

CHURCH TODAY

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December 10, 2018

ON THE INSIDE

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Mary's appearance to Juan Diego as one of his people is a powerful reminder that Mary—and the God who sent her—accept all peoples. See pages 3 and 17 for more on Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas.

Opportunities to serve the Central Louisiana community

As Advent and Christmas approach, there are many worthy charities and organizations that you, your parish, or parish organizations may choose for donations or various “drives.” See page 8 for a guide of specific Catholic organizations within our own Diocese that might be considered to receive the benefits of such donations or “drives” hosted by parishes or groups around the Diocese.

Use Your Words

Just as parents coach and coax toddlers to practice their language skills (rather than throw a tantrum), we can encourage each other to use our conversations, witness and prayers for the children we love. See page 20 for how to use our words to encounter, accompany, and care for every young person in our care.



Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endures forever. | Ps. 118:1

GIVING THANKS AND GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY.

The entire student body of St. Mary's School, Natchitoches recently participated in collecting food items to donate to the local food pantry.

Nation mourns death of 41st president, recalls his life, legacy

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service



NATION MOURNS DEATH OF PRESIDENT. U.S. President George H.W. Bush applauds St. John Paul II after a welcoming ceremony prior to their audience at the Vatican in 1991. Bush, the 41st president of the United States and the father of the 43rd, died Nov. 30 at his home in Houston. He was 94. (CNS photo/Rick Wilking, Reuters)

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- When he was running for re-election in 1992, President George H.W. Bush told Catholic News Service that he believed that a strong religious faith could provide "an extra shot of strength when you need it."

"I don't believe you can be president without having faith. I really strongly feel that," Bush said in a telephone interview that October as he flew en route from a campaign appearance in Kentucky to scheduled stops in Florida.

That religious faith which sustained him and his family and was clearly evident during his years in the White House -- and more recently as he mourned the April 17 death of his beloved wife of 73 years, Barbara -- is being noted by many in paying tribute to his life and legacy after his death late Nov. 30 at age 94 at his home in Houston.

His spokesman, Jim McGrath, confirmed the death of the former president in a tweet. The cause of his death was not immediately available, but he had been in failing health the last few years. In 2012, he announced that he had vascular Parkinsonism, a condition that limited his mobility and required him to use a wheelchair most of the time.

"Jeb, Neil, Marvin, Doro and I are saddened to announce that after 94 remarkable years, our dear Dad has died," said former President George W. Bush, the late president's oldest son. "George H.W. Bush was a man of the highest character and the best dad a son or daughter could ask for. The entire Bush family is deeply grateful for 41's life and love, for the compassion of those who have cared and prayed for

Dad, and for the condolences of our friends and fellow citizens."

Air Force One, technically called "Special Air Mission 41," flew to Houston to bring the body of the late president back to Washington. After arrival at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington late in the afternoon Dec. 3, his body was to be transported to the U.S. Capitol Rotunda to lie in state through the early morning of Dec. 5. The public was invited to pay respects beginning Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m. EST through Dec. 5 at 7 a.m. The funeral service was planned for 11 a.m. at the cathedral.

The final "Special Air Mission 41" flight was to return the president's body to Texas late Dec. 5 for funeral services the next day in College Station, Texas. He will be laid to rest the afternoon of Dec. 6 at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, where wife Barbara and their daughter Robin, who died at age 3, are buried.

Catholic leaders, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic

Bishops, joined in "grieving the loss of one of our nation's leaders."

"We remember with gratitude this great man who spent his life selflessly in service of his country," the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said Dec. 3. "With an unwavering commitment to building bridges of peace and ensuring our nation's freedoms, he also inspired many as a devoted husband, father and family patriarch."

"On behalf of my brother bishops of the United States, we pray for the repose of the soul of our 41st president as we remember a life well lived," said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, who heads the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. "We also offer our deepest sympathy and prayers for his bereaved family and all those who mourn his passing. May you find peace and comfort in the consoling love of Jesus Christ."

The National Right to Life Committee, a federation of state right-to-life affiliates and

more than 3,000 local chapters, also mourned Bush's death and praised him for a number of pro-life measures he supported as president.

"President George H.W. Bush dedicated his administration to advancing pro-life policies to protect mothers and their unborn children," said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life.

While in office, Bush stated that the "protection of innocent human life -- in or out of the womb -- is certainly the most compelling interest that a state can advance," she added.

During his pontificate, St. John Paul met with Bush twice at the Vatican, first when Bush was vice president and then when he was president.

"I had the opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Holy Father for his spiritual and moral leadership," Bush said in a statement after the two leaders met privately for more than an hour Nov. 8, 1991.

"His message for peace and

the message that he sends across the world to all these countries" experiencing war and other hardships "is a message of hope and, indeed, a message of peace," the president said.

Born in Milton, Massachusetts, June 12, 1924, Bush delayed entrance to Yale University to volunteer for service in World War II. At 18, he was one of the Navy's youngest pilots. After several flying successful bombing missions, he was shot down during one in 1944 and was rescued at sea. The rest of his flight crew perished.

After graduating from Yale, he became an oilman in Texas, but after his successful stint in the oil fields, he spent most of the rest of his life in public service -- including as a two-term congressman from Texas, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, an ambassador, vice president under President Ronald Reagan (1980-1988) and finally president (1988-1992).

He and Barbara married Jan. 6, 1945. As a young couple they suffered through the death from leukemia of daughter Robin at age 3. Throughout their lives they and their whole family mourned her loss. Bush is survived by son George W., the nation's 43rd president, and four other children; 17 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; and two siblings.

"We are guided by faith," Bush said of his wife and family in that 1992 interview with CNS. "We (are) regular attendees at church and that gives us strength every Sunday. And we just feel that it's important as a family to pray together. We still say our blessings at our meals and we still say our prayers at night."

Carol Zimmermann
contributed to this story.

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for December

That people, who are involved in the service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.

The Chancery and other offices in the
St. Joseph Catholic Center at
4400 Coliseum Blvd. in Alexandria
will be closed
December 24, 2018 - January 4, 2019.

The building will reopen on Monday, January 7, 2019.

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Looking back



December 2011:

St. Mary's School, Natchitoches collects food for Immaculate Conception Food Pantry.

Members of the SMS National Honor Society, along with Saint Mary's students, collected and delivered food items to the Immaculate Conception Church Food Pantry. Pictured in the front row are Sidney Morgan, Melanie Maggio, Mahalie Hubbs, and Rebecca Pickett. Middle row: Ashlyn Balthazar and Lindsay Lee. Standing in the back are Kaitlynn Bedgood, Faith Stanfield, Camille Lott, John Sullivan, Caitlin Ingram, and Nick Takes.

December 2018:

Each year the entire student body of St. Mary's School in Natchitoches competes to see which class can collect the most food items to be donated, including dry cereal, spaghetti noodles, cranberry sauce, dried beans, canned soup, rice, and peanut butter.

The winner this year for Elementary is Pre-3 and Pre-4. They will receive a pizza party and movie. The winning Junior High and High School classes are the 7th and 8th grades. They will spend a day serving others at the Winnfield food pantry, and receive a pizza party!

A Safe Environment for All

For updated information, news articles, and documents regarding ongoing activity and planning for securing and maintaining a Safe Environment for all, visit www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/healing (visit www.diocesealex.org and look for "A Safe Environment For All" under the "Our Faith" tab). Here, you can find Bishop Talley's message for November 2018, as well as updates from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Also found on this page is the letter from Pope Francis to all Bishops in the United States regarding a meeting in February 2019 at the Vatican entitled "The Protection of Minors in the Church."

How to report abuse

What to do if you suspect sexual abuse of a minor by a cleric, church worker, or volunteer? **FIRST**, call the LA Child Abuse Hotline at 855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437) and/or your local law enforcement agency. **THEN**, call the diocesan Victims' Assistance Coordinator, Dr. Lee Kneipp, Clinical Psychologist at 318-542-9805.

Feast of the Month: Our Lady of Guadalupe

FRANCISCAN MEDIA -

The Story of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The feast in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe goes back to the 16th century. Chronicles of that period tell us the story.

A poor Indian named Cuauhtlatohuac was baptized and given the name Juan Diego. He was a 57-year-old widower, and lived in a small village near Mexico City. On Saturday morning December 9, 1531, he was on his way to a nearby barrio to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady.

Juan was walking by a hill called Tepeyac when he heard beautiful music like the



warbling of birds. A radiant cloud appeared, and within it stood an Indian maiden dressed like an Aztec princess. The lady spoke to him in his

own language and sent him to the bishop of Mexico, a Franciscan named Juan de Zumarraga. The bishop was to build a chapel in the place where the lady appeared.

Eventually the bishop told Juan to have the lady give him a sign. About this same time Juan's uncle became seriously ill. This led poor Juan to try to avoid the lady. Nevertheless the lady found Juan, assured him that his uncle would recover, and provided roses for Juan to carry to the bishop in his cape or tilma.

On December 12, when Juan Diego opened his tilma in the bishop's presence, the roses fell to the ground, and the bishop sank to his knees.

On the tilma where the roses had been appeared an image of Mary exactly as she had appeared at the hill of Tepeyac.

Reflection

Mary's appearance to Juan Diego as one of his people is a powerful reminder that Mary—and the God who sent her—accept all peoples. In the context of the sometimes rude and cruel treatment of the Indians by the Spaniards, the apparition was a rebuke to the Spaniards and an event of vast significance for the indigenous population. While a number of them had converted before this incident, they now came in droves. According to a contemporary chronicler,

nine million Indians became Catholic in a very short time. In these days when we hear so much about God's preferential option for the poor, Our Lady of Guadalupe cries out to us that God's love for and identification with the poor is an age-old truth that stems from the Gospel itself.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patron Saint of:

- The Americas
- Mexico

Our Lady of Guadalupe's Feast Day:

Wednesday, December 12

Advent as the season to prepare our hearts as gift

Let's see now, we've already had "Black Friday." It's come and gone. The term Black Friday is used by media and marketing folks to designate the *day after Thanksgiving*, when the stores have their items for sale at a discounted price. The traffic circle and mall filled with cars and trucks, chaos from dawn to dusk. That one day of binge buying has expanded in recent years. "Black Friday sales" were advertised this year **before Thanksgiving Day** was celebrated.

As lots of us have begun shopping online, the online vendors created *Cyber Monday*, the Monday after our national day of thanksgiving to God and after our national holy day of shopping (Black Friday). On *Cyber Monday*, there were discounts available with the click of the computer mouse. Then, following *Thanksgiving Day* and *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday*, there is *Giving Tuesday* . . . an opening for generosity and



I am the VINE; YOU are the BRANCHES

(John 15:5)

Most Rev. David P. Talley
Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria

selflessness, as we are encouraged to support institutions that build up the common good.

You might ask me: How has this mention of *Thanksgiving Day* and *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday* and *Giving Tuesday* have ANYTHING to do with December and the expectant season of Advent? Well . . . **everything** . . . but the connection between these civic and marketplace holidays and Advent requires us to ponder the *purpose of Advent* and its power to refresh our minds and hearts.

Through THE gift of God's revelation, Jesus of Nazareth, we have come to know him as the fulfillment of the Promise given to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and David. Through this gift of grace you and I now live a life of faith in the Lord Jesus as his Church. Our Christ-centered Catholic formation tells us that the Crucified and Risen Lord commissioned his chosen Apostles to continue the ministry of Reconciliation, the mission of redeeming all of humanity. The Cross has won the victory over the

Evil One, over sin and death. This truth must now be shared with all of humanity, in obedience to the word of the Savior . . . to make disciples of all (Matthew 28:18-20).

The global Church that we are members of, the Catholic Church that we love and are dedicated to, serves as an instrument of the Redemption won in that obedient love . . . seen in the Good Friday sacrifice of the Lamb. To renew humanity through this gift of grace, the successors of the Apostles use liturgical prayer and the liturgical

year to carry out our formation in Christ the Lord.

Each liturgical year of God's grace recognizes two pivotal seasons: the season of Christmas, the *Incarnation*, as the living God taking on our flesh and blood, as the Father's Son is born to us. This season of the Nativity leads us to ponder the purpose of his birth, recognized in the *passion of the Lord* and resurrection, as Jesus is shown to be the Priest and the lamb of sacrifice, for the sins of the world and as the Victor over sin and death. Both of these pivotal seasons are anticipated with a time of prayer and expectation. The season of Easter is preceded by holy Lent. The season of the Nativity or Christmas is preceded by Advent.

So, how do *Thanksgiving Day* and *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday* and *Giving Tuesday*

See GIFT, page 20

First Friday and First Saturday Devotions

Though the Catholic liturgy is the "summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed" and "the font from which all her power flows" (SC, 10), we are also blessed to have numerous "devotions" to help us in our daily efforts to live a life that will lead us to heaven. Most of the popular devotions have specific prayer formulas and have attached special graces one may receive if remaining faithful to the devotion, however, we must be careful and not treat a devotion as superstition. Instead, the devotions exist to help keep us close to our Lord by practicing the virtues and avoiding sin.

This month's question asks for more information about two popular devotions – First Friday Mass and First Saturday Mass. Many of the church parishes throughout our diocese offer these two special Masses each month, so hopefully this column will give you a better understanding of their history and significance.

Though similar in name and time of the month in which they are observed, and that they are devotions for reparation, they differ in their intentions. Let's



Embracing the Liturgy

By Deacon Richard W. Mitchell

take one at a time:

The **First Friday** devotion began when a nun named Margaret Mary Alacoque had an encounter with Jesus (vision) in the late 1600's where he asked that the Church honor His Most Sacred Heart. Jesus asked the faithful to turn their focus back to God and "receive communion on the First Fridays, for nine consecutive months." Our Lord made a promise to St. Margaret Mary that for those who completed this request (assuming communion is received in a state of grace) and who have a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart, will receive the Twelve Promises listed below:

1. I will give them all the graces necessary for their state of

life.

2. I will establish peace in their families.

3. I will console them in all their troubles.

4. They shall find in My Heart an assured refuge during life and especially at the hour of their death.

5. I will pour abundant blessings on all their undertakings.

6. Sinners shall find in My Heart the source of an infinite ocean of mercy.

7. Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.

8. Fervent souls shall speedily rise to great perfection.

9. I will bless the homes where an image of My Heart shall be exposed and honored.

10. I will give to devotees of

My Heart the power of touching the most hardened hearts.

11. Those who propagate this devotion shall have their names written in My Heart, never to be effaced.

12. The all-powerful love of My Heart will grant to all those who shall receive Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months the grace of final repentance; they shall not die under My displeasure, nor without receiving their Sacraments; My Heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.

This First Friday devotion grew in popularity once Sister Margaret Mary was canonized a saint in 1920.

The **First Saturday** devotion began as a request by Our Lady of Fatima, who appeared to three children on December 10, 1925. Our Lady said to Lucia (the oldest of the three): "I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all who, on the First Saturday of five consecutive months, confess their sins, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for

15 minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to my Immaculate Heart."

Now that you know a little more about First Friday and First Saturday Masses, challenge yourself to find time on your calendar and adopt these devotions or look into other devotions. These devotions, and others like them, are here to help draw us closer to the Lord and help spread his Good News to those around us. The more time we spend with Jesus, the more we will come to Love the Liturgy.

Send your questions
and/or share your comments
with Deacon Mitchell via email
to: WhyDoWe@diocesealex.org.

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Support your favorite charities through the Amazon Smile Program

Giving Tuesday is a great day to give back to your community and favorite charity as the Christmas season approaches. But there are several ways to give back throughout the year, including the AmazonSmile program.

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

How to shop at AmazonSmile

To shop at AmazonSmile, simply visit smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device (AmazonSmile is *not* available through the Amazon app for phones and tablets). When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization from over one million eligible 501(c)(3) public charitable organizations currently registered with the program.



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To shop through the program, simply go to smile.amazon.com, and log in to your current Amazon.com account. Tens of millions of products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages are eligible for charitable donations.

The Diocese of Alexandria has been approved as a charitable organization with AmazonSmile,

as well as other organizations in our community. Please consider making "Catholic Diocese of Alexandria" your charitable organization of choice at smile.amazon.com to quickly and easily support diocesan ministries throughout the year.

Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same account.

What is the AmazonSmile Foundation?

The AmazonSmile Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation created by Amazon to administer the AmazonSmile program. All donations generated by the AmazonSmile program are remitted to the AmazonSmile Foundation. In turn, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates those amounts to the charitable organizations selected by customers. Amazon pays all expenses of the AmazonSmile Foundation; they are not deducted from the donation

amounts generated by purchases on AmazonSmile.

How are donations made to the organization of my choice?

Each quarter, the AmazonSmile Foundation makes donations to eligible charitable organizations by electronic funds transfer. Donations are transferred approximately 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter.

You can support the Diocese of Alexandria when you shop on AmazonSmile!

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Celebrating the entire Christmas Season

Christmas is one of the most important days of the Church year, second only to Easter itself. It is the feast of the incarnation, the feast of God becoming flesh (the Latin "in carne" means "enfleshment"). It is a uniquely Christian teaching, the Divine choosing to become one of us. Because of this belief, God is not only Transcendent, but also wholly Immanent, Emmanuel (God-with-us). While remaining Transcendent (meaning we must rise above our present condition to reach Him), He is at the same time Immanent (meaning He is with us as we rise toward Him). Every Eucharist is like Christmas where the bread and wine are transformed into His flesh, His Body and Blood, and, in a sense, He is born anew on the altar.

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Masses on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts, and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him... including the fact that he was born to die for us.

The Christmas tree and the Nativity scene are popular



symbols of the season and a tradition in many Christian homes. It is also traditional to exchange Christmas gifts with family and friends as a way to honor God the Father's gift of his only son to the world. Having received the gift of Christ, we naturally want to pass that gift along to our loved ones.

The Octave of Christmas is a time for us to enter into the stories of special saints who are associated with the birth of our Lord because of their innocence: our first martyr and the disciple Jesus loved.

The Birth of Christ - Dec. 25

Tuesday is Christmas Day, the first day in this eight-day celebration of the Octave of Christmas. We take joy in the story of the nativity and of Our Savior's entrance into the world in the most humble of ways. Families are encouraged to read together the infancy narrative from the Gospel of Luke, and reflect on the gift of salvation that Jesus brings.

St. Stephen - Dec. 26

December 26, the day after Christmas, is the Feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr. The reading from Acts takes us into the story of his being stoned by an infuriated crowd.

St. John, the Apostle - Dec. 27

December 27 we traditionally celebrate the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. This apostle is associated with the wonderful tradition and writings that bear his name. This week, our reflection is framed by the wonderful words of the First Letter of John and the story from the Fourth Gospel of Simon Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" who ran to find the empty tomb on Easter morning. Today, pray about how you can better live out your own vocation and calling.

The Holy Innocents - Dec. 28

On December 28, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Innocents. This celebration takes us back into the infancy narrative of Matthew. The account of how Jesus begins his journey to become one with us, is powerfully told as a journey of Jesus' entering into the journey of his people, with the flight into Egypt and the horrible slaughter of the innocent children. On this Feast of Holy Innocents, pray for greater respect for all life from conception until natural death.

St. Thomas Becket - Dec. 29

On December 29, we celebrate the Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord -- and the feast of St. Thomas Becket, who was a bishop, martyred for defending the principles of religious liberty. Ask St. Thomas for protection of our religious liberty from contemporary threats.

The Holy Family - Dec. 30

The Feast of the Holy Family is often celebrated on the Sunday after Christmas. When a Sunday does not occur between December 25 and January 1, this feast is celebrated on December 30 with

only one reading before the Gospel. This time allows us to reflect on Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, and ask ourselves what graces they could offer us.

This also allows us a bit more time to reflect upon the Christmas story, including the everyday reality that was part of their lives as family - the patience, give and take, the self-sacrifice and the love that was a part of their very human interaction together, throughout what we call "the hidden life" of Jesus. That can include all the hidden years of Jesus' life, what their village was like and what ways they spoke with each other, as well as what difficulties they might have experienced. Today, participate in Mass as a family and enjoy a special treat together afterward!

Mary, Mother of God - Jan. 1

On New Year's Day, the octave day of Christmas, the Church celebrates the Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God. It is the highest title of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Theotokos, Mother of God. This title was given to Mary at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

The Epiphany - Jan. 6

In most countries and dioceses, the Feast of the Epiphany is transferred to the Sunday between Jan. 2 and Jan. 8. This year, we celebrate the Epiphany on Sunday, Jan. 6.

The Epiphany marks the arrival of visitors, traditionally identified as magi, to where Jesus was born. Their visit is an important reminder that Jesus came to bring salvation to all nations.

This marks a week of gratitude -- growing in a sense of freedom and joy over the gift we have been given to know God's love for us and presence with us more deeply.

However, if our celebration of the days before Christmas and Christmas Day itself were busy or even difficult, then this can be days of recovery and added time to let Our Lord come into our lives where we need him to come the most.

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/christmas/index.cfm>



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Penance Services

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Mondays in December: 10 & 17 at 5:00 p.m.

St. Paul the Apostle Church and Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Mansura

Tuesday, Dec. 11

6:00 p.m. -- St. Genevieve Church, Brouillette

6:00 p.m. -- Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville

Wednesday, Dec. 12

6:00 p.m. -- Holy Ghost Church, Marksville

6:00 p.m. -- St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo

Friday, Dec. 14

6:00 p.m. -- St. Joseph Church, Cheneyville

Monday, Dec. 17

6:00 p.m. -- Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen

Tuesday, Dec. 18

6:00 p.m. -- St. Charles Chapel, Goudeau

6:00 p.m. -- St. Peter Church/St. Michael Church, Bordelonville

6:00 p.m. -- Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine

Wednesday, Dec. 19

6:00 p.m. -- St. Anthony of Padua Church, Bunkie

Natchitoches Deanery

Wednesday, Dec. 19

6:30 p.m. -- St. John the Baptist Church, Cloutierville

Eastern Deanery

Tuesday, Dec. 11

6:15 p.m. -- St. Patrick Church, Ferriday

Wednesday, Dec. 12

6:00 p.m. -- Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Vidalia

Thursday, Dec. 13

6:00 p.m. -- St. Gerard Mission, Jonesville

Monday, Dec. 17

5:30 p.m. -- St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph

Central Deanery

Wednesday, Dec. 12

6:00 p.m. -- St. Francis Cabrini Church, Alexandria

6:00 p.m. -- St. Peter Mission, Elmer

6:10 p.m. -- Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville

6:30 p.m. -- St. John the Baptist Church, Deville

Monday, Dec. 17

6:30 p.m. -- St. Rita Church, Alexandria

Wednesday, Dec. 19

6:30 p.m. -- Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria

6:30 p.m. -- St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria

Times listed above were available at press time.

Go to www.diocesealex.org for a more updated list of for Christmas Eve, Christmas Midnight, Christmas Day, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and Penance Services to be held throughout the Diocese.

Before celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, one should prepare oneself with an examination of conscience, reflecting prayerfully on one's thoughts, words, and deeds in order to identify any sins.

There are various types of examinations of conscience but regardless of which one you use to prepare yourself for the Sacrament, it should be rooted in Scripture. Visit www.diocesealex.org for a few examples of Examinations of Conscience that can help you prepare for the Sacrament.

How's your Catholic vocabulary?

Term: Advent

Definition: Advent is a period of preparation, extending over four Sundays leading up to Christmas. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin *advenio*, which means "to come to," and refers to the coming of Christ.

Our preparations for Christmas should include Christ's birth at Christmas, the coming of Christ in our lives through grace and the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and finally, to His second coming at the end of time.



**First Sunday of Advent:
December 2, 2018**



Quiz Answer:

B. Pope Francis

Follow Bishop Talley on Twitter:

@BishopDavidT

Suicide prevention, human trafficking, domestic assault, and sexual abuse hotlines can be found in the "Healing Voices Newsletter" - a website created by dedicated survivors of clergy sexual abuse.

The website also features many resources, including a compilation of "Emergency Numbers" such as hotlines for suicide prevention, human trafficking, domestic assault, and sexual abuse.

Visit www.thehealingvoices.wordpress.com for more information.

FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY JUDGE

PETER J. LEMOINE
Social Security Disability Law

Offices in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Cottonport
Adjunct Professor (1994-1997), Northwestern State University

MEMBER: Louisiana State Bar Association, American Bar Association, Baton Rouge Bar Association, Avoyelles Parish Bar Association, National Organization of Social Security Claimant Representatives, Legal Services for Purposes of Disability Committee (Louisiana State Bar Association).

PUBLISHED ARTICLES: "The Worn-Out Worker Rule Revisited," "Significant Work-Related Limitations of Function Under §12.05C," "Questionable Retirement and the Small Business Owner," "Crisis of Confidence: The Inadequacies of Vocational Evidence Presented at Social Security Disability Hearings."

318-717-1995

Opportunities to serve the Central Louisiana community

As Advent and Christmas approach, there are many worthy charities and organizations that you, your parish, or parish organizations may choose for donations or various "drives."

The following is offered as a guide of specific Catholic organizations within our own Diocese that might be considered to receive the benefits of such donations or "drives" hosted by parishes or groups around the Diocese.

Manna House

The Manna House, located in Alexandria, accepts donations of food as well as cleaning and other supplies. Contact Manna House at 318-445-9053 or cenlamannahouse@gmail.com.

Servant House

This ministry, based in Marksville, is currently accepting donations of non-perishable food items. For more information, contact the Servant House at 318-253-7810 or servanthouse89@yahoo.com.

Sacred Heart Homeless Ministry / Food Pantry

Located at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville, this ministry accepts non-perishable food items, and other personal essentials. Contact Sacred Heart of Jesus parish at 318-445-2497 or Parish Manager Robin Graham at rgraham@jesusinpineville.com.

Divine Mercy Home

Under the auspices of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Natchitoches, this home offers a safe haven for those affected by domestic violence. The Divine Mercy Home accepts food, cleaning supplies, and other personal essentials. Contact St. Anthony of Padua Church at 318-352-2559 or Fr. John O'Brien at frjobrien@diocesealex.org.

Catholic Relief Services Ethical Trade

The Catholic Relief Services Ethical Trade provides many quality products, ideal for gift-giving. Catholic Relief Services Ethical Trade is a community of fair trade believers dedicated to improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable by choosing to consume differently. More information and a Holiday

Gift Guide can be found at <https://ethicaltrade.crs.org>.

Your Own Parish Ministries

Many parishes operate food pantries or offer other direct aid opportunities. Please contact your individual church parish offices or see your church bulletin for more information on how you can help your parish serve those in your local community.



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The above list was provided by the Office of Life and Justice.

Please call 318-445-6424 ext. 225 for assistance, or for more information on services provided.

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2018 PRIESTS CONVOCATION. Bishop David Talley and the priests of the diocese gathered for the second annual priests' convocation at Maryhill Renewal Center from Dec. 4-6 for the purpose of continuing formation and fellowship. The keynote speaker for the gathering was Dr. Ralph Martin, author of *The Fulfillment of All Desire: A Guidebook for the Journey to God Based on the Wisdom of the Saints*. Find more about Dr. Martin at renewalministries.net.



BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS CULTURES. Father Peter Faulk, JCL, JV, was featured in the Santa Croce Pontifical University of the Holy Cross bi-weekly e-newsletter recently. Father Peter is the Judicial Vicar for the Diocese and also plays an important role in Hispanic ministry. Santa Croce Pontifical University is located in Rome, Italy, and is a center for the study for theological, philosophical, and canonical formation, with an enrollment of about 1,500 students. To read the full article, please visit www.diocesealex.org.

Dec. 25: Church Vocations Collection

Traditionally at all Christmas Masses, a second collection is taken for the education and formation of our priests. Through the Church Vocations collections, to be held Dec. 25, your generosity and prayers allow the church to continue to provide priests, sisters, and brothers to serve our spiritual and physical needs. Please be generous.

Seminarian Burses

November Donations

Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Father Chris Nayak Burse	
Father Peter Kuligowski	\$30.00
Father Peter Kuligowski Burse	
Mrs. Nelwyn Broussard	\$50.00
Monsignor Milburn Broussard Burse	
Mrs. Barbara Rigby	\$50.00
Leo P. Dobard Burse	
Mrs. Nelwyn Broussard	\$100.00
Deacon Roderick "Benny" Broussard Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Robichaux	\$100.00
Leonard E. Johnson Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Mr. Dwight E. Beridon	\$250.00
Monsignor John Timmermans Burse	
Mr. Dwight E. Beridon	\$250.00
Harold and Lillie Beridon Burse	
Total	\$1,055.00



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2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal Totals

*As of November 30, 2018

I will give you a new heart!
2018 ANNUAL DIOCESEAN APPEAL

I will give you a New Heart

"... and a new spirit I will place within you." - Ezekiel 36:26

Dear Friends,

As we near the end of another year it is indeed, one of the greatest joys in my service as Shepherd of the Church of Alexandria to express my heartfelt gratitude for your generosity and support to the 2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal. Your support in this uncertain financial climate significantly helps the Church in Central Louisiana to continue offering its broad range of spiritual and practical assistance to God's people.

The ADA funds vital ministries that are essential to our faith: Campus Ministry -- for students on our colleges campuses; Tribunal Office -- for those seeking annulments and other services; Vocations -- for the continuing formation of priests, the formation and education of seminarians and the formation and training of those preparing for the permanent diaconate. These areas of ministry and formation serve each one of us.

I am sincerely grateful to you for all that you have done to make Christ present in so many ways throughout our diocese. For those who have not donated to the 2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal it's not too late, donations can be made until December 31. Please be assured you and your intentions will be in my prayers.

In the light and love of the Lord,

Most Reverend David P. Talley
Bishop of Alexandria

2018 ANNUAL DIOCESEAN APPEAL

DIocese of Alexandria
P.O. Box 7417
Alexandria, Louisiana 71306



Thank You!

2018 ADA Results

Arcadia Deanery	Goal	Pledged	Received	Families	Donors	Avg. Gift
St. Joseph Church - Marksville	\$31,626.22	\$35,026.00	\$36,412.25	813	161	\$238.59
St. Anthony of Padua Church - Bunkie	\$23,213.82	\$30,910.00	\$29,623.35	448	130	\$227.87
St. Mary's Assumption Church	\$17,386.14	\$12,602.00	\$11,647.00	415	74	\$157.39
Sacred Heart Church - Monroeville	\$15,912.56	\$10,643.00	\$10,351.25	289	74	\$139.88
St. Alphonsus Church	\$13,202.55	\$8,846.00	\$8,698.20	220	75	\$115.98
Mater Doloresa Church	\$13,419.58	\$10,973.78	\$10,871.28	238	73	\$148.92
St. Paul the Apostle Church	\$13,420.31	\$7,496.25	\$5,380.05	223	48	\$112.08
Holy Ghost Church - Marksville	\$10,539.05	\$7,857.00	\$7,687.00	142	29	\$265.07
Our Lady of Lourdes - Fifth Ward	\$9,626.19	\$9,498.00	\$9,498.00	180	68	\$139.68
Christ the King Church	\$11,628.68	\$8,345.50	\$8,345.50	304	63	\$132.47
St. Joseph Church - Chenayville	\$3,554.67	\$9,536.00	\$9,536.00	38	19	\$501.89
St. Francis de Sales Church	\$6,944.74	\$3,208.75	\$2,908.75	96	27	\$107.73
Immaculate Conception Church - Dupont	\$6,237.45	\$4,278.00	\$4,278.00	111	22	\$194.45
St. Genevieve-Brouillette	\$6,118.85	\$4,534.00	\$4,364.00	80	31	\$140.77
Church of the Little Flower	\$4,882.87	\$5,235.00	\$5,235.00	80	30	\$174.50
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church - Mansura	\$5,003.85	\$1,240.00	\$1,240.00	111	13	\$95.38
St. Peter Church	\$6,455.96	\$4,073.00	\$4,073.00	124	37	\$110.08
St. Richard Chapel - Hickory Hill	\$3,602.76	\$1,889.00	\$1,889.00	50	12	\$140.75
St. Martin of Tours-Belledeau	\$4,348.80	\$4,979.00	\$4,979.00	107	23	\$216.48
Our Lady of Sorrows Church	\$3,724.10	\$1,788.00	\$1,788.00	73	15	\$119.20
St. Charles - Goudreau	\$2,152.23	\$2,854.00	\$2,854.00	27	9	\$311.56
St. Michael Church	\$2,248.49	\$214.00	\$214.00	55	5	\$42.90
Deanery Total	\$215,350.45	\$189,466.28	\$183,622.63	4234	1038	\$176.90

Central Deanery	Goal	Pledged	Received	Families	Donors	Avg. Gift
St. Rita Catholic Church	\$69,849.83	\$103,914.60	\$102,031.50	1,296	328	\$311.07
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church - Alexandria	\$90,629.01	\$104,221.75	\$96,527.55	885	238	\$405.58
Sacred Heart Of Jesus	\$42,698.88	\$39,568.00	\$38,606.56	725	164	\$235.41
St. Francis Xavier Cathedral	\$35,548.17	\$51,762.75	\$50,008.22	377	142	\$352.17
St. Francis Cabrini Church	\$32,095.33	\$32,858.00	\$28,747.60	447	103	\$279.10
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church	\$16,781.72	\$22,240.00	\$21,341.10	300	89	\$215.87
Mary, Mother of Jesus Church	\$16,579.03	\$17,568.50	\$16,906.10	149	50	\$338.12
St. Martin Church	\$14,216.54	\$10,402.00	\$10,402.00	135	44	\$236.41
St. Juliana Church	\$13,757.33	\$4,738.00	\$4,738.00	129	51	\$92.90
St. James Church	\$9,621.31	\$5,948.00	\$5,703.75	174	36	\$158.44
St. Michael the Archangel - Leesville	\$15,638.55	\$15,566.00	\$15,205.00	213	76	\$200.07
Sts. Francis and Anne Church	\$9,947.45	\$11,057.00	\$10,657.00	146	42	\$253.74
St. John the Baptist - Deville	\$6,795.10	\$6,481.36	\$6,316.36	130	38	\$166.22
St. Margaret Church	\$5,777.60	\$8,062.00	\$5,576.14	68	25	\$223.05
St. Joseph Church - Coftar	\$6,456.76	\$2,860.00	\$2,690.00	79	17	\$156.47
Our Lady of Lourdes - Winfield	\$4,450.25	\$4,818.00	\$4,243.00	68	18	\$235.72
St. Edward Church - Fishville	\$4,353.14	\$4,492.00	\$4,492.00	54	16	\$280.75
St. Louis Church	\$3,577.85	\$6,835.00	\$6,710.00	26	16	\$419.38
Our Lady of Guadalupe	\$4,762.12	\$180.00	\$180.00	24	2	\$90.00
St. Peter Mission - Elmer	\$2,999.20	\$4,330.74	\$4,330.74	32	16	\$270.67
St. John The Baptist - Mondie	\$2,490.87	\$1,276.00	\$1,276.00	61	17	\$75.06
St. Patrick Church-Montgomery	\$2,707.64	\$2,838.00	\$2,838.00	40	17	\$168.94
St. Wilfred Chapel-Effe	\$2,103.33	\$1,775.00	\$1,775.00	32	17	\$104.41
St. Jude Mission - Seper	\$1,523.42	\$1,425.00	\$1,425.00	12	6	\$237.50
St. Cyril Chapel/Fishwoods	\$435.39	\$230.00	\$230.00	14	3	\$76.67
St. Margaret Mary Chapel - Gonum	\$749.46	\$90.00	\$90.00	13	3	\$30.00
St. William Chapel - Olla	\$24.39	\$575.00	\$575.00	13	4	\$143.75
Deanery Total	\$436,767.67	\$461,412.70	\$443,591.62	5,648	1,588	\$279.34

Eastern Deanery	Goal	Pledged	Received	Families	Donors	Avg. Gift
St. Mary Church - Winnsboro	\$7,908.15	\$12,583.00	\$12,583.00	66	22	\$571.95
St. Mary Church - Jena	\$3,311.26	\$184.00	\$184.00	37	4	\$46.00
Our Lady of Lourdes - Vidalia	\$10,208.65	\$6,946.71	\$6,946.71	143	37	\$187.75
St. Patrick Church - Ferriday	\$9,163.78	\$8,319.00	\$8,255.00	77	31	\$266.29
St. Edward Church - Tallulah	\$7,375.99	\$3,480.00	\$3,480.00	67	23	\$151.30
St. Joseph Church - St. Joseph	\$4,666.97	\$6,068.50	\$6,068.50	46	24	\$255.35
St. John Chapel - Columbia	\$2,102.80	\$1,894.50	\$1,425.50	27	10	\$142.55
St. Gerard Church - Jonesville	\$2,176.26	\$1,470.00	\$1,470.00	22	11	\$133.64
St. Francis of Assisi Church - Waterproof	\$1,183.70	\$2,070.00	\$2,070.00	18	12	\$172.50
Deanery Total	\$48,097.71	\$42,755.71	\$42,422.71	583	174	\$243.81

Natchitoches Deanery	Goal	Pledged	Received	Families	Donors	Avg. Gift
Minor Basilica Of The Immaculate Conception Church	\$33,671.03	\$44,728.00	\$43,786.00	413	147	\$207.95
Holy Cross Church	\$17,505.02	\$9,491.00	\$9,178.50	137	42	\$218.54
St. Augustine Church	\$14,042.39	\$16,655.00	\$15,882.40	157	60	\$264.71
St. Anthony Church of Padua - Natchitoches	\$16,283.57	\$20,031.00	\$19,951.00	155	75	\$266.01
St. John the Baptist - Clouterville	\$5,465.67	\$4,706.25	\$4,355.00	113	44	\$98.98
St. Anne Church - Spanish Lake	\$1,475.05	\$1,110.00	\$961.25	38	7	\$137.32
Nativity Of The Blessed Virgin Mary	\$3,674.85	\$2,744.00	\$2,684.00	44	21	\$126.86
St. Anne Chapel - Old River	\$1,861.30	\$2,898.00	\$2,448.00	28	15	\$163.20
St. Joseph Chapel-Tchet	\$1,692.96	\$819.00	\$819.00	14	8	\$136.50
Our Lady of the Rosary-Black Lake	\$1,572.67	\$5,373.00	\$5,373.00	19	12	\$447.75
Holy Family Church-Monet Ferry	\$1,138.14	\$561.00	\$311.00	16	6	\$51.83
St. Francis of Assisi Church - Pothatan	\$1,183.88	\$1,137.00	\$1,137.00	18	9	\$126.33
Holy Rosary Mission- Emanuel	\$217.64	\$133.00	\$133.00	13	3	\$44.33
Deanery Total	\$99,784.17	\$116,186.75	\$107,011.15	1166	447	\$239.48

No Church Given	\$0.00	\$4,352.00	\$3,888.80	337	24	\$162.03
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	Goal	Pledged	Received	Families	Donors	Avg. Gift
Total 2018 Annual Diocesan Appeal	\$800,000.00	\$816,173.44	\$780,536.91	11888	3271	\$238.62

St. Michael the Archangel pays off mortgage with donation

By Cari Terracina
Publications Manager

“Old and new.” These were the words used to describe the \$2.5 million Saint Michael the Archangel Catholic Church in Leesville, completed and dedicated in February of 2007.

The church boasts older items carried over from the previous church, including the Tabernacle, a sixty-year-old vessel originally donated by Martha Sliman in memory of Simon and Sam Koury, as well

as well as new construction consisting of a massive marble-floored foyer and high ceilings.

Many people find that going to church is not only a spiritual experience, but also an emotional experience - it allows people to be in a safe space where they are surrounded by people with similar values and beliefs.

One long-standing church within the Diocese of Alexandria, St. Michael the Archangel in Leesville, has been building its incredible community in the heart of the town since 1913.



ORIGINAL ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, LEESVILLE. The original St. Michael's Church built in 1913, stood in the heart of Leesville. The old church was renovated several times over the years, and was finally torn down to make room for the new church in the same location.



SHREDDING CEREMONY AT ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, LEESVILLE. Pastor, Father Kenneth Michiels celebrates the paying off of the church mortgage by L.J. and Norma Langlois, long-time parishioners of the parish, with a shredding ceremony on Nov. 24.

The parish community has worked diligently over the years to pay off the mortgage for the new church building, and finally, Saturday, Nov. 24 was able to shred the paid-in-full mortgage note for the church building.

The gift came Thursday, Nov. 15 from parishioners, Mr. and Mrs. Langlois. The news was announced over the weekend

of Nov. 24, and the parish community was able to gather to celebrate with a potluck dinner and shredding-of-the-mortgage ceremony.

“We’ve got a lot to be grateful for and to celebrate,” said Father Kenneth Michiels, long-time pastor of the parish.

The present property was dedicated with a special Mass,

celebrated by Bishop Emeritus Ronald Herzog, Fr. Michiels, and many other priests on Feb. 16, 2007, and has since stood to serve the growing community.

For more information, including pictures of St. Michael the Archangel’s church, please visit www.diocesealex.org.

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• **Dec. 18, 6:00 p.m.**
St. Joseph Catholic Center
4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria

• **Jan. 14, 6:00 p.m.**
Minor Basilica of the
Immaculate Conception
(Church Hall),
Natchitoches

• **Jan. 24, 6:00 p.m.**
Sacred Heart School,
Moreauville

To register,
go to www.virtus.org



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Pray for our priests!

Priests have gathered together over the past few weeks for food and fellowship in each of the deaneries, have actively continued their priestly formation, and joined the community in the daily activities of life. Please remember to keep our priests, deacons, seminarians, and religious in your prayers and invite them into your homes and family activities for this new year.



AVOYELLES DEANERY PRIEST GATHERING. Priests of the Avoyelles Deanery gathered on Nov. 21 to enjoy fellowship. Pictured from left to right are: Seminarian Jacob Cass; Father Abraham Palakkattuchira, Father Martin Laird; Monsignor Steve Testa; Father Dwight De Jesus, Father Rusty Rabalais, Father Dutch Voltz, Father Abraham Varghese, and Father Jose Pallipurath.



EASTERN DEANERY PRIEST GATHERING. Priests of the Eastern Deanery gathered in Tallulah for fellowship. Father Ryan Humphries hosted, cooked, and shared some stories of his recent sabbatical. Pictured from left to right are: Father Peter Kuligowski, Father John Pardue, Bishop David Talley, Father Dale Meade, and Fr. Ryan Humphries.



HUNTING IN BELLEDEAU. Father Dwight De Jesus spends time hunting geese.



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER RELIC. Father Taylor Reynolds was able to venerate the arm of St. Francis Xavier (above), and celebrate Mass at the Tomb of St. Peter in Rome (below) as he continues his canonical studies. Pictured are Fr. Taylor and Sarah Flores. Mrs. Flores is the sister of Sandi Tarver, the executive secretary of the Development Office for the Diocese of Alexandria.



The Diocese prepares for Advent

The Diocese of Alexandria prepares for Advent with trainings, commissionings, and community gatherings.



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, PLAUCHEVILLE. Bishop David Talley with Pastor, Father Martin Laird and the altar servers of Mater Dolorosa church in Plaquemine. Bishop David celebrated Mass at the parish on Nov. 25.



ACTS MISSION LEADERSHIP TRAINING. Individuals met at the St. Joseph Catholic Center on Saturday, Dec. 1 from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. to complete leadership training and certification for ACTS retreats. Knights of Columbus from Sacred Heart of Jesus church, Pineville provided the lunch.



ST. PAUL AND OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR CHURCHES, MANSURA. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion were installed for St. Paul the Apostle and Our Lady of Prompt Succor churches in Mansura on Sunday, Nov. 18.



ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH, MANSURA. The children's choir from St. Paul the Apostle church in Mansura helped to celebrate the installation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and lectors at a special Mass on Sunday, Nov. 18.

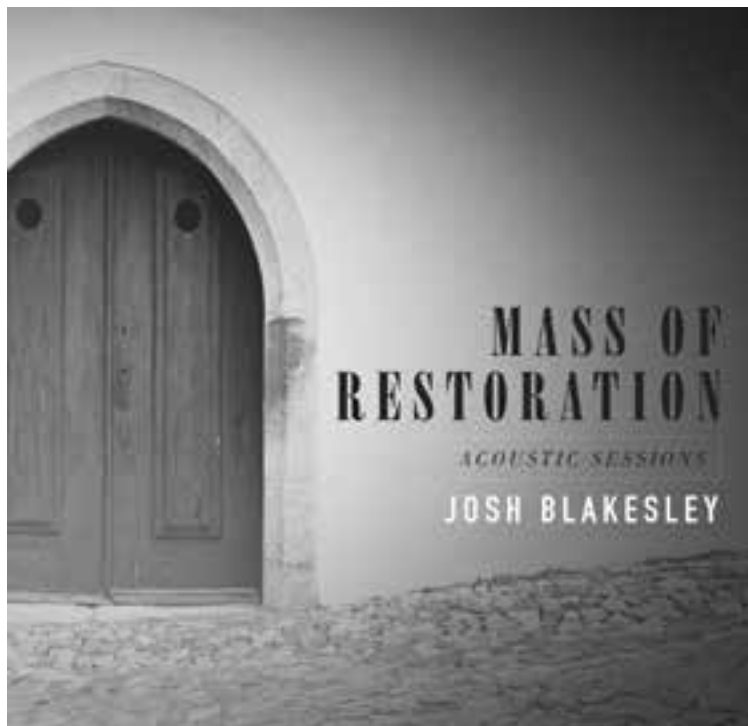


ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH, ECHO. Father Dwight De Jesus is shown above, along with donor Eddie Pitre, blessing the new Rosary Garden at St. Francis de Sales church in Echo. The Rosary Garden was donated by Pitre in memory of his son, and features beautiful statues, a walking path, and granite benches. For more pictures, please visit the General Photo Gallery at www.diocesealex.org.

OCP Releases Mass of Restoration - a new Mass setting for contemporary liturgy

PORTLAND, Ore. —With five solo albums under his belt, Josh Blakesley is no longer a newcomer in the contemporary Catholic music world. This time around he joined forces with his guitarist Grae McCullough to bring us *Mass of Restoration*, a new Mass setting for contemporary liturgy that is joyful and approachable, yet fresh, dynamic and expressive.

The pair sought to create a setting that honors the history of music and the traditions of the Church that would still appeal to today's parishioner. "Knowing Josh's strengths as a musician and songwriter, we were excited to offer this setting to parishes. As expected from Josh and Grae, the result of their work is a singable, well-written and comprehensive



setting for any congregation," explained Rick Modlin, manager of music development at OCP.

In talking about his approach to writing music, Josh explains, "I believe that God inhabits the praises of his people, and people are being moved by powerful refrains, repetitive bridges and intimate lyrics—much in the way I'm sure "Ode to Joy" affected assemblies when it was introduced as a hymn in the early 1900s."

The accompaniments include vocal harmonies and keyboard and guitar parts, making it accessible for many different ensembles. The MP3 album is all acoustic—and truly stunning. To offer a glimpse of the simple beauty of *Mass of Restoration*, Josh, Grae and their bandmates,

Blake Powell and Christian Gaudet, have made a series of videos for each of the Mass parts. Watch them at www.ocp.org

Mass of Restoration is one of more than 60 new and revised Mass settings OCP has published since the implementation of the updated texts from The Roman Missal, Third Edition in November 2011. The settings range in style from traditional and chant to contemporary, multilingual and more. Learn more about *Mass of Restoration* as well as OCP's other Mass settings at ocp.org/mass-settings.

***Mass of Restoration* can be found anywhere music can be downloaded, and is the first of its kind, recorded in three different versions: the Acoustic Sessions, Mass of Restoration Live (released Nov. 2018), and finally, the Sacred Sessions (organ), to be released Feb. 2019.**

Listen and pray along at www.ocp.org.



MSGR. JOHN TIMMERMANS. Monsignor John Timmermans celebrated his 94th birthday on Nov. 11 at Riviere de Soleil, Mansura.

Please remember to celebrate with our retired priests this Christmas season!

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Local Christmas events

Nov. 17-Jan. 6, 2019:
City of Natchitoches 92nd Christmas Festival of Lights

Over 300,000 Christmas lights and 100 lighted set pieces illuminate downtown Natchitoches and Cane River Lake every evening at dusk through January 6, 2019. All Christmas events take place in Downtown Natchitoches along the banks of Cane River Lake and the Historic District. Visit www.natchitocheschristmas.com for a complete schedule of dates, times, and events.

Dec. 11: Advent Reflection, Mary, Mother of Jesus, Woodworth

“And the Word Became Flesh” Advent reflection will be held 6:30-8:30 p.m., with a program of speaking, music, and prayer to help us dive deeper into the mystery of the Incarnation: Christ Becoming Man. There is no charge, and everyone is invited. Books and other resources will be available for purchase before and after the event, presented by Dumb Ox Ministries. For more information, contact Cindy Sayes at 318-446-2893.

Dec. 12: Children’s CCD Nativity Program, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria

The church’s annual nativity program for CCD students and parents will be held 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Church. Call 318-445-9748, ext. 216 for more information.

Dec. 13: Advent Reflection, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria

Father Derek Ducote will present on “The Three Comings of Christ in Advent: His Birth, His Return, and Within You Now.” Live music by Grae McCullough and Kelly Pease Lombardi. Door

Prizes will be given and there will be a special gift for the 50th person who walks through the front door of the Church. Childcare is available; please email olpschildcare@gmail.com with the event name and ages of children.

Dec. 16: Advent Bible Study, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria

This study will be held in the Madonna Room with two sessions on each day to choose from (8:00-8:45 a.m. or 7:00-7:45 p.m.). For more information, contact Renee Aldridge at 318-445-9748, ext. 216 or renee.aldrige@olpschurch.org.

Dec. 19: Eucharistic Adoration and Penance Service, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria

At 6:30 p.m., guest speaker Paul Hood will present “The Invitational Life.” Confessions will begin at 7:00 p.m., with soft praise and worship music offered during adoration and confessions. Childcare is available. Please email olpschildcare@gmail.com with the event name and ages of children. For more information, please call the church office at 318-445-3693.



Prayer to Our Lady

O morning star, O dove of light,
 Come to our aid during this flight.
 Give us the grace we need each day
 To fight the world, for this we pray.

As a suckling babe in a mother’s arms,
 Protect us from evil and all that harms;
 Lead us to your Son Most High.

Thus, when all is done,
 We can say with a sigh:
 All praise and honor to God on high.

lizdescant@gmail.com
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Christmas Concerts

Dec. 11: Join the Red River Chorale for their annual holiday concert at 7:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. This concert features choral selections accompanied by string ensemble and organ as well as unaccompanied pieces, all to prepare us for the Christmas season. Visit redriverchorale.com for more information or to purchase tickets.

Dec. 16: The St. Cecilia Chorale of Avoyelles will present its Christmas Cantata at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church in Hessmer. The performance begins at 3:00 p.m., and is free and open to the public. Donations are gladly accepted.

Dec. 20: “Angels Sing” Christmas Production Join Sacred Heart School in Moreauville at the Earl Barbry Convention Center in Marksville at 6:00 p.m. for this year’s production of “Angels Sing.” The entire school will present angelic, inspirational music set to a beautiful background of angels and the blessed manger. The 8th grade students will depict the various characters in The Nativity Story journeying to Behlehem to witness the newborn child with His parents, Mary and Joseph. The remaining students will sing and perform routines to embellish the production. All are invited to attend. The show will be directed by Mrs. Karen Moreau, Development, Stewardship, and Events Coordinator, and co-directed by Mrs. Carmen Necaie, SHS Art Teacher. Monetary donations will be accepted at the door. For more information, contract Karen Moreau at 318-359-1943 or karen.moreau@shsmoreauville.com.



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El Adviento como invitación a practicar la hospitalidad

By Hosffman Ospino
Catholic News Service

Es interesante cómo los católicos y otros cristianos dedicamos épocas enteras del año a reflexionar sobre lo que significa “esperar.” El Adviento es una de ellas. Lo mismo es la Cuaresma, la cual estará pronto con nosotros. ¿Qué esperas este Adviento? ¿Qué planeas hacer mientras esperas?

El término Adviento -- “Adventus” en latín -- nos recuerda que algo se acerca inminentemente. Cuando era niño, mi sentido de inminencia se reducía casi que exclusivamente al día de Navidad y a los regalos que sabía pronto recibiría. De hecho, mi atención se enfocaba más en los regalos que en cualquiera otra cosa. Más adelante aprendí, con la ayuda de

una buena catequesis en mi casa y en mi parroquia, que el Adviento es mucho más que esperar regalos materiales. Tal como en el caso de las otras épocas litúrgicas del año, el centro del Adviento es Jesucristo.

Que el centro del Adviento sea Jesucristo puede sonar un tanto obvio a los católicos que están bien catequizados. Pero seamos honestos. Durante la época del Adviento, muchos católicos a nuestro alrededor parecen estar más preocupados por los regalos y las compras y las comidas especiales que en



cualquier otra cosa que tenga que ver con Jesucristo.

Aprendí que los cristianos vivimos en un estado permanente de espera, anhelando el regreso de Jesús el día final. Decimos constantemente, “Ven, Señor Jesús.” Durante el Adviento intensificamos esta súplica.

Debo reconocer que me tomó un buen tiempo hacer mía esta idea. Una vez lo hice, me ha fascinado desde aquel entonces. Mi vida y mi historia presentes son importantes. Sin embargo, la venida del Señor llevará esa vida y esa historia a su realización en

Dios. Anhele esto y lo espero con el resto de la iglesia.

¿Qué planeamos hacer mientras esperamos? Creo que las posadas, una tradición de Adviento bastante popular entre los católicos hispanos estadounidenses y muchos católicos latinoamericanos nos da una buena idea: Practicar la hospitalidad cristiana.

La tradición se inspira en los pasajes bíblicos que describen el caminar de María durante los últimos días de su embarazo y su esposo José buscando una posada para hospedarse. Muchos lugares

los rechazaron por razones distintas. Finalmente encontraron un espacio en un establo.

Las posadas con frecuencia se estructuran como una novena de Adviento. Cada día María y José, usualmente representados por niños, van a un hogar o a un grupo buscando hospedaje. Los peregrinos cantan una tonada popular. Después de ser rechazados varias veces, al final los reciben en un lugar. Entonces todos oran y celebran con un sentido profundo de fiesta.

Aprendemos dos cosas de las posadas durante el Adviento.

Uno, la vida es un caminar largo y complejo que con frecuencia pone a las personas en situaciones difíciles. La última esperanza para ellas es muchas veces la apertura y la generosidad de otras personas que están en una mejor situación.

Dos, ser cristiano significa darles la bienvenida a otras personas con sentido de urgencia, especialmente a aquellas que están más necesitadas, tal como si estuviésemos dándole la bienvenida a una madre que está a punto de dar a luz o a un niño que

pronto va a nacer. No podemos esperar mucho.

Sí, al trasegar por la vida esperando el momento final de la historia, tenemos la responsabilidad de darnos la bienvenida unos a otros, apoyarnos unos a otros, dándoles prioridad a quienes son más vulnerables. Estas personas son el rostro de Cristo entre nosotros.

No podemos proclamar con integridad que anhelamos la venida de Jesucristo, ya sea en el misterio de la Navidad o en el día final, y rechazar su presencia real en el inmigrante, el refugiado, el pobre, el niño y el más vulnerable. El primer anhelo presupone los demás compromisos.

La apertura a darle la bienvenida a otras personas, especialmente a las más necesitadas, es un rasgo distintivo que nos define como nación. Vivimos en circunstancias históricas que exigen renovar dicha decisión, la cual tiene un carácter netamente cristiano. Que el Adviento sea una oportunidad de hacer nuestra la invitación a practicar la hospitalidad.

QUIZ: Who said it?

Which individual said the following:

“Let us allow ourselves to be guided by Mary this Advent, she who is mother, a mamma, and knows how to guide us. Let us allow ourselves to be guided by her during this season of active waiting and watchfulness.”

Was it:

- A. St. Teresa of Avila
- B. Pope Francis
- C. St. Maria Goretti
- D. St. Faustina Kowalska

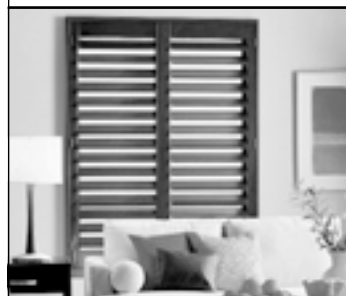


Answer on page 7

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Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Procession Dec. 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission Church in Forest Hill will celebrate this feast day with a short procession beginning at about 6:15 (after 5:00 p.m. Mass) from the church, around the block to the old academy gym. There will be traditional/indigenous food, music and dancing throughout the night. Parking is very limited.

Our Lady of Guadalupe is Mexico's patron saint. This feast day is celebrated in Latino/Hispanic communities across the country. Many participants dress in traditional garments and the celebrations typically include large fiestas and dancing.



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Moonlight Guadalupe

By Father John Girotti
Catholic News Service

I couldn't believe my ears. I had just opened the door to the church and I was hearing strains of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. It was Beethoven being played on a cold December afternoon in a church built in the middle of a Wisconsin farm field. How wonderful! And then I was confused.

We were preparing to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in conjunction with the Second Sunday of Advent. There at the piano was my altar server, a young man whose parents are Spanish-speaking and who speaks both English and Spanish perfectly well. And playing, of all things and on all days, the Moonlight Sonata!

I walked into the church and sat on the far side and simply listened to the glorious sound. As my eyes traveled around the

church, now tastefully decorated for the occasion, I was struck by how beautiful things looked. The Spanish-speaking congregation, mostly from Mexico, had spent all night decorating. In the front was the Virgin of Guadalupe's image, decorated with lights and flowers -- and their humble devotion.

This was only my fifth month of saying Mass in Spanish and I felt very unworthy to be leading these faithful people in a language that was not my own. A year earlier, I had innocently volunteered to go away for a few months to study Spanish and now I needed to really know what I was doing. I asked the Blessed Virgin to pray for me as the winter sun shone brightly through the church windows.

Suddenly, I heard loud chanting and shouts. The Moonlight Sonata abruptly ended and bursting through the church door came a small group of parishioners, dressed in native

dress carrying a statue of Mary and a large banner. They were chanting, "Estamos tristes, no, no! Estamos muy contentos, si, si." They were indeed not sad, but exuberant. Their faces reflected the radiance of their faith.

Extemporaneously, they shouted prayers of praise to the Virgin, applauded, embraced and then departed. "How quaint," I thought. I returned to my prayer for only a moment and then I again heard far-off shouts. Yet another group emerged with radiant faces, having walked for miles on pilgrimage to the Virgin. "Estamos tristes, no, no!" They, too, were so very, very happy.

I felt myself rise to my feet in reverence to their devotion. I had never seen such a thing before in my 42 years of life. Such raw devotion, such pure zeal, such love for the faith! Still another group came carrying a U.S. and Mexican flag, having also walked on pilgrimage through the snow and below freezing temperatures. This continued for over half an hour.

By this time, the church had begun to fill. As I walked to the

sacristy to prepare for Mass, a parishioner urged me to return to the church for the "dancers." I admit that a sense of horror flashed through my mind from previous liturgical trauma, but I was so intrigued by the whole thing I went to watch.

There came the young women of the parish with their mothers, resplendent in ethnic dress, dancing in front of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe. They danced and smiled. Nobody applauded after the dances, such demonstrations of veneration seemed to be -- well, expected. It was Our Lady of Guadalupe. Of course, she deserves such love.

The time for Mass came and the church was now overflowing. The people looked like they were celebrating Christmas and Easter and the second coming of Christ all together. I was able to make my way through Mass in Spanish. Then came the eucharistic prayer and the moment of consecration. To my surprise, the people called out not once, but twice: "My Lord and My God" or other pious sayings. I found myself silently saying the same.

Making my thanksgiving after Mass, I asked God a question: "Who are all these people?" And then it came to me. "These people" are "those people" who we hear about in the news and during our political debates. "Those people" are these people -- God's people, who have come to this country in search of a better life. They work in farms and factories. They work as cooks and cleaners. Just like my Italian ancestors did 100 years ago.

This must have been what the ethnic experience was like for most of our ancestors -- an experience that was honed, shaped and amalgamated into the American melting pot. This must have been what it was like -- a group of people, mostly poor, many fearful, gathering together to share the most important thing in the world to them: their Catholic faith -- and forming a community from this common experience. I thanked God for the privilege of witnessing this experience.

This is the Catholic Church - our church - and we are all blessed to be children of the same heavenly Father.

The Cross Word December 23 and 30, 2018

48 Opera solo
49 Neither's partner
50 Bishop's territory
51 Tints
52 Vane direction

DOWN

1 Hail Marys
2 Mary went to ___ country
3 Bullets
4 Clans of Judah
5 Inn
6 One who exploits
7 Ruby
8 ___ of Israel
9 Am not
10 "The ___ of Christ Jesus"
13 Spoken
18 Second Greek letter
19 Legame
21 Used to attract attention
22 Compact bundle
23 "___ and you shall receive"
24 Fib (3 wd.)
25 Holy Name month
27 Business title ending
28 Good-___
30 Ill-being
31 Podium
33 Stretch to make do
34 South American animals
36 Cal. University
37 Spooky
38 Parent teacher groups
39 Console
40 Jesus' mother
41 Solitary
42 Dark brown
43 Beget
45 Owned

ACROSS

1 Expression of triumph
4 Outlaw
8 Taxi
11 ___, vigor and vitality
12 Gaudete Sunday color
13 American river
14 Shade tree
15 Detail
16 Orange skin
17 Drool
19 Briny
20 Conger
21 Lay away
22 Unit of electric power
25 Infant leapt for ___
26 Eve made from one of Adam's
29 At sea
30 "The ___, the truth and the life"
31 Peter did 3 times
32 Deca-liter (abbr.)
33 Billion years
34 St. Longinus had
35 Nativity Gospel
37 Priest at Shiloh
38 "He shall be ___"
40 Common kids' disease
44 Not short
45 "Do no ___"
46 Kimono sash
47 China's continent



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE FEAST DAY. Our Lady of Guadalupe mission church in Forest Hill was filled to capacity Dec. 12, 2016, with an overflow crowd standing outside to celebrate this feast day. After Mass, a procession, led by men carrying a statue of Our Lady, processed to the gym, where Our Lady was placed on an altar surrounded by numerous flowers. Inside the gym, the celebration came alive with the music of a mariachi band, brightly clothed, feathered dancers, and lots of good food.



Advent as an Invitation to Practice Hospitality

By Hosffman Ospino
Catholic News Service

It is interesting that Catholics and other Christians dedicate entire seasons to reflect about “waiting.” Advent is one of them. So is Lent, which will soon be upon us! What are you waiting for this Advent? What to do while we wait?

The term Advent -- “Adventus,” in Latin -- reminds us that something is imminently coming. As a child, my sense of that imminent coming laser-focused on Christmas Day and the gifts that I knew I would receive. My focus, actually, was more on the gifts than on anything else.

Eventually I learned, thanks to good catechesis at home and at my parish, that Advent was much more than waiting for material gifts. As in the case of every other liturgical season, Advent is about Jesus Christ.

That Advent is about Jesus Christ may sound commonsensical to well-catechized Catholics. But let’s be honest, many Catholics out there seem more concerned during Advent about gifts and shopping and fancy meals than on anything that has to do with Jesus Christ.

I learned that Christians are permanently waiting for Jesus, longing for his return on the last day. We constantly say, “Come, Lord Jesus.” During Advent, we intensify that plea.



I must say that it took me a while to embrace the idea. Once I did, it has mesmerized me ever since. My present life and history are important. The coming of the Lord, however, will bring such life and history to fulfillment in God. I long for it. I await for it with the rest of the church.

What do we do while we wait? I think that the Advent tradition of las posadas among U.S. Hispanic and Latin American Catholics gives us a good clue: Practice Christian hospitality.

The tradition is inspired by the biblical passages describing

the journey of Mary during the last days of her pregnancy, and

her husband Joseph searching for an inn (posada, in Spanish) to stay. Many places rejected them for various reasons. Eventually they found space at a stable.

Las posadas are often structured as an Advent novena. Each day Mary and Joseph, usually children playing those roles, go to a home or to a group searching for a place to stay. The sojourners sing a popular tune. After several rejections, they are finally welcomed in one place. Then everyone prays and celebrates with a profound sense of fiesta.

Two things we learn from las posadas during Advent.

One, life is a long and complex journey that often places people in difficult situations. Their last resource many times is the openness and generosity of others who are better off.

Two, to be Christian is to welcome others, especially those most in need, with a sense of

urgency as if welcoming a mother about to give birth or a child to be born. One cannot wait long.

Yes, as we go through life waiting for history’s final moment, we have a responsibility to welcome one another, to take care of each other, especially those who are most vulnerable. They are the face of Jesus Christ among us.

One cannot genuinely claim to long for Christ’s coming, whether in the mystery of Christmas or on the last day, and reject his real presence in the immigrant, the refugee, the poor, the child and the most vulnerable. The first presupposes the others.

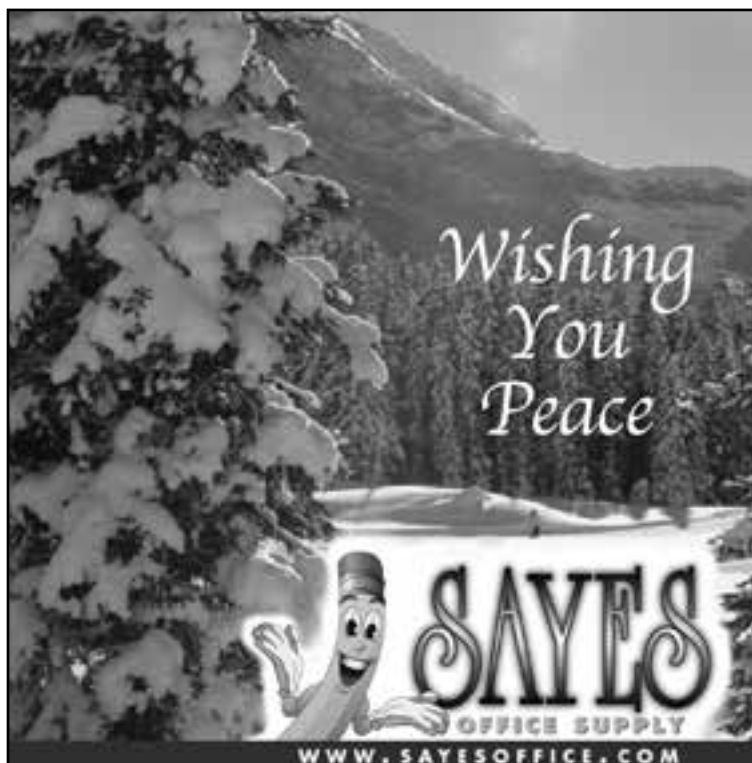
Openness to embracing others is a core trait that defines us as a nation. We live in historical circumstances that demand renewing that choice; a profoundly Christian choice. May Advent be an opportunity to embrace the invitation to practice hospitality.

Celebrate with us in February 2019!

Join us to celebrate weddings and anniversaries this coming February! Celebrate the marriages of your children and parents, or even your own, by submitting pictures of weddings celebrated in a Catholic Church within the Diocese of Alexandria for a chance to be featured in the February issue of the Church Today.

Submit one picture per email to cari.terraccina@diocesealex.org by Friday, February 8 (the larger the image size the better). Please include the names of the bride, groom, and celebrant, the church name, and date of the ceremony.

Those pictures chosen to be featured in the February issue of the Church Today will receive a small prize package of coffee table books. All other suitable pictures will be featured on the Diocese of Alexandria website and Facebook pages.



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Let our 'presence' be our present to others this Christmas

**By Sister Constance Veit
Little Sisters of the Poor**

In the past few weeks, I've been asked to speak about loneliness in the elderly on numerous occasions.

The issue of loneliness in the elderly may not be as clear-cut as it seems. While one recent study reported that nearly half of people over 60 said they feel lonely on "a regular basis," another asserted that only 6 percent of American seniors said they "often" feel this way. Contradictory statistics aside, in our country roughly one third of those over 65 and half of those over 85 live alone.

Sociologists see this trend as a sign of social progress. Improved health care, increased wealth and the emergence of retirement as a relatively long stage of life, they say, have created more choices for seniors and enabled them to live independent of their adult children.

This situation, often referred to as "intimacy at a distance," respects the life choices and autonomy of both older persons and their adult children, fostering more positive and supportive emotional bonds for all.

The problem is that our exultation of personal autonomy over family and community fails to acknowledge that sooner or later, each of us will need the help of others to survive and enjoy a

meaningful life.

This brings us to Christmas. What is Christmas without family and community? And yet this season can also be a time of stress for those who are estranged from their loved ones, those who cannot afford to fulfill their children's wishes, those whose holiday joys are but a distant memory, and those who find themselves alone in this world.

Christmas is the perfect time to begin promoting (rather than demoting) family and practicing what our Holy Father asked in his apostolic letter for the closing of the Year of Mercy, *Misericordia et Misericordia*.

As we gather in our families, social circles and faith communities - even at our office parties - may we look around to see who is standing on the periphery, who is at risk of being excluded from the joys of this season. Inspired by mercy, let us offer a word of consolation and begin restoring joy and dignity to those who feel left out.

Mercy leads us to see each person as unique. "We have to remember each of us carries the richness and the burdens of our personal history," Pope Francis wrote; "this is what makes us different from everyone else. Our life, with its joys and sorrows, is something unique and unrepeatable that takes place under the merciful gaze of God."



If you are young, you can share God's mercy this Christmas by patiently listening to your grandparents' stories, or offering them a hand in a way that says, "You are important to me."

If you are a grandparent, look to see which one of your children or grandchildren is waiting for your affirmation or your words of wisdom.

Even if you are infirm or in need and feel that you have nothing to give, you can still offer your smile, your thanks, or a word of kindness to those who help you.

Our Holy Father reminds us that God never tires of welcoming and accompanying us, despite our sins and frailties.


Let our loving presence be the gift we give others this Christmas!



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The Christmas season is a wonderful time of the year when we reconnect with friends, family and our faith but it can also be a time when we feel rushed to finish our gift shopping. It's much too easy to overlook those who may not be as fortunate.

One way to impact less fortunate lives and also finish your gift list is to shop for products made ethically.

Visit the Catholic Relief Services Ethical gift guide to support those less fortunate:
ethicaltrade.crs.org/guide/holiday-gift-guide/

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Use Your Words

By Laura Kelly Fanucci
Catholic News Service



Two groups ask me often what they can do to help their children grow in faith: parents of toddlers and parents of young adults.

Surprised? While their ages and stages of life may differ, the two groups are closer than you might think.

When I write about faith at home, I often hear from new parents. They want to know what prayers or books they can use to make sure their child learns the faith. Their enthusiasm and anxiety are evident: They want to get it right.

When I speak in parishes, I always hear from parents whose adult children have stopped going to church. They want to know why their children left and how they could encourage them to come back. Their faith and grief is clear: They want to know where things went wrong.

Empathy makes my heart reach out to both groups, though there are no easy answers.

I sympathize with parents of young ones. It's the beginning of family life at home. The stakes for faith feel high.

And I ache for the parents of adults who have left the church. It's beyond the years of family life at home. The stakes feel even higher.

I want to tell the first group: Don't worry. You're doing more than you realize. God is at work in ways you can't see. It's not all up to you.

I want to tell the second group the same.

But encouragement is not enough. We want to act, especially when our children and their faith is concerned.

So what can we do? Take our own advice.

"Use your words."

Just as parents coach and coax toddlers to practice their language skills (rather than throw a tantrum), we can encourage each other to use our conversations, witness and prayers for the children we love.

First, use your words to share your faith. Remember the power of example. How often do you talk about God, prayer or the church with the children or young

adults in your life? Have you ever spoken about your own faith journey, struggles or questions?

If you share what brings you joy, purpose, peace and truth, young people will notice. Even if they don't always agree or understand, they are paying attention to the way you live your life and how your faith shows up in everyday conversations.

Second, use your words to bear witness to your faith.

Remember the importance of integrity. How do your children hear you talk about other people? Politicians you disagree with? Individuals or groups you don't like?

Children are listening from their earliest days. Despite the influence of friends, media and culture, parents still have significant influence on the beliefs and morals of their children.

Think about the language and tone you use in conversation with your children. Do your words and

tone reflect your values, no matter the topic?

Finally, use your words to pray for young people.

Ultimately our children's faith -- like every part of their lives -- is out of our control. But prayer reminds us that each child belongs to God.

Remember the words we believe, the Word that matters most: "Be not afraid. I am with you." If we start a daily habit of entrusting the children we love to God, we can find comfort, hope and guidance in God's care.

At the recent synod on "Young people, faith and vocational discernment," the Vatican's preparatory document read: "The church wants again to state her desire to encounter, accompany and care for every young person, without exception."

We can do the same for the children in our lives. We can use our words for good.

GIFT

Continued from page 4

connect us to the purpose of this season of Advent? We are created in the Image and Likeness of God as loving, dependent creatures, as the Creator gives life to us and to all things. We are created to be men and women that live lives of *thanksgiving*. Each day of life is *Thanksgiving Day*. And, as the Image and Likeness of the living God, we are created to seek the good of all, to serve the *common good of all* . . . for we are in relationship with all as God *is* relational love—a dynamic love of Father and Son and Spirit. Yet, though this is the truth of our true selves, we have been effected by disobedience (our own and others), and often strive only to please ourselves, only to store up goods for ourselves, to live self-referential lives. Though we are the reflection of the living God, selfishness (disobedience) is at war with our true selves. The crassness that can be seen in the marketing and the living out of *Black Friday* and *Cyber Monday* . . . covers over our true selves, as lovingly dependent creatures of the Lord.

ADVENT is a season of reflection and preparation and hope: We remember that we were

created for love but have turned away through disobedience. We remember that God answered this disobedience with *such a Christmas gift*—the Nativity of his Son, born to redeem us and restore us. We remember the birth in Bethlehem and reflect on how we have *lived that truth* day by day and ponder that promised *adventus*: the coming of the Lord in Glory and the Kingdom and our place in that reign.

What has been given: the Nativity and redeemed life in him. What is to come: when we stand before God and respond to the question *So, how have you lived my gift of life?* **Advent** is the season to prepare our hearts as gift for the common good of all . . . as a response to the gift of Jesus . . . as a longing to love as God loves . . . to live for God and for neighbor . . . the anointed life . . . the Christian life.

AMDG

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam
(For The Greater Glory
of God)

Follow Bishop Talley on
Twitter:
[@BishopDavidT](https://twitter.com/BishopDavidT)

**"Have no love for the world,
nor the things that the world affords.
If anyone loves the world, the Father's
love has no place in him, for nothing
that the world affords comes from the
Father. Carnal allurements, enticements
for the eye, the life of empty show,
all these are from the world."**

1 John 2:15-16

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ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Above: The St. Anthony's School Children's Choir spread Christmas cheer at local nursing homes on Wednesday, Dec. 5.



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Right: Students from Mrs. Lori Scallan's 4th grade class, Mrs. Carmen Cook's class, and Sr. Jeannette and Sr. Judiann's SAS PK and K class made Christmas ornaments to hang on the town Christmas tree in Bunkie. The annual lighting of the tree was Saturday, Dec. 1.



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REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Registration is now open for the Steubenville South Catholic High School Youth and Beyond the Limits Junior High Youth Conferences!

Go to www.diocesealex.org/beyond-the-limits to register for the Junior High Beyond the Limits Conference, Feb. 16-17, 2019.

Special guests include: Jackie Francois-Angel • Fr. John Wiltse
Bishop David Talley • Paul Hood • Kelly Pease Lombardi

Go to www.steubenvillesouth.com to register for the Steubenville South Youth Conference, June 21-23, 2019.



Like both conferences on Facebook to keep up with the latest news and pictures!

facebook.com/STEBENVILLESTH
facebook.com/Beyond-the-Limits-Jr-High-Conference

Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Procession - Dec. 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission Church in Forest Hill, will celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe feast day with a short procession beginning at about 6:15 p.m. (after 5:00 p.m. Mass) from the church, around the block to the old academy gym. There will be much traditional/indigenous food, music, and dancing throughout the night. Parking is very limited near the church and procession route, so arrive early if you would like to watch the procession. See pages 16-17 for more information.

St. Kateri Circle Christmas Party - Dec. 13

The local Heart of St. Kateri Circle will host their annual Christmas party on Thursday, Dec. 13 at 5:30 p.m. at the Tekakwitha National Conference Office at 2225 N. Bolton Ave. in Alexandria. Light refreshments will be served and there will be a gift exchange game for those who wish to participate. It's a good time for fellowship, fun, and food. No RSVP is required, but a small snack/dish for the group is welcomed. All are welcome to attend this "come and see" to learn what the Tekakwitha Conference and St. Kateri Circle is all about. For more information, call 318-483-3908.

St. Joseph Catholic Center closed for Christmas and New Year's - Dec. 24 to Jan. 4, 2019

The Chancery and other offices in the St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria, will reopen on Monday, Jan. 7, 2019.

St. Joseph Church T-shirt and Poster Contest - Dec. 31

St. Joseph Church, Marksville is holding their 2nd annual "Da Parish Crawfish Festival," and is seeking out artists of all ages! The design must include the text "2nd Annual Da Parish Crawfish Boiling Championship," and "April 27, 2019." The winning design will remain the property of Da Parish Crawfish Boiling Championship Committee, St. Joseph ACTS Apostolate, and St. Joseph Catholic Church. The winner of the contest will receive a \$100 cash prize, two wristbands for admission into the event (worth \$50), will be introduced at the event, and have the opportunity to sign posters on the day of the event. To enter the contest or receive more information, please contact Glenn Leger at glennleger@bellsouth.net or Vickie Husbands at 318-359-2772.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

FOCUS Conference: SEEK2019 - Jan. 3-7

The Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) will host SEEK2019: Encounter Something More, Jan. 3-7, 2019 in Indianapolis. SEEK is a 5-day event geared toward college age people where they can gather to ask the big questions about life, love, and true happiness. Keynote speakers for SEEK2019 include Sr. Bethany Madonna, S.V., Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Leah Darrow, Jason Evert, Jennifer Fulwiler, Dr. Scott Hahn, Curtis Martin, Dr. Edward Sri, and Chris Stefanick. Registration is now open at www.seek2019.com.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas Contest - Jan. 11

The Catholic Daughters of the Americas will take part in the 2019 National Education Contest, open to those in grades 4 - 12, as well as adults. Contestants may enter a category only once but may submit entries in multiple categories, and must be sponsored by a local Catholic Daughters Court. Please visit catholicdaughters.org for more information.

Tailgate with Jesus - Jan. 19

Bring the whole family for a day of fun and fellowship Sat., Jan. 19 for a Tailgate with Jesus Gumbo Cookoff at Maryhill Renewal Center. Gates open 7:00 a.m. for non-cook team members. Mass with Bishop David Talley begins at 10:00 a.m. Gumbo served at 12:00 p.m. Vote for best gumbo team with a \$5 voting ticket. The team with most votes wins. Tickets are not needed to eat; the event is free for all. At 2:00 p.m., local teens will lead the Rosary in honor of Bishop, all priests, deacons, and religious throughout our diocese. Bring the kids, wear your ACTS shirts. Bring tents, chairs, blankets, tailgate games, finger foods and drinks, but no alcohol allowed.

For more information, contact Deacon Richard Mitchell via email at dcnrmitchell@diocesealex.org or by telephone at 318-445-6424 ext. 206. Sponsored by the ACTS Missions Chapter of Alexandria.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade - Jan. 21

The Office of Life and Justice is coordinating the Diocese of Alexandria's participation in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade in Alexandria on Jan. 21. Any donations of beads or bags of candy are greatly appreciated. Please drop items off at the Office of Life and Justice located in the St. Joseph Catholic Center by Thursday, Jan. 11 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. The parade begins at 10:00 a.m. on Jan. 21 on Bolton Avenue, in the parking lot of the Bolton Ave. Shopping Center.

Holy Spirit Women's Retreat - Jan. 25-27

Msgr. David Toups, Deacon Larry and Andi Oney will be featured at the annual Holy Spirit Women's Retreat from Jan. 25-27, 2019 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Lafayette, LA. The prophetic theme is "For Such a Time as This." The liturgies, music, prayer, teaching, and fellowship will bring encouragement to all those who love the Lord and the Church. Msgr. Toups is Rector of St. Vincent Seminary in Florida and Spiritual Director for Magnificat Ministry to Catholic Women. He writes and speaks out of his deep love for God and his profound faith. Deacon Larry and Andi Oney will be leading an Empowerment Service Saturday night. Their preaching ministry has brought them around the world, most recently to Poland and Canada. Patti Mansfield will be teaching on Spiritual Warfare and Janice Charbonnet on the Feminine Genius. This retreat is sponsored by the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of New Orleans (CCRNO) and has been serving hundreds of women from the Gulf South since 1988. Weekend and Saturday commuters are welcome. Early bird savings until noon Dec 3. Register online at www.ccrno.org or call 504-828-1368.

Central Louisiana March for Life - Feb. 2

Unite the pro-life people of Louisiana, across all denominations, to take a stand for life. Life March Cenla will be held Saturday, Feb. 2. Join the inspiring pro-life march from Pineville over the Red River to downtown Alexandria. Meet at Louisiana College (1140 College Drive, Pineville, LA 71360) before 10:00 a.m. The event will end at 12:00 p.m. Life March Central is sponsored by Louisiana Right to Life, Louisiana College, Louisiana Baptist Convention, Louisiana Family Forum, the Knights of Columbus, and Concerned Women for America.

The Louisiana Life March began as one event in Baton Rouge, then the program expanded to Shreveport/Bossier, and then Alexandria/Pineville. This year, events are being held in Monroe/West Monroe and Lake Charles. Visit www.prolifelouisiana.org for more information.

See pages 6, 7, and 15 or visit the General Calendar at www.diocesealex.org for updated penance services, and Advent and Christmas events.

Church Today News Deadlines

Next issue: Jan. 21
Deadline for news:
Friday, Jan. 10

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Upcoming Retreats

The following ACTS retreats will be offered soon:

• Jan. 10 - 13, 2019
Cenla ACTS for Women
For more information, contact Les Glankler at 318-664-5269 or www.cenlaacts.org.

ACTS

Additional ACTS Retreats will be hosted beginning in January 2019. Visit the website at www.diocesealex.org or your church parish for upcoming dates.

December - January

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>Confessions 5:00 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle and OLPS, Mansura</p> <p>10</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. S. CHEMINO</p>	<p>Penance Services 11 6 p.m. St. Genevieve 6 p.m. Sacred Heart, Moreauville 6:15 p.m. St. Patrick, Ferriday</p> <p>Advent Mission 6:30 p.m. Mary, Mother of Jesus, Woodworth</p> <p>Red River Chorale concert 7:30 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral PRAY FOR FR. D. COOK</p>	<p>Penance Services 12 6 p.m. OLL Vidalia 6 p.m. Cabrini 6 p.m. St. Peter, Elmer 6 p.m. Holy Ghost, Marksville 6 p.m. St. Francis de Sales, Echo 6:10 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus 6:30 p.m. St. John, Deville</p> <p>OLPS CCD Program: 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>FEAST of OUR LADY of GUADALUPE PRAY FOR FR. D. CORKERY</p>	<p>Penance Service 6:00 p.m. St. Gerard Chapel, Jonesville</p> <p>13</p> <p>Advent Reflection 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>St. Kateri Circle Party 5:30 p.m.</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM</p>	<p>Penance Service 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph, Cheneyville</p> <p>14</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. W. DECOSTE</p>	<p>15</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. DEJESUS</p>	<p>Advent Bible Study 8:00-8:45 a.m. 7:00-7:45 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>Christmas Cantata, 3:00 p.m., St. Alphonsus, Hessmer</p> <p>16</p> <p>THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE</p>
<p>Penance Service 5:00 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle and OLPS, Mansura 5:30 p.m. St. Joseph, St. Joseph 6 p.m. Little Flower 6:30 p.m. St. Rita</p> <p>17</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. DESIMONE</p>	<p>Penance Service 18 6 p.m. St. Charles Chapel, Goudeau 6 p.m. Mater Dolorosa, Plaucheville 6 p.m. St. Peter/Michael, Bordelonville</p> <p>VIRTUS 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. DHARMARAJ</p>	<p>Penance Service 19 6 p.m. St. Anthony, Bunkie 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria 6:30 p.m. Cathedral, Alexandria 6:30 p.m. St. John, Cloutierville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. DUCOTE</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Christmas Production 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart School, Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. FAULK</p>	<p>21</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. FERGUSON</p>	<p>22</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. FEY</p>	<p>23</p> <p>FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT PRAY FOR FR. W. GEARHEARD</p>
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CLOSED						
DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CENTER CLOSED						
<p>PRAY FOR FR. J. GOOTEE</p>	<p>SOLEMNITY of the NATIVITY of the LORD A Holy Day of Obligation PRAY FOR FR. R. GREMILLION</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. D. HART</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. J. HASIEBER</p>	<p>PRAY FOR BISHOP EMERITUS R. HERZOG</p>	<p>PRAY FOR MSGR. R. HOPPE</p>	<p>FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY, JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH PRAY FOR FR. R. HUMPHRIES</p>
31	JANUARY 1	2	3	4	5	6
ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CLOSED						
DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CENTER CLOSED						
<p>PRAY FOR FR. B. IBE</p>	<p>NEW YEAR'S DAY SOLEMNITY of MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD A Holy Day of Obligation PRAY FOR BISHOP D. TALLEY</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. H. IMAMSHAH</p>	FOCUS Seek2019 Conference: Jan. 3 - 7			<p>SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of the LORD PRAY FOR FR. S. KWEBUZA</p>
<p>PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. P. LAPALME</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. L. LAFLEUR</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. G. KROSFIELD</p>	<p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. KULIGOWSKI</p>	<p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. KUNNUPURAM</p>	<p>PRAY FOR FR. R. MATHEWS</p>
<p>7</p> <p>FOCUS Seek2019 Conference: Jan. 3 - 7</p> <p>ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CLOSED Teacher In-service</p>	<p>8</p> <p>CLASSES RESUME FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Catholic Daughters of the Americas Contest Deadline</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>FEAST of the BAPTISM of the LORD PRAY FOR FR. A. MESSINA</p>

MAY THE LORD BLESS YOU THIS CHRISTMAS & ALWAYS!

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