than 3,000 professed members including 1,800 priests.

In 1866 he founded an Order for women, known as the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC), which has now more than 7,000 nuns serving in numerous countries of the world.

He was a brilliant writer, excellent preacher and an inspiring champion of the Church working for the spiritual renewal of priests and laity. He started preaching retreats for priests and laity on a regular basis and codified norms for the celebration of the Mass and the liturgy of the hours.

He was always a man of God, who led a simple life and had a great vision beyond his times. One of his greatest accomplishments was establishing a charitable institute for the sick and destitute.

Four Indian priests currently serving in the diocese are members of CMI including Fathers James Nellikunnel, George Pookkattu, Jose Kumbumkal, and Abraham Palakkattuchira.



## Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows celebrate 175th anniversary

**By Sister Mary Colman  
Sister of OLS**

In our 175 years as a congregation, we now look back on our history from our origin in Italy and in Louisiana.

Blessed Elizabetta Renzi founded the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows in 1839 in Coriano, Italy. In the first school and boarding schools, the girls were taught prayers, reading, religion, sewing, embroidery and other tasks that would help them become good mothers.

Blessed Elizabetta also had a dream of her sisters becoming missionaries and leaving Italy to serve God and his people in different countries. Her dream did not happen until 1947 when Bishop Charles P. Greco invited the sisters to his diocese in Louisiana to staff parochial schools for African-American children: Our Lady of Sorrows in Moreauville, St. Anthony

School in Cottonport and Our Lady of Sorrows in Pineville.

In recent years, while continuing to work at St. Mary's Training School in Alexandria, we opened three community homes for mentally challenged young men and women. Nearby, is an office building which houses the well-known OLS Cookie Jar. Close to these homes is our St. Joseph's convent.

In Shreveport, there is the Elizabetta Renzi Child Development Center, the Renzi Education and Art Center, and an OLS Convent for retired and ill sisters.

In the Diocese of Alexandria, there are more Sisters of OLS working in the diocese, than any other congregation. They are Sisters Mavis Champaign, Linda Norsworthy, Anita Bianchini, Sandra Norsworthy, Nina Vincent, Kalen Sarmiento, and Delnise Silva.

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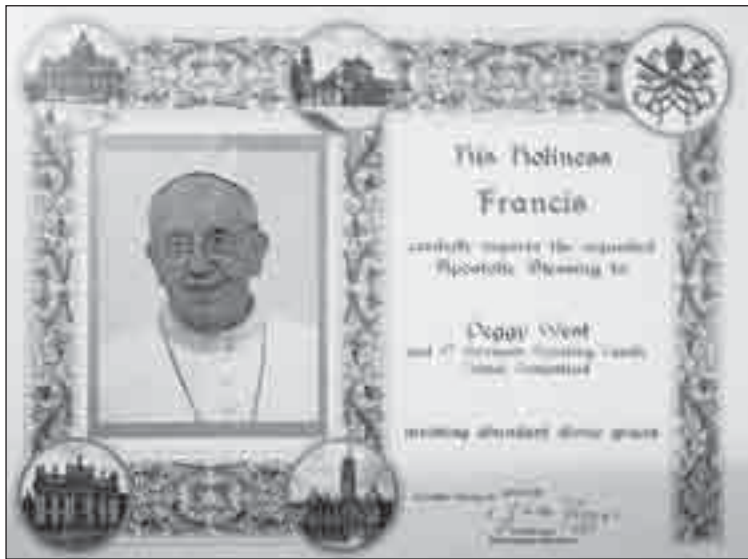
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## Vatican ends sale of Papal Blessing

Effective Dec. 31, 2014, the Vatican Almonry will no longer issue Papal Blessing parchments for all licenses.

After more than 70 years of honorable work, founded by Bruno Del Priore of Italy, that service will no longer exist.

If, however, you wish to receive a Papal Blessing parchment before the end of the year, you can forward your request to: del-

priore@dellarteroma.com or by fax: +39 06 6876719.

Since 1944, the Roman Catholic Church has offered blessings from the Holy Father for special occasions such as Baptisms, Confirmations, marriages and anniversaries. These blessings come in the form of hand-painted certificates made of parchment paper where the name(s) are inscribed.

## St. Mary's Training Center receives a \$10,000 grant

St. Mary's Residential Training Facility has been named the 2014 recipient of a \$10,000 grant from Valero Energy Foundation.

*Benefit for Children*, the Valero Energy Foundation's annual charitable fundraiser, focuses on providing grants to support children in need.

St. Mary's was one of several dozen non-profits to be recipients of the grant.

"Thank you to business partners and employees of the Valero St. Charles Refinery for this generous \$10,000 grant and especially to Ellen Williams and Dale Savoy, who have nominated St. Mary's over the past several years, said Sister Mavis Champagne, administrator of St. Mary's. "Your gifts provide de-



velopmentally challenged children with happiness, independence and dignity they deserve."

Gifts like this make it possible to provide critical services to the most vulnerable and devel-

opmentally challenged children in Louisiana. Without this kind of public support, it would not be possible to provide the services St. Mary's offers to hundreds of children and their families.

## Dec. 8: Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is Monday, Dec. 8, 2014. It is always a holy day of obligation. According to the Office of Divine Worship of the USCCB, Sunday Dec. 7, the Second Sunday of Advent, out ranks the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Any Sunday evening Mass is to be that of the Second Sunday of Advent.

Therefore, there can be no anticipated Mass of the Immaculate Conception this year. However, if a person were to attend Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning to fulfill the Sunday obligation and then again on Sunday evening to fulfill the obligation for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, even though the readings and Mass texts were of the Second Sunday of Advent, the obligation for the Immaculate Conception would be fulfilled. There are two obligations and, two masses are required. - Bishop Herzog



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11 a.m.-9 p.m.



The Church Today is planning to feature the choirs in our diocese in the January 2015 issue.

If your choir(s) would like to be pictured in this special section of the Church Today, please send a good clear (high resolution) picture of your choir(s) to [jpetrus@diocesealex.org](mailto:jpetrus@diocesealex.org) or mail to Church Today, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria, LA 71303.

The deadline to submit a picture is **Tuesday, Jan. 6, 2015.**





**ST. PATRICK/ ST. GERARD WELCOMES TWO INTO THE FAITH.** Mrs. Lavern Parish from St. Gerard in Jonesville and Mrs. Margaret Angela Guillory of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Ferriday were received into the Church by Father Louis Sklar Oct. 30. Mrs. Parish chose St. Claire and Mrs. Guillory chose St. Lucy as their confirmation names. Also pictured is Deacon Bill Shaidnagle.



**ALEXANDRIA SEMINARIANS INSTITUTED AS LECTORS.** Alexandria seminarians Austin Burns and Luke LaFleur were installed as lectors during the Institution of Lectors and Acolytes Mass held Nov. 1 at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. The Most Rev. Jeffrey Monforton, Bishop of Steubenville, was the principal celebrant and Msgr. Christopher J. Schreck, rector/president of the Josephinum, concelebrated. Seminarians installed as lectors typically are first-year theologians and are commissioned to proclaim the Word of God in the liturgical assembly and to catechize the faithful. Photo by Ryan Jurden.

## Seminarian Burses

### October Donations

<b>Knights of Columbus Council 9217</b> .....	\$25.00
Father Adrian L. Molenschot Burse	
<b>Dr. Joseph Landreneau</b> .....	\$25.00
Ms. Edna Rabalais Burse	
<b>Deacon and Mrs. Rodrick B. Broussard</b> .....	\$50.00
Monsignor Milburn Broussard Burse	
<b>Knights of Columbus Assembly 2078</b> .....	\$50.00
Monsignor S. J. Dekeuwer Burse	
<b>Dr. Joseph Landreneau</b> .....	\$100.00
Monsignor Henry Beckers Burse	
<b>Mrs. Mary Ann Simms</b> .....	\$100.00
Ethel Miller Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller</b> .....	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corker Burse	
<b>Ms. Geraldine B. Deptula</b> .....	\$1,000.00
Father Bruce Miller Burse	
<b>Ms. Elizabeth S. Arthur</b> .....	\$1,000.00
Sadie Stroud Burse	
<b>Mr. Albin A. Provosty</b> .....	\$7,500.00
Father William B. Provosty Burse	
<b>Total</b> .....	\$10,050.00

A Seminary Burse is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men to the priesthood. It may be named for anyone – bishop, priest, religious, or lay person – by the original donor, and can be added to and allowed to grow.

Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to the  
Diocese of Alexandria Chancery Office  
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**THE ST. FRANCES CABRINI SANCTUARY SOCIETY** makes hot tamales for the annual Christmas Shop to be held Nov. 22-23 in the SFC Activities Building. This is the Society's main fundraiser. Pictured are some of the workers: (from left) Marjorie Johnson, Pat Cook, Agnes D'Angelo, Ivy Fant, Kitty Wallace and Beverly Young.



**SERVANT HOUSE RECEIVES CHECK.** Servant House co-founders Donna Culotta and Aggie Neck accept a \$10,000 check from Bishop Ronald Herzog on behalf of the Catholic Extension. Servant House, a Catholic Charismatic House of Prayer in Marksville, was recently named a finalist in the 37th annual Lumen Christi Award. It offers an emergency food pantry, a healing Mass once a month, a prison ministry, religious education, and an Inner Healing Ministry.



**STS. FRANCIS & ANNE (Kolin) CDA #2613** elected officers for 2015 on Oct 19, which was Catholic Daughters Day. Pictured are (front row) Theresa Edens, treasurer; Beverly Belgard, vice regent; and Deanna McNeal, regent. Row 2: Rose Walker, Debbie Humphreys, Pat Theriot, secretary; and Sue Barlow, financial secretary. Back row: Eryline Nunez, Joe Mabou, Sheila McWilliams, Bobbie Farris, Linda Saucier, and Norma Locker (visiting from Texas court). Not shown are Charlotte Webb and Erminie Filipi.



**FR. JOY BECOMES AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.** Father Joy Retnazihamoni, originally from India and currently pastor of Sts. Francis and Anne Church in Kolin became a naturalized citizen of the United States Oct. 22 in the U.S. Federal Courthouse by Federal Judge Dee Drell. Father Joy was one of 22 people from nine different countries, who became citizens that day. Pictured are (front row) Jeannie Petrus, Father Joy, Judge Drell, Father Chris Nayak, and Emily Ann McCullough. Back row: Graham Bateman, Gennie Ashy, Luc Noel, Catsy Norris, and Lynn and Greg Ray.



### KC Coat Drive to continue until February 2015

**KC COUNCIL #4010 COAT DRIVE.** On Nov. 4, Grand Knight Carl Chapman of Council 4010 presented Demetria Alexander, supervisor of Federal Programs for the Avoyelles Parish School Board, with 38 coats from the KC Coats for Kids drive currently being held at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Mansura. Council 4010 launched their Coats for Kids drive back in September with the goal of keeping the kids of Avoyelles warm this winter season. The drive will continue until February 2015 with a collection bin located in the vestibule of the Church. For more information, call 318-264-5310.





**EAGLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND CLASS REPRESENTATIVES.** Members of the newly-formed Eagle Alumni Association executive board and class representatives are (front row) Wally Smith, Menard faculty member and treasurer; David Luck ('83), Renee Hicks ('96), treasurer; and Tamara McNulty, director of Development & Alumni Affairs. Back row: Beth Bankston Hopewell ('83), Emily Lynch Mathews ('83), Ann Edgerton ('60), Katie Womack Wright ('01), and Ken Ardoin ('60), president. Board president Ardoin, who recently retired as the Vice President of Advancement at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette, brings with him a wealth of knowledge concerning alumni relations and building new alumni associations. Not pictured is Charles Ardoin, vice-president; Nanette Gremillion Menou ('76), and Becca Foltz ('97).

**ST. RITA SENIOR HALLOWEEN PARTY.** St. Rita (Alexandria) seniors celebrated the annual Halloween party Oct. 29 with a pot luck luncheon and Bingo at the Holy Family Center. Some of the seniors dressed up for the occasion, including Jeanette Fenoli (at right) with Father Craig Scott, pastor.



**ST. MARY (Natchitoches) SCHOOL RECEIVES "CHRIST THE TEACHER" TAPESTRY.** In appreciation for the Catholic education that all of her children and grandchildren have received at St. Mary's School, Mrs. Melba Ackel donated a "Christ the Teacher" tapestry to the school. Her last grandchild, Madison Claire Ackel, is graduating in May of 2015. Mrs. Ackel and her late husband, Latief Ackel, have four children and are life-long residents of Natchitoches. Accepting the tapestry is St. Mary's Principal Jacque Horton (on left).



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# St. Augustine Church, Cemetery placed on National Historic Register

By Jeannie Petrus  
CT editor

What began as a plantation chapel in 1803 has been recognized for its significance to the Creole community of Cane River and Isle Brevelle, as well as to the state of Louisiana.

St. Augustine Church and Cemetery in Isle Brevelle was officially placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of Interior, on Sept. 24, 2014.

The National Register is America's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

"Receiving this historic designation means so much to us," said Gail Jones, a member of the St. Augustine Riverbank Restoration Committee. "Not only does it make us extremely proud, but it will also enable us to seek national grants that will assist us in preserving the structures and cultural identity of St. Augustine Church and Cemetery."

The idea of nominating St. Augustine Church and Cemetery as a "traditional cultural property" (TCP) was suggested by Cane River Creole National Historical Park Superintendent Laura Gates.

According to the National Park Service, a traditional cultural property, is one that is eligible for inclusion in the National Register because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community which (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

"Although, St. Augustine Church and Cemetery were as-



**ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH AND CEMETERY PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORICAL PLACES.** Members of the St. Augustine Riverbank Restoration Committee hold the plaque from the National Historic Register that reads: "This property has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior." Pictured are Dr. Mark Guidry, Lynn Christophe, Father Thomas Paul (pastor), Willie Metoyer (chair), Keilah Spann, Karey Blanchard, Gail Jones, and Larry Paige.

sessed as being eligible for the National Register without the specific designation as a traditional cultural property," said Jones, "the TCP approach provided greater recognition of the distinct cultural identity of the Cane River Creole community and the central role of St. Augustine in the community identity and culture.

The TCP approach also accounts for one very distinct variation from the typical nomination -- the "period of significance" (period of time it was actively used) extends through the present day.

St. Augustine Church and Cemetery are an important part

of church history and culture for several reasons:

- St. Augustine Church is the only parish in the diocese that was not built by the Catholic Church. The chapel was built in 1929 through the efforts of two prominent planters, Nicolas Augustine Metoyer and his brother, Louis, both free men of color. Originally built as a family chapel, Nicolas later donated the chapel and a parcel of land to the diocese as a mission station. Priests from Natchitoches came regularly to offer Mass in the chapel until it was formally established as a parish in 1856 by Bishop Auguste Marie Martin.

- The Cane River Creoles are a distinct cultural group tied together by traditional cultural practices, genetic heritage, and a self-awareness of their iden-

tity. They are recognized by the broader community as a distinct

group and have been the focus of many writings and works of other media -- scholarly and otherwise -- through the years. The tangible place where more than 200 years of Creole life on the Cane River is rooted and celebrated, is St. Augustine Church and Cemetery.

- In the cemetery, markers span nearly the entire 1829-present period of significance. The most prominent tomb is that of Augustin and Marie Agnes Metoyer who passed away in 1856 and 1839 respectively. There are also finely crafted wrought iron crosses, the earliest of which date to the 1830s.

St. Augustine Historical Society (SAHS) recently celebrated "Treasures of the Isle" (Nov. 8) in connection with the Tri-Centennial of Natchitoches. More than a dozen homes were available for public tours. At the end of the day, the community gathered for the 5 p.m. Mass lead by Father Thomas Paul, pastor, and a dinner in the parish hall featuring traditional foods and entertainment.



**ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY** has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of Interior. The designation will enable the parish to seek national grants that will assist in preserving the structures and cultural identity of the historic church and community.

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**OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL PARADE OF SAINTS.** The 4th graders dressed as saints on Oct. 31. Pictured is 4A, 4B, and 4C (from top to bottom).



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL (Moreauville).** Sacred Heart School's 8th graders celebrated All Saints Day with a historical review of various biblical saints. Mrs. Marcy Center, SHS's religion teacher, asked each student to research and portray their favorite saint.



**ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL'S PRE-SCHOOL.** Mrs. Doris Moreau and Ms. Ashley Flook's preschool class paraded through the school showing off their Halloween costumes. Pictured are (front row) \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Back row: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.



**ST. MARY'S (Natchitoches) VISITS BRIARWOOD.** 3rd and 4th graders from St. Mary's School visited Briarwood where Caroline Dorman was born. The students learned about native plants and then participated in a scavenger hunt finding these specific plants. Students were also able to tour the cabin Caroline grew up in.

**OLPS PUMPKIN DECORATING CONTEST.** There were many winners in the annual 3rd grade pumpkin decorating contest. These are the winners in the Guys and Dolls category: Scuba Steve by \_\_\_\_\_ -- 3rd place; The Chestnut Lady, by \_\_\_\_\_, 2nd place; and French Quarter Fairy by \_\_\_\_\_, 1st place.





with his parents,  
Troy & Tammy Spencer



with his parents,  
Gabrielle Soileau & John Lasyone



with his mother, Amy Earles  
and grandfather, Dr. LJ Mayeux



with her parents,  
Todd & Cristiane Jeansonne



with her parents,  
Chad & Gretchen Luneau



with his mother,  
Sandy Gauthier

## Last game for SAS 8th graders

**ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL 8TH GRADE CHEERLEADERS & FOOTBALL PLAYERS.** St. Anthony School in Bunkie honored the 8th grade football players and cheerleaders during the last game of the season. The 8th graders will graduate in May.



**OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH (Fifth Ward) CELEBRATES YOUTH DAY.** Father Silverino Kwebuza, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward, and his parishioners recently celebrated Youth Day beginning with a Mass at 5 p.m. Readers at Mass were and . After Mass, the youth and their parents gathered at the Calvary Garden and prayed the Rosary. The rest of the evening included Halloween games and activities for the kids and Halloween displays in the parking lot of the church. Pictured at left are the youth of parish who attended and participated in the Mass.

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**COCA COLA TEAM -- FIRST PLACE GROSS.** Members of the team are Andy Ash, Paul Pfingston, Thad Weber, and Cory Bergeron.



**ST. ANTHONY (Bunkie) LADIES TEAM -- FIRST PLACE PEORIA.** Members of the team are Jill Bain, Toni Farr, Cheryl Riche, and Linda Vollman.



**AIR EVAC TEAM -- 2ND PLACE GROSS.** Members of the team are Mike Diffie, Michael Diffie, Marty Haggard, Tyler Breed.



**GEOTECHNICAL TESTING LABORATORY, INC. TEAM -- 2ND PLACE PEORIA.** Members of the team are Ken Gorsha, Billy Thompson, Jack Gaar, and Dwayne Harper.



**OUTBACK STEAKHOUSE TEAM -- 3RD PLACE GROSS.** Members of the team are Paul Parsons, Peter Mahfouz, Buddy Gingras, and Rick Rowzee.



**CHRISTUS HEALTH TEAM #1-- 3RD PLACE PEORIA.** Members of the team are Jimmy Slater, Keith Breazeale, Sonny Carter, and Vic Mahfouz.

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**HOLE IN ONE WINNER.** Thad Weber won a “Cruise for 2” for making a Hole in One. The Cruise for 2 was donated by Travel and Cruise with Me in Alexandria. Other winners were Tom Phillips--Putting contest and Frank Brame--Closest to the Hole.

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## Christmas Concerts

- **Dec. 5:** St. Cecilia Chorale will perform at St. Rita Church in Alexandria at 6:30 p.m. All proceeds to benefit Radio Maria.
- **Dec. 7:** The Rapides Symphony Orchestra will perform *Holiday Cheer* at the Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center in Alexandria at 2:30 p.m. Admission: \$25
- **Dec. 7:** St. Cecilia Chorale will perform at St. Paul Church in Mansura at 4 p.m.
- **Dec. 7:** First United Methodist Church of Natchitoches, NSU Creative and Performing Arts, and other area churches in Natchitoches will present Community Carols & Chorus at 7 p.m. at Magale Recital Hall, NSU Campus. Admission: Free
- **Dec. 9:** The NSU Chamber Choir will perform Lessons and Carols at Immaculate Conception Church (613 Second St) in Natchitoches at 7:30 p.m. Admission: Free
- **Dec. 12:** St. Cecilia Chorale will perform at St. Mary's Assumption Church in Cottonport at 6 p.m.
- **Dec. 16:** Red River Chorale will perform Celebrating Christmas at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria at 7:30 p.m. Admission: \$15 for adults; \$5 for students
- **Dec. 17:** Our Lady of Prompt Succor (Alexandria) adult and youth choirs will perform Lessons and Carols at OLPS Church, 2120 Elliott Street, Alexandria at 6:30 p.m. Admission: Free.
- **Dec. 18:** NSU Choirs will present Lessons and Carols at 6:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church (533 2nd St.) in Natchitoches. Admission: Free

## 12 Nights of Christmas Alexandria

### Dec. 4; Holiday Magic Downtown

5 p.m., Downtown Alexandria. Lights are turned on for the Christmas season.  
Admission: Free

### Dec. 5: Candyland Christmas

5-8 p.m., T.R.E.E. House Children's Museum (1403 Third St.), Alexandria. Kids make candy sculptures, decorate cookies, make ornaments and talk to Santa on HAM radio.  
Admission: \$4 per person.

### Dec. 5-6: Holiday Light Safari

5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m., Alexandria Zoo. Dazzling light displays, visits with Santa, train rides. Admission: \$6 per person.  
Additional dates:  
Dec. 12-13  
Dec. 19-23  
Dec. 26-28

### Dec. 6: An Old-Fashioned Christmas

4 -6 p.m., Kent House Plantation. Make arts and crafts, story-telling, vintage music and dance, visit with Papa Noel, hot chocolate and cookies. Admission: Free

### Dec. 7: Live Nativity

6 - 8 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Alexandria. Drive through the live nativity to experience a re-enactment of the Christmas story, complete with live animals, carols and candlelight. Admission: Free

### Dec. 7: A Calvary Christmas

3 p.m. and 6 p.m., Calvary Baptist Church, (5011 Jackson St.) Alexandria. Christmas production presented by Calvary's Music Ministry. Admission: \$5 per person

### Dec. 8: Holiday in the Heart of Alexandria

6 p.m., Alexandria Mall. Live theatre cast and musical performance by Lagniappe Theatre Company. Light refreshments and a visit from Santa. Admission: Free

### Dec. 11: How the Grinch Stole Christmas

6 -8 p.m., Bath Planet of Central Louisiana (3016 Broadway Ave.). Games, give-a-ways snacks, Grinch themed craft and meet the Grinch! Admission: Free

### Dec. 12: Pineville Christmas Parade

7 p.m., Main Street, Pineville. Admission: Free

### Dec. 13: Christmas at Inglewood

9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Inglewood Harvest Barn, (6233 Old Baton Rouge Hwy) Alexandria. Hay rides through the garden, pictures with Santa, Farmer's Market and live music. Free

### Dec. 14: Alexandria Christmas Parade

2 p.m., Jackson St. Ext., Alexandria. Free

### Dec. 18: Holiday Expressions at AMoA

5:30 - 9 p.m., Alexandria Museum of Art. Children's book readings and holiday singing. Admission: Free

### Dec. 20: Polar Express Pajama Movie Party

4 p.m., Alexandria Mall Center Court. Santa and the conductor will start the movie showing of the Polar Express. Crafts and refreshments. Admission: Free

### Dec. 20: Having a Dickens of a Christmas

6-8 p.m., 135 Riverfront St., Pineville. Live carolers, candlelight tours of the fort and more. Admission: Free



## Parades

- Dec. 6: Natchitoches, 1 p.m.
- Dec. 12: Pineville, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 13: Plaquemine, 1 p.m.
- Dec. 14: Cottonport, 11 a.m.
- Dec. 14: Alexandria, 2 p.m.
- Dec. 14: Leesville, 5:30 p.m.



Monday, Dec. 8

Solemnity of the  
**IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION**

(Holy Day of Obligation)

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## Natchitoches Festival of Lights

### Dec. 1 – 24: Christmas in the Park

Rebel State Historic Park – Marthville, La. Visitors are invited to drive or walk through the park. Photos with Santa every Saturday in December. Admission: Free For information (318) 472-6255

### Dec. 7 – 23: Photos with Santa

6-8 p.m. nightly  
South end downtown riverbank, Natchitoches  
Visit with Santa & Photos with Santa on the south end downtown riverbank. Free

### 88th Annual Festival Of Lights Natchitoches Christmas Schedule Nov. 22, 2014 – Jan. 6, 2015

More than 300,000 Christmas lights and 100 plus riverbank set pieces are on every night at dusk through January 6, 2015. Downtown attractions include carriage tours through the historic district. Shops and restaurants open late. All events take place in the Landmark Historic District along the Cane River Lake and along the Cane River Lake south of Natchitoches.

This is only a partial list of all of the events.  
For a more complete schedule, go to  
[www.natchitocheschristmas.com](http://www.natchitocheschristmas.com)

### • Nov. 22: Turn on the Holidays

11 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Front Street and Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Free  
A Louisiana Main to Main & Natchitoches Tri-Centennial Event! Join us for the official start to the Natchitoches Christmas season as we turn on the Christmas lights for the first time. This all day event features live musical entertainment, children's activities, a Natchitoches Tri-Centennial Closing Celebration and Fireworks!  
-- 4-8 p.m. Holiday Open House: Downtown shops and attractions open late.  
-- 7 p.m. Fireworks over Cane River

### • Nov. 28-29: Holiday Kids Fest

3 p.m. - 9 p.m. (Friday)  
10 a.m. - 9 p.m. (Saturday)  
Front Street and Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Free admission to Riverbank, but rides for kids require tickets  
-- 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Fleur de Lis Arts & Crafts Show at Natchitoches Events Center, (750 Second Street) Free  
-- 3-7 p.m. - Musical Entertainment on the Downtown Riverbank Stage Free  
-- 7 p.m. Fireworks, Free

### • Dec. 6: Christmas Festival

7:45 a.m. - 9 p.m.  
Front Street and Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Armbands are required for entry to Front Street & Downtown Riverbank.  
Advance armband is \$6 for ages 12 & over; \$4 for children 6-11; Free for children under 5.  
Festival Day: \$8 for ages 12 & over; \$5 for children 6-11; Free for children under 5.  
The Natchitoches Christmas Festival is ranked 3rd "Best Holiday Light Show" behind the Rockefeller Center and Disney World in the nation by Yahoo.com. Celebrate the Christmas Season in Louisiana's oldest city! Enjoy a day filled with live musical entertainment, arts, crafts and food vendors, a parade and a magnificent fireworks show choreographed to holiday music over the Cane River Lake.  
-- 7:45 a.m. -Natchitoches "City of Lights" 5K  
-- 1:00 p.m. -Festival of Lights Parade  
-- 2:30-6 p.m. -Music Entertainment  
-- 6 p.m. -Fireworks over Cane River Lake

### • Dec. 9: Live Christmas Music

6:30-8:00 p.m.  
Downtown Riverbank Stage  
Admission: Free

### • Dec. 10: Holiday Tour of Homes

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Hosted by Natchitoches Historic Foundation  
For Tickets Call: 800-259-1714

### Dec. 12: Christmas Festival

3 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Front Street & Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Free  
-- 3 -9 p.m.: Holiday Kids Fest  
-- 5-8 p.m. Holiday Tour of Homes. For tickets call 800-259-1714  
-- 6 p.m. *Changed by a Baby Boy: A Christmas Musical*. Natchitoches Art Center on Second Street, Free.

### • Dec. 13: Christmas Festival (Week 2)

9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Front Street and Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Beginning at 2 p.m. armbands are required. \$5 for ages 12 and over.  
-- 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Les Amies Christmas Treasures Arts & Crafts Sale – Natchitoches Events Center, 750 Second St., Free  
-- 9 a.m. – 5p.m. Fete de Hiver. Fort St. Jean Baptiste SHS, 155 Jefferson Street. Celebrate Christmas 18th century style with historians, reenactors and period merchants. \$4 for ages 12 through age 62.  
--10 a.m. – 9 p.m. Holiday Kids Fest. Rides require tickets.  
--1-4 p.m. Holiday Tour of Homes. For tickets call: 800-259-1714  
--1 p.m. & 4 p.m. *Changed by a Baby Boy: A Christmas Musical*. Natchitoches Art Center (716 Second St.) Free  
-- 3-7 p.m. Music Entertainment  
-- 7 p.m. Fireworks over Cane River

### • Dec. 16: Live Christmas Music

6:30-8:00 p.m.  
Downtown Riverbank Stage  
Admission: Free

### • Dec. 17: Holiday Tour of Homes

5:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Hosted by Natchitoches Historic Foundation  
For Tickets Call: 800-259-1714

### Dec. 19: Christmas Festival

3 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Front Street & Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Free  
-- 3 -9 p.m.: Holiday Kids Fest  
-- 5-8 p.m. Holiday Tour of Homes. For tickets call 800-259-1714  
-- 6 p.m. *Changed by a Baby Boy: A Christmas Musical*. Natchitoches Art Center on Second Street, Free.

### • Dec. 20: Christmas Festival (Week 3)

10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Front Street and Downtown Riverbank  
Admission: Beginning at 2 p.m. armbands are required. \$5 for ages 12 and over.  
--10 a.m. – 9 p.m. Holiday Kids Fest. Rides require tickets.  
--12 noon-4 p.m. Cane River Creole Christmas at Badin-Roque House. The St. Augustine Historical Society hosts special tours and Creole holiday stories. Free.  
--1-2:30 p.m. Christmas Downriver. Cane River Creole National Historic Park presents Creole Christmas with special tours, educational programs and musical events FREE  
--1-4 p.m. Holiday Tour of Homes. For tickets call 800-259-1714  
--1 p.m. & 4 p.m. *Changed by a Baby Boy: A Christmas Musical*. Natchitoches Art Center (716 Second St.) Free  
-- 3-7 p.m. Music Entertainment  
-- 7 p.m. Fireworks over Cane River

### • Dec. 27: Fireworks over Cane River

7 p.m.  
Admission: Free

### • Dec. 31: Fireworks over Cane River

7 p.m.  
Admission: Free



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# Xtreme Obstacle challengers brave the cold to reach the goal

By Jeannie Petrus  
CT editor

It was 34 degrees at 6 o'clock in the morning when the first team of challengers showed up for the Xtreme Obstacles course, sponsored by St. Frances Cabrini School Nov. 1.

"It was crazy cold that morning," said Liz Hines, coordinator of the event. "It was the first cold snap of the season and it was cold even if you weren't wet."

But every 15 minutes, team after team showed up on the allotted time slot to participate in the first event of its kind in this area.

A team consisted of at least two people, but no more than 20. Teams included families of moms, dads, and kids; college groups, several members of Boy Scout Troop 6, a rowdy group of 30 spirited Menard students, a team from the Town Talk, a group led by Father Taylor Reynolds, and a group of 40 men and women from the Louisiana National Guard stationed in Marksville who used the obstacle course as their weekend workout.

"It was pretty tough," said one of the high school participants. "Tough . . . but a whole lot of fun."

The course consisted of hay bales to climb, several wooden



**A TEAM OF NINE** help each other through the mud pits. Slippery hills, water at different depths (a few inches to 5 ft deep) and the cold temperature made each pit a challenge. And then, there was the problem of shoes getting stuck in the mud . . . but the participants seemed to enjoy each of the challenges.

walls to climb and then repel down, zip lining through trees, walking a rope bridge, and lots of mud pits to run across, swim across, and maneuver "over and under."

The three-mile course took several months to build through

the efforts of many, many volunteers and groups who helped to make this all possible.

Hines said that each participant had to sign a "death waiver" which just protected the school from liability in the event of an injury.

"We had concerns that there was a possibility that someone could get hurt, but everything turned out well," she said. "We had one orthopedic doctor on site and two nurses."

According to Hines, there were no injuries and no malfunc-

tions of the obstacles.

"Everything went so well," she said.

So well, in fact, that the school intends to offer Xtreme Obstacles again in the spring.

"We haven't set a date yet, but sometime in the spring, when the weather is hopefully a lot warmer, we plan to do this again," she said.



**ZIP-LINING.** Lindsay Pinion nears the end of her zip lining challenge through the trees. The military-style obstacle course offered a workout of strength, agility, and endurance. The first event of this kind for this area attracted 150 participants.



**OVER AND UNDER** canals, filled with sloppy mud, had challengers climbing over some boards and crawling under the other ones.



**MANEUVERING TIRES** was not so difficult for this team of three.



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# R U texting in church? Leave your phone in the car!

Technology creates new distractions for celebrant, people in the pew

By Angela Cave  
Catholic News Service

(CNS) -- Entire families navigate their smartphones while sharing meals at restaurants. Students text in class. Parents take phone calls at their children's sporting events and plays.

It's no surprise that cellphones affect even church.

It has become common for parishes to place blurbs in their bulletins about silencing cellphones and for lectors to make announcements about it before liturgies, reminding parishioners they're in a place of worship.

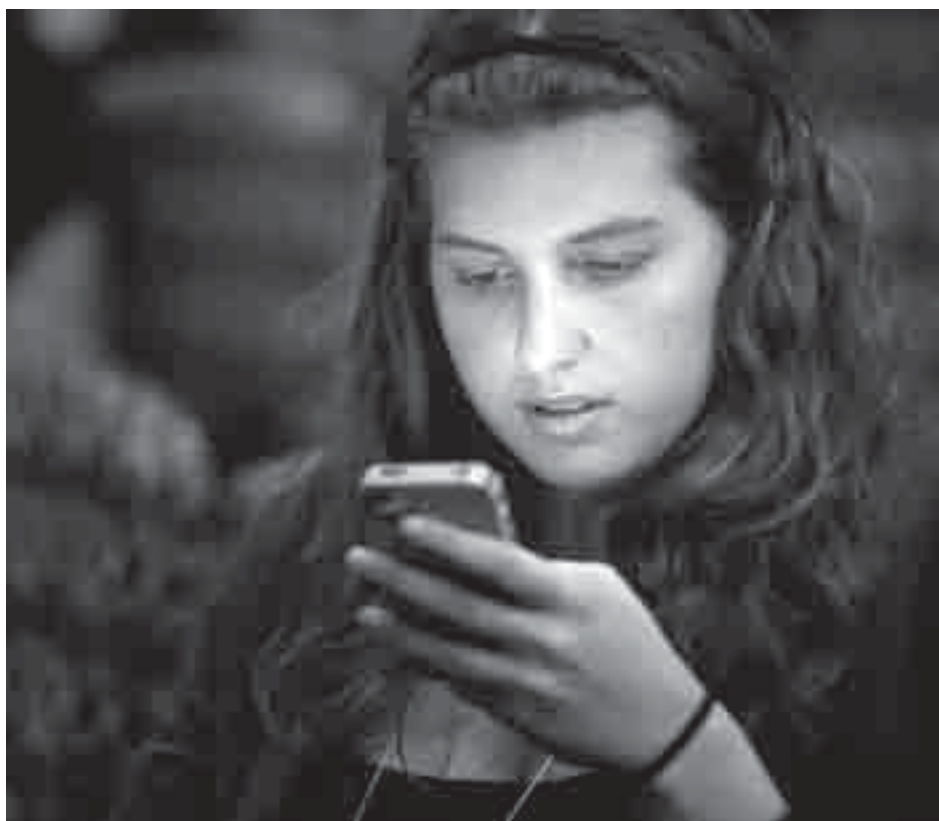
In some places, Massgoers heed the notices -- with a few exceptions for people who work in emergency fields or don't understand how to silence their phones. At other parishes, ringtones, texting or even taking calls during liturgies can distract the presider and the people in the pews.

Dorothy Sokol, parish life director at Our Lady of Grace Parish in Ballston Lake, notices phones ringing and worshippers texting at Mass, despite signs in two different places and announcements cautioning against it. She said some people don't know they're offending people, but she's distracted by it, especially when parents let toddlers play electronic games on their phones.

Some parishioners use a tablet or smartphone to follow along with the readings for Mass, and "there's a place" for that, she said.

As for texting, "people have to be conscious that they're in church to pray with a community and to try, if possible, to put the distractions away," Sokol said.

She's not sure how to handle teenagers



**TEXTING DURING MASS** is distracting not only to the celebrant, but to those in the pew.

she's seen texting repeatedly.

"What do you say?" she wondered. "Do you give the teenager grief when the parents are sitting right next to them and not saying anything? The last thing I want is for them to stop coming. You have to figure out what's best. Unfortunately, asking, 'What would Jesus do?' isn't a good question" -- the Son of God never had a cellphone.

Father Richard Carlino, pastor of St. John the Evangelist and St. Anthony parishes in Schenectady, calls himself

a "strong endorser of silencing the cellphones." People cooperate for the most part, but some don't hear the announcements at the start of each Mass.

"It throws my whole concentration off" when a phone rings during Mass, Father Carlino said. But "I don't think they do it maliciously."

Recently, he's also had to talk to parishioners about texting -- which he considers less distracting than a ringing phone, but "still a distraction from what they're supposed to be doing in church. Their mind

is not on the Lord. There are exceptions, but the exceptions should be few."

On the other hand, "I'm happy they're there, even if they're doing stuff they shouldn't be."

Father Thomas Holmes, pastor of St. Henry Parish in Averill Park and St. Mary Parish in Nassau, gets so frustrated by poor technology etiquette at Mass that he joked about installing an electric dog fence around the churches -- or at least a signal scrambler.

"Almost every weekend, somebody's cellphone goes off during Mass, oftentimes during the consecration," he said. "I often laugh, and it's a sarcastic laugh. I've said a couple of times, 'You've got to be kidding me.' I think they should be embarrassed."

There's a sign on the door of St. Henry's asking those who enter to turn their phones off. Father Holmes was puzzled and disappointed when he noticed someone had crossed out the words.

"It's disheartening," he said. "There's no reason for anybody to have their cellphone on in church."

He has spotted teenagers and young adults texting at Mass, but hasn't confronted anyone. Texting only distracts him if he notices it, but he still wishes it didn't happen at all in church.

"I've watched people walk into telephone poles while they're texting, so it doesn't surprise me" that it's hard to turn off the technology, he said. "People are attached. I've had parents tell me that their kids text each other while they're sitting next to each other on the couch."

"Overall, I think people should have a little more sense when it comes to their cell phones. They forget why they're (at church). It's only an hour of their life."



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books will help you practice the basics of Christian living like a pro. Soon you'll find yourself deeply committed to Christ, engaged in an active prayer life, and regularly overcoming common challenges and obstacles that confront you along the way.

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- **How to Make Sense of Suffering** helps you see that misfortunes are not the blind workings of chance, but are vital elements in God's loving plan.

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Social Security Disability Hearings."

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# Who thought the Day of the Dead could be so much fun?

Mexico's observance of All Souls Day is backdrop for *The Book of Life*

By Joseph McAleer  
Catholic News Service

(CNS) -- Who knew the Day of the Dead could be so much fun? The Mexican method of observing All Souls' Day, Nov. 2, is the backdrop for "The Book of Life" (Fox), an entertaining and visually stunning 3-D animated film.

Traditionally on this feast day, families visit cemeteries to place gifts by the gravesides of their departed loved ones in a spirit of remembrance. Although the practice is Aztec in origin, its intentions correspond with Catholic teaching, which encourages prayer for the souls of the deceased.

In popular culture, the Day of the Dead has often morphed into a Halloween-like party with multicolored skulls and imagery bordering on the diabolical. Fortunately, this is not the case in "The Book of Life." Instead, director and co-writer (with Douglas Langdale) Jorge R. Gutierrez uses the observance to highlight the enduring bonds of family.

Yes, dancing skeletons abound, and there are mythological aspects to the plot that might call for discussion with impressionable youngsters. But this is, in essence, a harmless fairy tale.

At its core, "The Book of Life" is a love story, told to schoolchildren on a museum visit by one of the institution's guides, Mary Beth (voice of Christina Applegate). She uses wooden dolls that spring to life to enact her yarn.



**THE BOOK OF LIFE** is a love story, told to school children by a museum guide during a tour. Christina Applegate, the voice for Mary Beth (the guide), tells the story of two friends trying to woo the same woman since childhood. However, one has a secret weapon: a charm given to him by the ruler of a purgatory-like underworld, populated by the spirits of those who have no one to pray for them.

In the Mexican village of San Angel, best friends Manolo (voice of Diego Luna) and Joaquin (voice of Channing Tatum) have been in love with the same woman, Maria (voice of Zoe Saldana), since childhood.

Manolo is a reluctant bullfighter, forced into the ring to uphold his family's proud tradition. A gentle, sensitive soul, Manolo would rather make beautiful music with his guitar -- and

with Maria. (He woos her with a surprising playlist that includes covers of Elvis Presley and Rod Stewart.)

Joaquin, on the other hand, is a puffed-up macho soldier, struggling to live up to his own family line of fierce warriors.

Unbeknownst to Manolo, Joaquin has a secret weapon: a medal which makes him invincible. This charm was given to him by the god Xibalba (voice of Ron

Perlman), the ruler of the desolate Land of the Forgotten, a purgatory-like underworld populated by the spirits of those who have no one to pray for them.

Xibalba longs to escape his realm. So he makes a wager with his estranged wife, the goddess La Muerte (voice of Kate del Castillo), overseer of the heaven-like Land of the Remembered. The bet centers on Maria. If she chooses Joaquin as her mate, La

## MOVIE REVIEWS

Muerte will, reluctantly, swap positions with Xibalba.

Since Xibalba has stacked the deck in favor of Joaquin, things look bad for La Muerte and Manolo. But several twists and turns are in store as the action shifts back and forth among the three worlds.

Although "The Book of Life" is a fantasy and does not espouse a particular religion, it does include among hundreds of background characters a (presumably Catholic) priest and a trio of nuns. Their depiction is, however, perfectly respectful.

Parents should be advised that, while the tone is light and the action slapstick, there are several dark moments which may frighten younger viewers.

In the end, Catholic moviegoers will concur with the script's lesson about honoring the dearly departed: "As long as we remember, they are always with us."

The film contains nonscriptural religious themes, some mildly scary sequences, occasional bathroom humor and a few very mild oaths in Spanish.

The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.



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## Virtus Training

The next Virtus Training session will be held Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 6 p.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center in Alexandria. To pre-register, go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) or call 318-445-6424, ext 213.

## Women's Charismatic Conference

The date for the 2014 Women's Catholic Charismatic Conference, originally scheduled for Oct. 4, has been moved to Saturday, Nov. 22 at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville. Registration and a continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m. and the conference begins at 9 a.m. We will close with a vigil Mass at 4 p.m. The theme of the conference is "Be Not Afraid." Our speakers are Aggie Neck and Tracy Simpson. Conference fee of \$50 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Please contact Diane at 318-419-1547 for more information.

## Cabrini Sanctuary Christmas Boutique

The St. Frances Cabrini Sanctuary Society annual Christmas Boutique will be held Saturday, Nov. 22 from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the school gym. Events include a silent auction, sweet shop, frozen food area, bookstore and arts and crafts. On Sunday, there will be a dinner from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. The entree for the dinner will be "Chicken Spectacular" a popular dish from Bishop Greco's famous cookbook, and prepared by the Brocato family (of Brocato's restaurant). The dinner will also include corn, salad, and rolls.

## Marriage Help

Retrouvaille (announced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the program to be held on Jan. 23-26 at Maryhill Renewal



**OL of LOURDES (Fifth Ward) PUBLIC ROSARY RALLY.** Parishioners from Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward participated in the 2014 Public Square Rosary Rally Oct. 11 with Father Silverino Kwebuza, pastor and Deacon Ted Mouldar.

## DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Center in Pineville, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit: [www.HelpOurMarriage.com](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.com)

### Ignite Confirmation Rally

The Office of Religious Formation and Training will host IGNITE Confirmation Rally on Saturday, Jan. 24 from 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. at Holy Savior Menard High School. Cost is \$20 per person by Jan. 5 and \$25 after Jan. 5. Lunch is included. To register, go to [www.diocesealex.org/youthministry](http://www.diocesealex.org/youthministry). Parish must provide one chaperone per 8 candidates. For more information, call 318-445-6424, ext 221.

### Interested in Monastic Life?

Are you interested in how to live a monastic life without living in a monastery? Fr. Bob Garrione, parochial vicar at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral has established online (with the Bishop's approval) The Monastery of the Oblates, Cistercian de Guadalupe, a group of lay brothers and sisters from all over the continental US, Canada, Australia and England, who learn the beauty of a monastic Benedictine/Cistercian (Trappist) spirituality and how to apply it to their lives, without moving away to live in a monastery. For more info, call Fr. Bob at 318-445-1451 ext 11 or email [oblcist@gmail.com](mailto:oblcist@gmail.com).

### Job Opening

Substitute Child Nutrition Technician needed for the Diocesan Catholic School Cafeteria's in Avoyelles, Natchitoches, and Rapides Parish. Applicant must be drug-free and able to pass a background screening. Cur-

rent position would be on an as needed basis only, with possibilities of leading into a permanent full-time position. Must be available between the hours of 6:00 am and 3:00 pm. M-F. If interested contact the Diocese of Alexandria Child Nutrition Office at (318) 445-6424 ext. 232.

## Volunteer Opportunities -- Radio Maria

Radio Maria is a Catholic radio station located in Alexandria (601 Washington Street).

Volunteers are needed to:

- answer the phone between the hours of 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Monday - Friday)
- stuff envelopes for periodic mailouts
- be on a "call list" of volunteers, and called as needed when there is a need.
- answer the phone during semi-annual (Spring and Fall) Mariathons for 2-hour shifts
- make a food dish or a dessert for periodic special events at the station.
- light housekeeping at the studio
- work the sound board for 2-hour shifts on the weekend. (Requires a little training to do this.)
- pray on the air
- make a 3-5 minute presentation about Radio Maria to parishes after a weekend Mass

If you think you can volunteer for any of the duties listed above, please call Carla at 318-561-6145.

## Holy Spirit Teen, Young Adult Retreat

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO) will sponsor its annual Holy Spirit Teen and Young Adult Retreat, better known as January Retreat, Jan. 2-4, 2015 at the Landmark Hotel in Metairie. The retreat will include talks, skits, music, worship, Mass, confessions, and fellowship.

Speakers include Fr. Tim Hedrick, Fr. Jonathan Hemelt, Sr. Tracey Dugas, Timmy McCaffery, Matt Bourgeois, Alex Lorio, Deacon Larry Oney and Chantelle Hudachek. Music will be provided by Leslie Bertucci and NoLoud-Rocks.

This is a great retreat for Confirmation preparation. Cost is \$170. Registration closes Dec. 5. To register, visit [www.ccrno.org](http://www.ccrno.org) or contact CCRNO at [youth@ccrno.org](mailto:youth@ccrno.org)

## Holy Spirit Women's Retreat

Sister Briega McKenna, OSC, and Fr. Kevin Scallon, CM, will be the featured speakers at the annual Holy Spirit Women's Retreat from Jan. 16-18, 2015 at the Hilton Hotel in Lafayette. The theme is "I Thirst." This retreat is sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO). Weekend and Saturday commuters are welcome. Register online at [www.ccrno.org](http://www.ccrno.org) or call (504) 828-1368.

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
17	18 VIRTUS 6 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center Alexandria	19	20	21	22 Women's Catholic Charismatic Conference 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center  Turn on the Holidays 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Natchitoches	23
PRAY FOR FR. L. MELCHER	PRAY FOR FR. A. MESSINA	PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS	PRAY FOR FR. B. MILLER	PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
All Catholic Schools closed this week				Diocesan Offices closed		
PRAY FOR FR. J. NELLIKUNNEL	PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL	PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIKWE	THANKSGIVING DAY PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN	PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR	PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA	PRAY FOR FR. A. PALLAKATTUCHARA
DECEMBER 1	2	3	4	5 St. Cecilia Chorale 6:30 p.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria	6 City of Lights Christmas Festival 7:45 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Natchitoches  Christmas Parade 1:00 p.m. Natchitoches	7 Rapides Symphony 2:30 p.m. Coughlin Saunders, Alexandria  St. Cecelia Chorale 4:00 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle, Mansura  Live Nativity 6:00-8:00 p.m. First United Methodist, Alexandria
PRAY FOR BISHOP R. HERZOG	PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPPARAMBIL	PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH	PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL	PRAY FOR FR. G. POOKKATTU
8  SOLEMNITY of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION Holy Day of Obligation PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS	9 NSU Chamber Choir Lessons & Carols 7:30 p.m. Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches  PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY	10  PRAY FOR FR. J. RETNAZHAMONI	11  PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS	12 St. Cecelia Chorale 6:00 p.m. St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport  Christmas Parade 7:00 p.m. Pineville PRAY FOR FR. J. ROBLES SANCHEZ	13 Christmas Festival 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Natchitoches  Christmas Parade 1:00 p.m. Plaucheville PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ HERNANDEZ	14 Christmas Parade 11:00 a.m. Cottonport  Christmas Parade 2:00 p.m. Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. J. ROY
15  PRAY FOR FR. J. RYAN	16 Red River Chorale 7:30 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT	17 OLPS Choirs Lessons & Carols 6:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY	18 NSU Choirs Lessons & Carols 6:30 p.m. Trinity Episcopal, Natchitoches PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA POSADA	19  PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR	20 Christmas Festival 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Natchitoches PRAY FOR FR. S. SOARES	21  PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN



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