

CHURCH TODAY

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

January 21, 2019



A year like no other

Join us in this month's issue as we begin 2019 by celebrating and caring for life at all stages

INSIDE

And yet.

Thank you for journeying with us as we jump into this new year with guest contributors from around the diocese, learn more about the history of our church parishes, share exciting events from our communities, and provide tools and inspiration for living out the faith in our daily lives. See page 4 for more.

Get to know our priests, deacons, religious, and seminarians.

We asked our priests, deacons, religious, and seminarians: What are you most thankful for from this past year, and why? Read a few of their answers on page 9, and commit to getting to know your priest or deacon better in 2019.

Incorporating faith into fitness and fitness into faith.

Did you know that fitness can help you on your path to holiness? Join Kim Roberts, Guest Contributor, on page 18 as she shares her story, and provides a few ideas for those looking to start their own faith and fitness journey this new year.

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TODAY**



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Looking back



January 2010:

Diocese celebrates dedication of Immaculate Conception as a Minor Basilica -

Before a capacity-filled church and others viewing from a nearby remote site, Rev. Scott Chemino, Vicar General for the Diocese of Alexandria read the apostolic decree from His Holiness Benedict XVI proclaiming Immaculate Conception in Natchitoches, Louisiana a Minor Basilica.

The Most Reverend Ronald P. Herzog, Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria was the principal celebrant of the Mass. The Most Reverend Greg Aymond, archbishop of New Orleans was the homilist. Concelebrants included the Most Rev. Michael Duca, Bishop of the Diocese of Shreveport; the Most Rev. Michael Jarrell, Bishop of Lafayette; the Most Rev. Alfred Hughes, retired Auxiliary Bishop of New Orleans.

January 2018:

Join us as we spotlight one parish in the Diocese of Alexandria each month, sharing a little of that parish's history, ministries, and community. See page 11 for more on the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

Feast of the Month: St. Josephine Bakhita

**The Story of
St. Josephine Bakhita**

Born in Olgossa in southern Sudan, Josephine was kidnapped at the age of 7, and sold into slavery. Ironically the name "Bakhita" in Arabic means "lucky" - a name given to St. Josephine after her many abductions caused her to forget her own name. She was resold several times, finally in 1883 to Callisto Legnani, who later took Josephine to Italy, and gave her to his friends, the Michieli family.

Bakhita became babysitter to Mimmina Michieli, whom she accompanied to Venice's Institute of the Catechumens, run by the Canossian Sisters. While Mimmina was being instructed, Josephine felt drawn to the Catholic Church, being baptized and confirmed in 1890, and taking the name Josephine.

When the Michieli family came to collect Bakhita, she refused to leave. During the ensuing court case, the Canossian Sisters and the patriarch of Venice intervened on Josephine's behalf. Eventually, an Italian court ruled that because Sudan had outlawed



slavery before Bakhita's birth, and the Italians did not recognize slavery, by law Bakhita had actually been free since 1885.

Josephine entered the Institute of St. Magdalene of Canossa in 1893 and made her profession of vows three years later. In 1902, she was transferred to the city of Schio (northeast of Verona), where she assisted her religious community, and soon became well loved by the children attending the sister's school and the local citizens. The first steps toward her beatification began in 1959. She was beatified in 1992, and canonized eight years later.

**What We Can Learn
From Her Story**

For those who have had a life-altering conversion, who have attended a timely retreat, who have put in long hours with a counselor or spiritual director, or who have faced an addiction head-on, you might recognize the freedom that comes with acknowledging someone or something that has oppressed you, and finding they no longer have a hold in your life.

Josephine Bakhita's witness is a lived metaphor for what Jesus has already done in us. There is no circumstance, habit, secret, or shame we may find ourselves in the clutches of that hasn't already been satisfied by His sacrifice. Our hope is in the one who has suffered, died, and rose out of love for us, who is inviting us into a place of freedom.

Prayer and Action

National Human Trafficking Awareness Day was January 11. To learn more about human trafficking and how you can help:

- Visit www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/info-graphic for a great visual to help understand the problem and our (unintentional) role in it.

- Support companies that make an effort to label their product that has been made justly. Check out the USCCB's 2017 Lenten action for spotting slave-free seafood at www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/upload/Labeling-for-Lent/pdf.

- Learn from the U.S. Catholic Sisters Working against Human Trafficking at www.sistersagainstrafficking.org.

- Partner with A21 at www.a21.org to bring a campaign to your community.

Source:
www.franciscanmedia.org

**St. Josephine Bakhita's
Feast Day:
Friday, February 8**

Shutdown won't deter crowds from marching for life in nation's capital

By Julie Asher
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Neither snow nor sleet -- nor partial government shutdown -- will keep pro-lifers away from the nation's capital for the March for Life Jan. 18.

If it continues, the shutdown will be almost a month old by then. Daily news reports show the closures of monuments, memorials and the Smithsonian museums in Washington and trash cans overflowing on some federal property -- images that might lead some folks around the country to think it is affecting big events planned for the nation's capital.

But not so.

"PLEASE NOTE: We plan to march even if the government shutdown is not yet resolved," declares the March for Life website, marchforlife.org. "We have marched for 45 years and will march again this year to end the human rights abuse of abortion."

Come to think of it, the start of what was a two-day historic blizzard that hit Washington in January 2016 had some impact on numbers, but marchers by the thousands still turned out that Jan. 22 to mark the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion virtually on demand.

"The shutdown really did not factor into our planning at all," said Patrick Ford of Belmont Abbey College in Belmont, North Carolina. Director of campus ministry and the Hintemeyer Catholic Leadership Program at the college, Ford is the point person for the school's pro-life contingent heading to the march.



PARTICIPANTS MARCH FOR LIFE. March for Life participants are seen in Washington in this 2014 file photo. (CNS photo/lyer Orsburn)

"This year, especially, we have tried to make this trip more of a pilgrimage and less of a site-seeing event," he told Catholic News Service.

Ford added, "We look forward to another great March for Life with our hundreds of thousands of friends!"

The same goes for the 500-plus students coming in from Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. They'll be carrying a giant green banner and wearing winter hats especially designed for this year's march, said Dominique Cognetti, a junior majoring in social work.

The entire effort -- from promoting the march in late September with fliers on campus to designing their gear for the march -- is led by the students, Cognetti told CNS in a telephone

interview Jan. 9.

"I don't think at this time it's going to affect anything," she said of the shutdown, recalling that Franciscan students came to Washington "when the whole storm" took place in 2016.

They're coming in eight buses. This year, like always, they will begin their trip on the eve of the march with a late night Holy Hour. They depart at midnight to arrive at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception about 6:00 a.m., in time for the 7:30 a.m. Mass that sends participants forth for the March for Life rally, with a lineup of speakers, on the National Mall.

After the rally, the march itself goes up Constitution Avenue and ends at the Supreme Court.

This year's theme, "Unique From Day One: Pro-life Is Pro-science" focuses on how scientific advancements reveal "the humanity of the unborn child from the moment of conception." Speakers will include three members of Congress -- Sen. Steve Daines, R-Montana, and Reps. Dan Lipinski, D-Illinois and Chris Smith, R-New Jersey -- and a Democratic member of the Louisiana Legislature, Rep. Katrina Jackson.

"We are delighted to have these four pro-life champions speak at the March for Life rally," said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life. "The right to life is a nonpartisan issue and, regardless of politics, we should all unite for life and stand against abortion, the greatest human rights abuse of our time."

Others who will address the rally include Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-life Activities; Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, CEO of the Knights of Columbus; Ben Shapiro, editor-in-chief of The Daily Wire; Abby Johnson, founder of And Then There Were None; Alveda King, Priests for Life's director of civil rights for the unborn; Dr. Kathi Aultman, fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; and Ally Cavazos, president of Princeton Pro-Life.

Attending the March for Life is something Cognetti has been doing since she was a freshman in high school, she told CNS.

When she was younger, she would accompany her parents to the march, and later got involved on her own. To see the "amount of people" gathered for life, "especially those in my generation, really touched me. ... We have thousands of people coming to D.C. to defend what they believe in and not just older people," she said.

The March for Life is a great way for her and everyone from Franciscan University "to stand together, to stand firm in what we believe in. We know life starts at conception."

The march is "very eye-opening," she added, and provides a chance for people who say they are pro-life to do something about it.

Cognetti added that she feels her generation is making "a name for ourselves and not sitting down any more and saying we're pro-life -- we're taking action!"

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A message from the Diocese of Alexandria's Safe Environment Program

If you have reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected and that the abuse is by a parent or caretaker, please call: Louisiana Child Abuse / Neglect Hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437).

If suspected abuse is related to a diocesan/church/school program, or if abuse occurred by anyone acting in Church services, a report also should be made to the diocesan victim assistance coordinator, Dr. Lee Kneipp at 318-542-9805.

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."

And yet

Dear fellow disciple,
I've been thinking lately about how I don't know much.

I don't know much about the theological teachings of our faith, or about how scholars interpret Scripture.

I don't know all that much about the lives of the Saints, or the Doctors of the Church.

I don't know much about what this new year will hold for any of us.

To be perfectly honest, I just don't know much.

And yet.

And yet, I have the honor to serve thousands of you by way of the Church Today and other diocesan publications.

And yet, I get to serve through cariterracina.com and everydaymissionaries.com, working alongside other women to offer simplicity, joy, and tactical tools for living simpler, more grace-filled lives.

And yet, I get to serve my family through being active and



Letter from the Editor

Mrs. Cari Terracina
Publications Manager for the Diocese of Alexandria

present in our daily lives and in the hard and holy work of raising a family.

I don't know much. And yet, He asks me to serve.

I don't know much. And yet, He pours out new mercies daily, and asks me to share that same mercy with others.

I don't know much. And yet, He asks me to step into this new year with courage, dedication, and the willingness to vulnerably work alongside each of my co-workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20).

So, if you don't know much either, I'm with you.

I'm with you if you're doubting. I'm with you if you think you're not equipped. I'm with you if you think that maybe you heard a calling for this new year, but you aren't actually sure if it's meant for you. I'm with you if you don't know what others already think about you or will think about you. I'm with you if you're scared about what this new year holds for you, your job, and your family. I'm with you if you don't know much.

Because there is always the "and yet."

There is always the next step.

There is always the fact that our God is bigger than how much we think we know.

If you think you weren't made for this, or that the job God has called you to is really better suited for the woman next to you, or the man down the street, or the family you see in the Church pew each weekend, I completely understand.

And yet. He "who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

I am so grateful for every "and yet" that God offers me.

And, He offers the same to you, I have no doubt. We can't do it all and do it well, but we can choose to focus on the opportunities God provides for us in this new year, and cultivate what matters.

Thank you for journeying with us as we jump into this new year, ready to "begin again" in knowing, loving, and serving God and His Church. We invite you to peruse these pages as we focus on caring for life from conception to death, and then join us on our diocesan social media pages and website as we hear from new guest contributors from around the diocese, share pieces of the history of our diocese, exciting events in the lives of our parishes, tools to help us live out the faith in our daily lives, and inspiration for the journey. We'll see you there.

To each and every "and yet,"
— Cari and Joan

Follow Cari on
Instagram at [@cariterracina](https://www.instagram.com/cariterracina)

Catholics and Cremation

I have recently spoken to a few people and answered questions about the Catholic Church's stance on cremation. Though some are uncomfortable discussing this, I think it is important for Catholics to know the Church's teaching on this topic.

From personal experience, I can attest that end of life decisions (either for our family or for ourselves) can be difficult to make. However, making these decisions and informing our loved ones of our wishes makes things much easier for them during the emotionally difficult time of death. Knowing we are honoring our loved one's decisions can certainly help us as we grieve.

One such decision is the funeral liturgy, specifically the disposition of our body. Some wish to have their bodies cremated and inquire if it is allowed in the Catholic Church, and if so, if they can have a Catholic funeral with the cremains.

The short answer is "Yes," since 1963, the Catholic Church has permitted cremation. But please do not stop reading there



Embracing the Liturgy

By Deacon Richard W. Mitchell

because we must ensure that we respect the cremains. To ensure that we do so, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued guidelines for us to follow.

According to the guidelines, if one chooses cremation, the cremains must be kept intact and treated as one would treat a body. They are to be placed in a proper vessel and interred in a proper place, such as a cemetery. Therefore, the ashes should not be scattered, kept on the mantel, or divided among the family, etc., but instead treated with the same respect and reverence as a body at a funeral. For as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith states, "By burying the bodies of the faithful, the Church confirms her faith in the resurrection of the body, and

intends to show the great dignity of the human body as an integral part of the human person whose body forms part of their identity. She cannot, therefore, condone attitudes or permit rites that involve erroneous ideas about death, such as considering death as the definitive annihilation of the person, or the moment of fusion with Mother Nature or the universe, or as a stage in the cycle of regeneration, or as the definitive liberation from the "prison of the body."

As long as the cremation and guidelines set by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith are followed, one may certainly have a Catholic funeral liturgy.

After reading this article, odds are that some of you may

have the cremains of your loved ones in your home. If this is the case, I would encourage you to speak to your pastor to ensure you take the proper steps to inter the remains.

Knowing that Mother Church cares for us in life and at the time of our death, certainly strengthens faith and helps us to Love the Liturgy.

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

For more information concerning the Church's teaching on cremation, please visit www.diocesealex.org, or search for

"Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith cremation" for the Vatican's official document on the topic.

QUIZ

Who said the following:

"The supreme function of reason is to show man that some things are beyond reason."

Was it:

- A. St. Lawrence
- B. Blaise Pascal
- C. G.K. Chesterton
- D. St. Thomas Aquinas



Answer on page 15.

To live today, in Christ's light and love, as branches of the vine

In January, we begin a new calendar year. How will you and I live the gift of life in 2019? Where is the road-map, or better today, the GPS signal...that will point us in the right direction, to find the life we long for, the life we hope for? Well. The saintly woman we remember on the 1st of January might be able to give us a clue.

On the 1st, as the world-wide Catholic Church celebrated holy Mass, remembering Mary, the mother of Jesus, the mother of God, we were initiated anew into the incredible Good News that God has given to us. In the Catholic Church's liturgical calendar, the 1st of January is the eighth or Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord, as we Catholics have celebrated Christmas Day for eight days! On the 1st, this Solemnity of Mary, remembering her role in the gift of the Lord, we heard the proclamation from the Gospel of Luke, where we learned that Mary *kept all of these things in her heart...* marveling at what God had done through her (Luke 2.19).



I am the VINE; YOU are the BRANCHES

(John 15:5)

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

When her baby boy had grown to full manhood and had left the work of Nazareth to attend to his Father's will, Mary would answer all who asked about her Jesus with a simple response. She said then...and...she and all the saints of God say to us today, through their intercessory prayer for us...**Do whatever he tells you** (John 2.5).

And, what does Jesus of Nazareth say to you, in the here and now of central Louisiana? How has his life, his Passion, his Resurrection, his Ascension... how has this revelation of the living God impacted upon your life? How do you *live* this gift of life?

We have been given such a gift. But the gift requires us to accept it, and act upon it. The Door to God's heart, the passage way to the life we long for, the life we hope for, has been given to us through faith. The Gift has been given to you and to me. How do we respond to this immense love?

We begin again, to live the sacredness of life, in loving God with all we have and loving our neighbor as the Lord Jesus instructs his followers.

We begin again, to serve the Lord's Way of life, as members of his Church...to be faith-filled and obedient to his path. That means a life of *metanoia*...conversion of heart...turning toward the light

of God and turning away from *every kind of sinfulness and the temptations of the evil one...* temptation to sin, both in our personal lives and as a culture, a society, through structural or institutional sin. This means learning from the saints, seen week by week on your Catholic calendar. This means to discover again prayer and fasting and service.

We begin again, to protect and guard and form all life. We must speak out against any civil law that betrays the sacredness of each human life.

We begin again...we who are parents of children...**to take over the formation of their**

lives...saying YES to all that is life-giving for our children and saying NO to all that is death-dealing for them. Intentional disciples of the Lord Jesus are to form their children through Christ's Church...that they may live in the freedom of God's light and love.

We begin again, to work together with all who claim Christ, seeking the unity that the Lord himself calls us to (John 17. 20-21). This we celebrate in the week of prayer, dedicated to the longing for Christian Unity (January 18 to 25).

We begin again, to take our place in the purifying fire of God's love (Luke 12.49), seeking to live the life we long for, the life we hope for, as living braches of the Vine of Life...and inviting every person we meet to join us, in this Good News of God's love... manifest and complete, in Mary's son...and God's.

AMDG

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

Vivir hoy, en la luz y el amor de Cristo, como ramas de la vid.

En enero, comenzamos un nuevo año calendario. ¿Cómo viviremos tú y yo el don de la vida en 2019? ¿Dónde está la hoja de ruta, o mejor aún, la señal GPS ... que nos indicará la dirección correcta, para encontrar la vida que anhelamos, la vida que esperamos? Bien. La mujer santa que recordamos el 1 de enero podría darnos una pista.

El día 1, mientras la Iglesia católica de todo el mundo celebraba la Santa Misa, recordando a María, la madre de Jesús, la madre de Dios, nos iniciamos nuevamente en la increíble Buena Noticia que Dios nos ha dado. En el calendario litúrgico de la Iglesia Católica, el 1 de enero es el octavo o octavo día de la Natividad del Señor, ¡ya que nosotros los católicos hemos celebrado el día de Navidad durante ocho días! En la primera, esta solemnidad de María, recordando su papel en el don del Señor, escuchamos la proclamación del Evangelio de Lucas, donde aprendimos que María tenía todas estas cosas en su corazón ... Marvel por lo que

Dios había hecho. a través de ella (Lucas 2.19).

Cuando su bebé había alcanzado la edad adulta y había dejado la obra de Nazaret para atender la voluntad de su Padre, María respondería a todos los que preguntaban sobre su Jesús con una simple respuesta. Ella dijo entonces ... y ... ella y todos los santos de Dios nos dicen hoy, a través de su oración de intercesión por nosotros ... Haz lo que te diga (Juan 2.5).

Y, ¿qué te dice Jesús de Nazaret, aquí y ahora, en el centro de Louisiana? ¿De qué manera su vida, su pasión, su resurrección, su ascensión ... ¿cómo ha impactado esta revelación del Dios vivo en su vida? ¿Cómo vives este don de la vida?

Nos han dado tal regalo. Pero el don nos exige que lo aceptemos y actuemos en consecuencia. La Puerta al corazón de Dios, el camino a la vida que anhelamos, la vida que esperamos, nos ha sido dada a través de la fe. El regalo le ha sido dado a usted y a mí. ¿Cómo respondemos a este inmenso amor?

Comenzamos de nuevo, a vivir lo sagrado de la vida, a amar a Dios con todo lo que tenemos y amar a nuestro prójimo como el Señor Jesús instruye a sus seguidores.

Comenzamos de nuevo, para servir el Camino de la vida del Señor, como miembros de su Iglesia ... para ser llenos de fe y obedientes a su camino. Eso significa una vida de metanoia ... conversión de corazón ... girando hacia la luz de Dios y alejándose de todo tipo de pecaminosidad y las tentaciones del maligno ... tentación de pecar, tanto en nuestra vida personal como en una cultura, una sociedad, a través del pecado estructural o institucional. Esto significa aprender de los santos, vistos semana a semana en su calendario católico. Esto significa volver a descubrir la oración, el ayuno y el servicio.

Comenzamos de nuevo, para proteger y proteger y formar toda la vida. Debemos hablar en contra de cualquier ley civil que traicione lo sagrado de cada vida humana.

Comenzamos de nuevo ... nosotros, que somos padres de niños ... para asumir la formación de sus vidas ... diciendo SÍ a todo lo que da vida a nuestros hijos y diciendo NO a todo lo que es muerte para ellos. Los discípulos intencionales del Señor Jesús deben formar a sus hijos a través de la Iglesia de Cristo ... para que puedan vivir en la libertad de la luz y el amor de Dios.

Comenzamos de nuevo, a trabajar juntos con todos los que reclaman a Cristo, buscando la unidad a la que el Señor mismo nos llama (Juan 17. 20-21). Esto lo celebramos en la semana de oración, dedicada al anhelo por la Unidad de los Cristianos (18 al 25 de enero).

Comenzamos de nuevo, a tomar nuestro lugar en el fuego purificador del amor de Dios (Lucas 12.49), buscando vivir la vida que anhelamos, la vida que esperamos, como broches vivientes de la Vid de la Vida ... e invitar a cada persona que encontremos. para unirse a nosotros, en esta Buena Nueva

del amor de Dios ... manifiesto y completo, en el hijo de María ... y en el de Dios.

AMDG

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam
(Para la mayor gloria de Dios)



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

7 Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

By Will Travis
Guest Contributor

About 6 years ago, my daughter and I were able to go on a mission trip to India. We spent two and a half weeks “in country” and had some incredible experiences. For part of the trip, we worked with the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, praying with them and attending Mass with them daily. During the week we spent there, we worked with them until lunch, and then went into the slums to evangelize and pray with the people in the afternoons. We also brought food to those we met. When we ate in a restaurant and got a to-go box for our left overs, you couldn’t go twenty feet out the door without seeing someone that needed it either for themselves or for their family. It was an eye opener to say the least.

Not long after coming home, I was listening to a priest talk about his time in Calcutta, so as you can imagine, I listened up. The story he told summed up my time in India and my worldview since.

He went to India to serve with the Missionaries of Charity and when he got to the motherhouse, they put him in a room with a window. After he got settled in, he was near the window and he smelled a horrible smell. It was terrible! He looked out and saw a man dressed in rags and covered in filth lying on the sidewalk outside. To use his word, the priest was “repulsed.” He moved away from the window and tried to clear his senses. Right then, Mother Teresa came in and said, “Come, your brother has need of you,” and led him out to the man under his window. That sentence pierced his heart as it did mine while he told his story.

Catholic social teaching, as provided by the Church, has seven themes. Each theme has everything from papal writings to magisterial documents defining and providing clarity for the people of God. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace put out the “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church” that is available for free on the Vatican’s website if you want to take a 300 page deep dive. But you don’t have to to understand what we are called to do as Missionary Disciples of our Lord. It’s important to realize that most of what the Church teaches about social doctrine has its



ST. RITA CHURCH. Father Daniel Hart and members of St. Rita Church helped feed Hurricane Harvey evacuees.

roots in the dignity of the human person: each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. Social teaching is how we are to treat one another. How we are to navigate the demands of Love, and what that means for society.

Jesus talked about this many times in the Gospels, but probably the most well known example is in the story of “The Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37). I am sure you are all very familiar with the parable, so I am going to only touch on a few points. First, the lawyer asks Jesus what must he do to inherit eternal life, and Jesus returns a question with a question asking, “What is written in the Law?” The lawyer says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus

agreed. The lawyer then asked, “Who is my neighbor?” We all know the story about how a man beaten by robbers was passed by several people until a Samaritan takes care of him. This is where the rubber meets the road for our understanding of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

We can create scenarios with each of the seven themes to substitute with the “man beaten by robbers.” Maybe it is someone very hungry, or an immigrant with needs, or an employee that isn’t treated fairly. We all have situations that we run across where we make a conscious choice, just like the passers by in the parable. Whether we will help...or not.

Love is an action. Which passerby loved his neighbor? The Samaritan. We can love like this by following a simple rule: If you can, do. We must love those

God puts in front of us. Jesus was very clear whom we are serving in His example of the sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-46). It is *Jesus* who is the one being served as we do for others, as we love others. Sometimes we can meet someone’s bodily needs such as food, clothing, a ride, and so on. Other times someone needs to talk, to be prayed with, or to be told the truth even if they don’t want to hear it. The Social Doctrine of the Church has its roots in the individual’s dignity, and is played out one act of love at a time. The whole of society and culture is changed by the actions of you and me.

Lastly, ‘tis the season of New

Years resolutions, and I don’t want to end this article without some practical takeaways! We have to love. We have to act, or we say no to serving the Lord. I think we can all agree that is a bad idea. The bad news is, it isn’t always easy and can be messy. The good news is, we don’t have to do it alone. Jesus gives us the grace to do what he asks of us.

To stay plugged in to the source of life and strength:

1. Live a Sacramental life! Frequent Holy Mass, go to Confession at least monthly, and visit the Lord in Adoration.

2. Pray! Spend time with Jesus. Seek to be closer to Him, and spend time reading the Gospels. Spend part of your time quiet and listening.

3. Keep your eyes open and look for opportunities to love those God puts in front of you. Whether you are at work, at the store, on the street, or most importantly, at home.

“Come, your brother has need of you”

Will is son of Deacon Bill Travis and brother to Father Adam Travis. He and his wife Shelly have three children and live in Pineville, LA.

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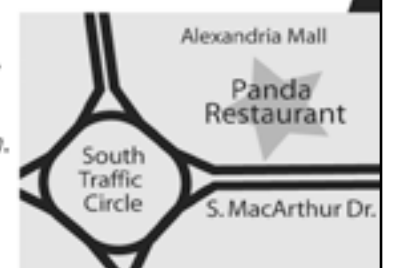
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Former Planned Parenthood worker says 'power of ultrasound' changed her



“UNPLANNED” MOVIE JOINS TWO OTHER PRO-LIFE MOVIES IN THEATRES. Abby Johnson, left, is seen on the set of the movie “Unplanned” with actress Ashley Bratcher, who plays her. (CNS photo/courtesy Unplanned)

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- When it comes to speaking her mind, Abby Johnson never holds back. Affable in a way usually described as down-home, as the mother of seven children, she finds that a certain bluntness suits her best.

It's the only way, she concedes, to keep order in her household.

Johnson, the pro-life activist and founder of And Then There Were None, will have just four minutes to make her points when she speaks to the March for Life rally Jan. 18, and she'll have to take some months off after her eighth child is born in June.

A new film drama, “Unplanned,” based on her 2011 memoir of working for Planned Parenthood, will do all the talking for her soon.

And that means losing a bit of the control she's had over her own life story since she began making speeches almost 10 years ago. She's thrilled, of course, but quickly told Catholic News Service in an interview, “It felt like I'm making myself very vulnerable here in a way I haven't before.”

“Everyone in America is going to have the opportunity to see the worst version of me. So I really prayed about it. I felt very anxious about it.”

Written and directed by Chuck Konzelman and Cary Solomon, who also made the

three “God's Not Dead” films, and starring Ashley Bratcher as Johnson, it's set to hit theaters March 22. Excerpts will be shown during the rally on the National Mall.

“I'm telling you, this is anointed,” Solomon said at a November screening at the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington. “This has nothing to do with us.”

“Abortion is not going to stop on its own,” he added. “Media (are) the most powerful weapon there is.”

The film takes viewers inside procedures at the clinic where Johnson worked, including abortions resulting from the RU-486 (mifepristone) protocol, and covers her life and career through the time she joined the clinic, interactions with pro-life protesters, her resignation, and a later legal challenge from Planned Parenthood over revealing information in clinic documents, in which she prevailed. There's also a cameo by Mike Lindell, founder of My Pillow, who helped finance the movie.

Johnson will be among more than 10 March for Life rally speakers, including journalist Ben Shapiro and Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, along with several members of Congress.

Johnson, a Texas native, began volunteering for Planned

Parenthood in 2001, joined its clinic in Bryan, Texas, shortly later, and resigned in 2009 after participating, she says, in an ultrasound-guided abortion of a 13-week-old fetus.

“It was the power of the ultrasound that changed my heart,” Johnson says. “Now science has ruled definitely that there's life in the womb.”

“We're trying to serve the Lord. And you know what? We're going to get ripped,” Solomon said. “America cannot continue to exist if we do abortion. It will destroy us.”

Johnson found the two filmmakers easy to work with. “I wanted it to be accurate. We had a lot of conversations over what I did and didn't want.” When a draft script was sent for her approval, she found “it was done really well. I told them go come down here to Texas. So we got started.”

The film shows abortion equipment and procedures, but stays away from many details, usually reminding viewers that pain is always involved. “I think it would have been really lost on people if they would have been medically detail-oriented.”

And that, Johnson says, suits the goals of And Then There Were None. “Our focus is not on legislative issues. Our focus is not to make abortion illegal, but to make it unthinkable.”

“Unplanned” joins two other recent pro-life dramas. “Gosnell: The Trial of America's Biggest Serial Killer,” based on the crimes of Philadelphia abortionist Dr. James Gosnell, was released last year. “Roe v. Wade”, a drama based on the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, has had a complicated production history and as yet has no release date.



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The Call to Address Racism in Our Hearts and Communities

In their new pastoral letter against racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love*, the Catholic bishops of the United States invite conversion of hearts, minds, and institutions in order to address the evil of racism that still exists in our communities.

By our baptism, we are members of Christ's body and sharers in his mission. Imitating Christ, we must care for all members of our communities, honoring each person as unique, sacred, and created in the image of God. We know that the evil of racism cuts to the core of God's plan for humanity, devaluing the diversity God created within the human family. As followers of Christ, we seek to reclaim the God-given sanctity of each person's inviolable human dignity. The bishops remind us, "The command of love requires us to make room for others in our hearts. It means that we are indeed our brother's keeper (see Gn 4:9)."

Some among us may want to believe that our country has moved beyond the reality of racism that has so profoundly stained its past, or that racism does not involve us. Almost every day, news headlines demonstrate that our country's "original sin" of racism continues to impact the lives of many Americans, many of them Catholic—particularly those who belong to the African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Native American communities.

There are signs that racism's legacies remain prevalent in many systemic inequalities that have deep impact on people of color. The bishops write, "Racism can



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only end if we contend with the policies and institutional barriers that perpetuate and preserve the inequality—economic and social—that we still see all around us."

Within the walls of the Church, many people of color have experienced discrimination and outright racism. Leadership has been lacking. The bishops write, "All too often, leaders of the Church have remained silent about the horrific violence and other racial injustices perpetuated against African Americans and others." Reflecting on these realities, the bishops implore us to find ways to actively work against the evil of racism.

We must seek racial justice within our Church and in our country. Let us all allow the Holy Spirit to convert our hearts to do the work of healing, so we may live authentically in true relationship to one another. Let the fruit of this conversion be evident in our full celebration and integration of ethnic and cultural

diversity, which is truly a gift from God.

How Can I Respond?

(1) Listen to and know the stories of our brothers and sisters who have suffered from racism in history, and in the present.

True and authentic encounter is difficult but worth the effort. Authentic relationships require vulnerability, humility, and getting outside of your comfort zones. For some, this will mean actively seeking opportunities to engage with people of diverse backgrounds. For others, this might mean raising your voice or sharing your story. Through authentic engagement we bring together diverse perspectives and experiences which honor the fullness of God's plan.

(2) Work to address both individual and systemic racism.

Racism can be individual, when persons fail to recognize certain groups as created in

the image of God and equal in dignity, or it can be systemic, where practices or policies are upheld that treat certain groups of people unjustly. These systems are often perpetuated due to the silence or unawareness of many. Commit to learning more about racism and employment, housing, wealth, education, criminal justice, and voting—and then get involved in diocesan, parish or community efforts to pray and work for conversion of both hearts and systems.

(3) Think about what you can do, wherever you are. Commit to raising your awareness in whatever situations you find yourself.

a. As people of faith, we can intentionally work to create spaces of welcome and opportunities for encounter. Create opportunities for sharing of stories and learn how racism impacts our communities. Regularly think about whose voices may be missing as leaders and volunteers in parish ministry. In parishes and schools, educators can use activities from usccb.org/racism to integrate content on the pastoral letter into their lessons.

b. In your family, think

about who you socialize with on a regular basis. Intentionally create opportunities to interact with those you may not run into over the normal course of your week. Where in your community do you see diverse groups of people come together? Parents: talk with your children about race. Continuing to talk with them about everyone's human dignity and the pain of racism in our country will help form them to respect the dignity of all. Find prayers for children at usccb.org/racism.

c. At school or work, ask: How you can learn more about other cultures? What resources are available to you? If there are others who are treated differently because of their race, speak up. Think about what you might do if you hear someone make disparaging remarks about a classmate or coworker. How can you be ready to respond?

(4) As individuals and communities of faith, examine your conscience.

We all must ask ourselves: Where have I not lived as an example of Christ's love? Where have my attitudes or perceptions caused me to devalue persons of other cultures or ethnicities? When have I been unnecessarily suspicious or allowed a preconceived notion to overshadow the human nature of another? When have I seen the "other" instead of welcoming an opportunity to listen to the story of that person's life, struggles, or joys?

For More Information

Read the new pastoral letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love* and then talk with others about how your community can respond to the bishops' invitation in the pastoral letter. USCCB resources against racism are at usccb.org/racism.



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Death Announcements

Fr. Terry Edward Allen, a priest of the Diocese of Alexandria, passed from this life on Monday, Dec. 24, 2018. Fr. Allen was born on Oct. 17, 1935 in Rayne, LA, the son of Wilson and Edith Allen. He attended Menard Memorial High School and Maryhill Seminary. Fr. Allen completed his B.A. degree at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Alexandria on June 3, 1961. After 44 years of active ministry, Fr. Allen retired in June of 2005. A Mass of Christian Burial was held at the Maryhill Chapel on Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018, with Rev. Louis Sklar presiding. Interment followed in the Priests' Cemetery at Maryhill.

Deacon Norman Gremillion, age 88 of Plaquemine, passed away on Thursday, Dec. 27, 2018. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Saturday, Dec. 29, 2018 at Mater Dolorosa Church with Rev. Martin Laird officiating. Burial followed in the church cemetery. Mr. Gremillion retired from the U.S. Postal Service where he was Post Master in Plaquemine. Upon his retirement, he went on to study and become a Deacon for the Diocese of Alexandria.



SEMINARIAN MISSION TRIP. Seminarian David Keran poses with a group of seminarians along with the Bishop of Arecibo in Puerto Rico. First-year theology students at Notre Dame Seminary are required to go on a mission trip over winter break. For the past several years, these seminarians have traveled to Nicaragua, but with the current political unrest there, the trip was moved to Puerto Rico. The purpose of the trip was to learn about and experience the universality of the Church, insofar as, while a priest is ordained in a particular diocese, he is ordained to serve the entire Church.

Prayer for Priests

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them, we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. Amen.

Seminarian Burses

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Bayou Chateaux Nursing Center	\$100.00
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Deacon and Mrs. L.G. Deloach	\$500.00
Father Rickey Gremillion Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Simms	\$3,525.00
Joe Simms, Jr. Burse	
Total	\$4,585.00

GET TO KNOW OUR PRIESTS, DEACONS, RELIGIOUS, AND SEMINARIANS

We asked our Priests, Deacons, Religious, and Seminarians:
What are you most thankful for from this past year, and why?

Father Derek Ducote, *Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria*: I'm thankful for Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish and School, where I have been welcomed and invited into many homes, events, and classrooms to celebrate Sacraments, pray, teach, and play "dinosaurs" on the classroom rug with our students.

Father Taylor Reynolds, *Judicial Law student of Santa Croce University, Rome, Italy*: New adventures, such as studying in Rome and future promises, such as being back home in June!

Deacon Richard Mitchell, *Director of the Office of Divine Worship*: I'm thankful for the successful beginning of the new deacon program. Fifteen men were accepted into the program and continue to discern their call to possible ordination. Seeing their excitement and eagerness to dive deeper into their faith is a beautiful blessing for our diocese.

Check back here and on the diocese website each month for a new Q&A with our priests, deacons, religious, and seminarians!

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Cenla Pregnancy Center turns dreams into realities in first year

By Bob Tompkins
Guest Contributor

What started a little more than a year ago as a dream has become a reality that exceeded expectation, according to Claire Lemoine, the executive director of the Cenla Pregnancy Center.

Since the Center opened its doors in December of 2017, the Cenla Pregnancy Center has provided counseling to over 200 women for more than 550 services, reports Lemoine.

“Any mother finding herself in a crisis pregnancy can receive (free) services from us, including pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, pro-life referrals, resources and education,” says Lemoine. “This past year we also started offering post-abortive Bible study,” she added. The Bible study consists of a nine-week course that can be set up at the client’s convenience.

A young woman came to the Cenla Pregnancy Center one day with intentions to have an abortion but changed her mind, Lemoine says, noting the young woman also spoke at a pro-life rally in town last fall.

With that woman, as with any client, the Center’s staff talked with her to address her concerns, then offered counsel and asked her to consider what impact such a decision would have in her life.

“We don’t lecture as if to tell any client, in a demeaning manner, ‘You can’t have an abortion,’”



BABY BOTTLE DONATION CAMPAIGN. Students from St. Anthony School support the Cenla Pregnancy Center by participating in a baby bottle donation campaign.

Lemoine says. “We talk with them about their circumstances while addressing their fears of this unplanned pregnancy.”

“We have been able to counsel them, offer ultrasounds,” she continues. “Having the ability to do ultrasounds, especially on women who are considering abortion, has been a game-changer. Showing them that beating heart at six weeks, that baby just needs time to grow into what he or she needs to be.

“We dreamed about seeing clients and changing minds over a year ago,” she goes on, “and this year we have seen 24 women expressing intentions of having an abortion.” Some tests, she points

out, were negative and at least three abortion-minded women miscarried. Some did not return to the center or answer their phone after their visit, but Lemoine said she knows eight of those 24 chose life.

Some have expressed interest in adoption, she says, but none have followed through with that option. Yet, if adoption is their plan, she says, the Cenla Pregnancy Center offers the help of an attorney to answer legal questions about adoption. The center also can put them in touch with people who have placed a child for adoption to tell them about their own experience.

“We dreamed about seeing mothers,” she says, “and another reality is we’ve saved (unborn children of) mothers whose next step would’ve been abortion. We’ve built relationships and support systems with mothers and they continue to come back or call us with questions.”

The main fund-raiser for the

year was a banquet that featured actress, author and staunch pro-life advocate Jennifer O’Neill. Another fund-raiser that has become popular especially with youngsters is a baby bottle campaign. Churches and organizations, large or small, have hosted baby bottle campaigns in support of the pregnancy center. “Those baby bottle donations add up,” she says. “Little kids sometimes walk in with donations, and they’re so proud.”

Clients have different ways they can earn points to use at the boutique shop, which is expanding because of an outpouring of donations from supporters. One client, says Lemoine, has a 10-month old baby and has never purchased a diaper from a store, always coming up with enough boutique bucks to get them for free at the center.

Lemoine says that in

addition to the three-person staff, local Ob-Gyn Doctor David Spence serves as the volunteer medical director along with 8-10 volunteers who work each week at the Cenla Pregnancy Center.

The Center is located in the Baptist Building near the corner of Jackson St. and MacArthur Dr. The volunteers help in the advisory-client role, or as a receptionist or with odd jobs. An intern from Louisiana College also started her internship as part of her requirement for the Bachelor of Social Work Program, which requires 25 hours of weekly service.

Pastor Brian Gunter of First Baptist of Pollock, a founder of the Cenla Pregnancy Center and president of the center’s nine-member board, works part-time with Louisiana Right to Life and has nurtured a close network of support with other pregnancy centers across the state, Lemoine says.

The leadership and grassroots support for the center is multi-denominational, with a heavy flavor of Catholics and Baptists.

“Everyone is coming together for the same cause on behalf of the belief that life begins at the moment of conception,” says Lemoine.

To learn more about the Cenla Pregnancy Center, go to the website at www.cenlapc.com, and follow the center on Facebook. Groups can call to request speaking engagements or to schedule a tour.

The Cenla Pregnancy Center operates four days a week, Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Please call the Center at 318-314-3061 for more information on services provided or ways to support the center’s services.

Bob Tompkins is a retired sportswriter, husband, father, and grandfather. Connect with him on Facebook or Twitter.

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Highlighting the Office of Development and Public Affairs

The Office of Development and Public Affairs oversees stewardship programs that provide funding for the operation of Diocesan ministries, working to provide funding for the Diocesan offices, for the care of the Diocese's retired priests, and for other programs and events organized by the Diocese of Alexandria.

The staff of the Office of Development and Public Affairs, Cole Churchman and Sandi Tarver, is also involved in developing stewardship programs for parishes within the Diocese.

Committed to keeping the Catholic faithful informed of ways to practice stewardship, thereby enhancing the spiritual life of everyone in the Diocesan community, Churchman and Tarver work closely with Bishop Talley and other diocesan staff to coordinate events throughout the year, including the annual



Cole Churchman
Director of Development

Bishop's Golf Tournament, hosted each October.

The Annual Diocesan Appeal is held each year, encouraging the faithful of the diocese to continue to grow in generosity and in faithfulness by supporting ministries throughout the diocese.

Churchman and Tarver are also available to assist in planned giving as a means of investing



Sandi Tarver
Executive Secretary

in the future of our faith. Contributions to the Catholic Foundation are invested and the interest is used to fund any program or ministry the donor requests. For more information on the Office of Development and Public Affairs, and how you can contribute to the life and ministries of the Diocese, please call 318-445-6424, ext. 220.

Parish Spotlight: The Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception

The oldest parish in the Diocese of Alexandria, the Church of the Immaculate Conception was placed under the patronage of Mary in 1853 at the request of Pope Pius IX. It was at this time that Pope Pius IX erected the Diocese of Natchitoches, and named the pastor of then St. Francis' Church, Father Auguste Marie Martin, as the first bishop. On September 4, 1892 Bishop Durier, the 3rd Bishop of Natchitoches, consecrated the completed church, with the Sisters of Divine Providence later opening St. Mary's School in 1888.

In 1910, the cathedral see was moved to Alexandria by order of Pope St. Pius X. The church underwent several restorations, including the addition of a new vestibule and a central air-conditioning and heating system in 1955 and 1956.

In 2006, Immaculate Conception Church observed



the 150th anniversary of the beginnings of its construction with relics of Sts. Pius X, Elizabeth Ann Seton, and Therese of Lisieux being placed in the new altar. It was at this time that the church was dedicated as an "induit" church, sharing in the privileges of the Major Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome. On Feb. 22, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI honored the church with the rank and title of minor basilica in virtue of its being "for all Louisiana, in the United States, a head and mother."



LOCAL PRIESTS RECEIVE CANON LAW DIPLOMA. Father Chad Partain and Father Adam Travis both received their graduate diploma after completing specialized courses in Canon Law.



BISHOP TALLEY SERVES AS CO-CHAIR OF USCCB COMMITTEE. As a member of the USCCB's Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs, Bishop David Talley is assigned to co-chair this dialogue concerning ecumenism. The committee met this past December, and is working on documents that commemorate 50 years of work, seeking common ground in Christ.

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The Diocese celebrates with joy and giving this Christmas season!



DEACON ASPIRANTS. Deacon Aspirants and their wives gather together for a Christmas celebration on Dec. 17.



SAINT MARGARET CHURCH, GORUM. The Christmas Vigil Mass at St. Margaret Church was colored by the presentation of the Christmas Play, reenacting the birth of Jesus. Participants included (Front Row) Father Silverino Kwebuza, Hattie Bynog, Charles Bailey, Susan Slatten, Emelise Cormier, and Linda Willis, and (Back Row) Robert Williams, Tracy Williams, Be Deshotels, Jessica Bailey, Glenn Cormier, and Thomas Swift. (Not pictured is Corine Cormier.)



SEMINARIAN MISSION TRIP. Seminarian David Keran poses along the coast of Puerto Rico during his stay for a mission trip.



GUMBO COOKOFF. Winner of the Saints Francis and Anne church cookoff, Roman Ray won the most votes out of the 7 teams that participated on Dec. 3.



TOYS FOR TOTS. Saint Mary's School, Natchitoches, 4-H members collected toys for tots, and donated them to the local toy drive.



THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS GIVING. Each year, parishioners of St. Patrick Mission, Montgomery and St. Joseph, Colfax, along with their pastor, Father Silverino Kwebuza, adopt the residents of St. Mary's Training Facility as part of their loving outreach program. This year, supporters contributed \$1,030 towards St. Mary's mission of caring for individuals with developmental disabilities. Pictured are: Fr. Silverino, Mr. Robert Watson of St. Patrick Mission, and Karen Guillory and Dorothy Jones of St. Joseph Church and St. Mary's Programs Director, Bo Vets.



HOLY GHOST CHURCH AND SAINT RICHARD'S CHAPEL CHRISTMAS GATHERING. Parishioners gathered for a Christmas celebration in Marksville on Dec. 20. Participants included Patricia Lavalais, Sheila Augustine, Brad Augustine, Dariyon Greenhouse, Rose Noel, Brian Barton, Patricia Jacob, Bertha Lavalais, Freddie Greenhouse, Deacon Ted Moulard, Annatrail Simon, Weldon Simon, Father Abraham Palakkattuchira, Francine Darby, Father Abraham Varghese, and Christian Bayonne.



BUNKIE CHRISTMAS PARADE. Saint Anthony's Childrens Choir participated in the Christmas parade for the town of Bunkie on Dec. 15.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES, WINNFIELD. Members of the Our Lady of Lourdes, Winnfield children's Christmas program pose with Pastoral Administrator, Father Brian Seiler.



SAINT JAMES MEMORIAL CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. Saint James Church hosted their annual Christmas play on Saturday, Dec. 15.



SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHE. The Praise Team from Saint Mary's School, Natchitoches visited a local nursing home to sing Christmas carols to the residents.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Mrs. Cindy Robin and Mrs. Claudia Crabtree teach their first grade students about giving to others this Christmas season. The teddy bears pictured above were mailed to hospitalized children in Children's Medical Center in Plano, TX.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. First grade students donate food to the Christmas Food Drive to help provide over 100 meals to families in need. These families received donations of gifts and food.



SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES, ECHO. Right: Students from Saint Francis de Sales Church, Echo participate in the annual Christmas program.

Our Parishes Need Us to Lead by Example

By Kristi Denoy
Blessed Is She

I love my parish for many reasons. We have one priest who's a dynamic homilist, and another who is the most pastoral confessor I could hope to have.

Our Community Life Director is amazing and is constantly organizing activities to enrich the lives of our parishioners. Our Children's Faith Formation Director is impeccable. She attends to every detail that someone could possibly think of in all her myriad programs and activities.

Even with all of that, it still isn't enough.

Our parishes are trying to meet people where they are in their current faith formation journeys. That's a wonderful goal.

But they're also trying to maintain the building and facilities, and schedule every ministry around liturgies and Bible studies and requests for space for meetings.

They can only do so much.

How to Lead in Our Parishes By Example

That's why our parishes need us to step up to the plate. We have to be willing to be the hands and feet of our parishes.

Easier said than done, right? Maybe not.

Step One: Observe

The first step is to look around. What is missing in your parish? Is it a mothers' group? Assistance for those who are homebound?

What is present and necessary, but floundering? Are people



PRAYER WARRIORS. Father Bill Gearheard leads a group in bible study and prayer recently at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria.

welcomed upon arrival, depending on which Mass they choose to attend?

What aren't you offering that could help you meet others where they are? Do you have a large population that doesn't speak English and no ESL classes at the parish? Several single moms and no help extended their way?

Identify the need.

Step Two: Make a Plan

Once you've identified "the thing," make a plan to meet that need. Do you need better community outreach? Why isn't yours as effective as it needs to be? How do other local churches do it effectively? Are there events made accessible to the public? Does your parish charge for them?

Want parents of little ones to feel supported rather than treated like second-class citizens relegated to the cry room or Narthex? Try making Mass bags available for

check out at the Welcome Table. You may even be able to get donations from local companies and fellow parishioners. You'd be surprised how people meet a need when it's made known.

Do your research and formulate a plan for attacking your issue head-on.

Step Three: Enlist Others

Don't go it alone. Recruit fellow parishioners to help out. They can be Mass friends, Bible study classmates, or people you know from other interactions at church.

Admittedly, this may be the hardest part. People love to participate in things, but that doesn't always carry over to a love of helping set things up. If you're smart about it, though, you can work around that. I'm sure there are several confirmandi who require service hour fulfillment—there's a great source of manpower

and it gives them ownership over something in their parish community.

Step Four: Know Who to Go to

This is going to be a key step. You want to approach the correct person to get the ball rolling as soon as possible.

Think about the area you're trying to fix. Does it have to do with the parish-at-large? Reach out to your Community Life Director. Are you targeting newlyweds? Empty nesters? That's Adult & Family Life territory. Does it have to do with religious education? Reach out to that director.

Figure out where the need you're addressing fits into your parish and know who you need to speak with.

Step Five: Make a Proposal

You've done the research. The need is there and you can state why. You have both the solution and the

manpower to take it from idea to reality. You even know who you need to convince.

But you do still have to convince them.

Pull everything together into a PowerPoint presentation. Feeling extra tech-savvy? Make a video, including parishioner testimony supporting your endeavor. Make sure you have a list of names of those volunteering to help.

If what you're proposing is going to cost money, you have extra work cut out for you. But don't give up on it entirely. Research even more. Know the costs. Have names and managerial contacts of companies willing to donate items for the project. If you're modeling it on a program at another church, show what that looks like (and again, include contacts).

Show how your proposal is necessary for parish life, but also how little the priests will have to do to implement it. Remember that they've got their hands full.

The Church Needs Us

The church is more than a building. It's you and me. If we want our churches to reflect that in every way, we have to be willing to do something about it.

Do you feel the call to be more active and involved in spearheading ministries in your parish?

Kristi Denoy is a wife to her Catholic Match and momma to two beautiful daughters, ages 9 and 3 months, respectively. She enjoys mom and pop coffee shops, reading, and all things theatre. Find out more about her at hailmarry.org



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To help offset the minimal budget available to Maryhill for these purposes, a "Wish List" has been created so that you may donate needed items or services if you would like. This list will be updated from time to time. Please contact Deacon Luke White, Maryhill Facilities Manager, if you are interested in donating any of these items and to make sure the list is up-to-date. He can be reached at: dclwhite@diocesealex.org or (318) 542-1707.

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These may be purchased here: HD Supply: Hdsupplysolutions.com or 1-800-431-3000

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These prices were quoted from Randy's One Shop, Hwy 1, Alexandria

Celebrating ACTS Mission Chapter



ACTS MISSIONS, CHAPTER OF ALEXANDRIA COMMISSIONING MASS. Bishop David Talley celebrated the formation of the Diocese of Alexandria ACTS Chapter, with a Commissioning Mass March 11, 2018 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. As celebrant of this Mass, Bishop Talley welcomed parishioners from the Diocese ACTS Core Parishes -- St. Joseph Church, Marksville; St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville; and Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria. Pictured with Deacon Richard Mitchell (forefront) are (front row) Mark Neely, Sue Welch, Bishop Talley, Chris Armstrong, and Jeannie Gauthier. Back row: Robert Kinberger, Nicki Mitchell, Melanie Dupré, and Tom Bouchie. Not pictured are Dixie Clement and Robert Johnson.

**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.

"Those who want to be rich are falling into temptation and a trap. They are letting themselves be captured by foolish and harmful desires which drag men down to ruin and destruction. The love of money is the root of all evil. Some men in their passion for it have strayed from the faith, and have come to grief amid great pain."

1 Timothy 6: 9-10

lizdescant@gmail.com
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In January 2018, the ACTS Missions Chapter of Alexandria was established. The group is composed of twelve volunteer lay people from four parishes in the diocese—St. Joseph Church, Marksville; St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville; and Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria. A subsidiary of ACTS Missions in San Antonio, Texas, the Chapter partners with parishes in the diocese to build vibrant, active communities through ACTS retreats and provide ongoing parish support. Its primary function is to support and serve the parishes of the Diocese of Alexandria, as well as education concerning the ACTS ministry.

The ACTS Apostolate enables Catholic parish communities to utilize ACTS retreats as an evangelization tool to inspire intentional, Christ-centered discipleship through adoration, community, theology, and service. Through ACTS, the laity have an

opportunity to participate in the Church's New Evangelization and become the joyful missionary disciples called for by Pope Francis.

One benefit of establishing an ACTS Chapter in Alexandria is to provide retreat training in Central Louisiana that was previously only available online or by traveling hours away. On December 1, 2018, the Chapter held its first independent training for those interested in learning more about the retreat process. Twenty people attended the event and learned more about how to conduct an ACTS retreat and ensure it remains simple, reverent, and Catholic.

Evangelization, as the second function of the Chapter, has begun this year by the addition of two new parishes that will offer ACTS retreats to their parishioners. St. Alphonsus in Hessmer will conduct their first men's retreat on Feb. 7-10, 2019, and their first women's retreat on Sept. 26-29, 2019. Our Lady of Guadalupe in

Forest Hill will conduct the first-ever Spanish ACTS retreats in the entire state of Louisiana. Their first men's retreat will be Jan. 31-Feb. 3, 2019, and their first women's retreat will be held Mar. 28 - 31, 2019.

In 2019, the ACTS Chapter of Alexandria will continue in its mission of education and evangelization throughout the diocese. Some of their goals include hosting retreat and Core training events in Alexandria, as well as town hall meetings throughout the diocese. Their hope is to continue growing the ACTS ministry so other parishes can have another tool to help their parishioners deepen their Christian faith through an encounter with Jesus Christ, grow in faith and discipleship, and build their parish community. For more information, contact the ACTS Chapter of Alexandria by phone (318-445-2401) or email (actschapteralexandria@gmail.com), or visit their website at www.actschapteralexandria.com.



Quiz Answer:

ANSWER: B. Blaise Pascal
(1623-1662) French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer and Catholic theologian



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Nuestras parroquias nos necesitan para liderar con el ejemplo

Por Kristi Denoy
Bendita es ella

Amo mi parroquia por muchas razones. Tenemos un sacerdote que es un homilista dinámico y otro que es el confesor más pastoral que puedo esperar tener.

Nuestro Director de Vida Comunitaria es increíble y organiza constantemente actividades para enriquecer las vidas de nuestros feligreses. Nuestro Director de Formación en la Fe de los Niños es impecable. Ella atiende todos los detalles que alguien pueda pensar en todos sus innumerables programas y actividades.

Incluso con todo eso, todavía no es suficiente.

Nuestras parroquias están tratando de reunirse con las personas en su camino actual de formación en la fe. Esa es una meta maravillosa.

Pero también están tratando de mantener el edificio y las instalaciones, y programar cada ministerio en torno a liturgias y estudios bíblicos y solicitudes de espacio para reuniones.

Solo pueden hacer mucho.

Cómo liderar en nuestras parroquias por ejemplo

Es por eso que nuestras parroquias necesitan que demos un paso al plato. Tenemos que estar dispuestos a ser las manos y los pies de nuestras parroquias.

Es mas facil decirlo que hacerlo. ¿Verdad? Tal vez no.

Paso uno: observar

El primer paso es mirar alrededor. ¿Qué falta en tu parroquia? ¿Es un grupo de madres? ¿Asistencia para los que están confinados?

¿Qué es presente y necesario, pero tambaleante? ¿Se da la bienvenida a las personas a su llegada, según a qué misa asistan?

¿Qué no estás ofreciendo que pueda ayudarte a encontrar a otros donde están? ¿Tiene una gran población que no habla inglés y no tiene clases de ESL en la parroquia? ¿Varias madres solteras y sin ayuda se extendieron en su camino?

Identificar la necesidad.

Paso dos: hacer un plan

Una vez que haya identificado "la cosa", haga un plan para satisfacer esa necesidad. ¿Necesita una mejor difusión comunitaria? ¿Por qué el suyo no es tan efectivo como debe ser? ¿Cómo



PRAYER WARRIORS. Oración El padre Bill Gearheard, guerrero de la oración, dirige un grupo de estudio bíblico y oración en la iglesia Our Lady of Prompt Succor en Alexandria.

otras iglesias locales lo hacen con eficacia? ¿Hay eventos hechos accesibles al público? ¿Su parroquia cobra por ellos?

¿Quiere que los padres de los pequeños se sientan apoyados en lugar de ser tratados como ciudadanos de segunda clase relegados a la sala de los gritos o Narthex? Trate de hacer bolsas de masa disponibles para la salida en la mesa de bienvenida. Incluso puede obtener donaciones de compañías locales y feligreses. Se sorprendería de cómo las personas satisfacen una necesidad cuando se da a conocer.

Haga su investigación y formule un plan para atacar su problema de frente.

Paso tres: Aliste a otros

No lo hagas solo. Recluta compañeros feligreses para ayudar. Pueden ser amigos de la Misa, compañeros de estudio bíblico o personas que conozcan de otras interacciones en la iglesia.

Es cierto que esta puede ser la parte más difícil. A la gente le encanta participar en las cosas,

pero eso no siempre se transmite al amor por ayudar a preparar las cosas. Sin embargo, si eres inteligente al respecto, puedes solucionarlo. Estoy seguro de que hay varios confirmandi que requieren el cumplimiento de las horas de servicio; hay una gran fuente de mano de obra y les da la propiedad de algo en su comunidad parroquial.

Paso cuatro: saber a quién ir

Este va a ser un paso clave. Debes acercarte a la persona correcta para hacer rodar la bola lo antes posible.

Piensa en el área que estás tratando de arreglar. ¿Tiene que ver con la parroquia en general? Póngase en contacto con su Director de Vida Comunitaria. ¿Estás apuntando a los recién casados? ¿Vacíos anidados? Eso es territorio de vida de adulto y familia. ¿Tiene que ver con la educación religiosa? Póngase en contacto con ese director.

Descubra dónde encaja la necesidad que está abordando en su parroquia y sepa con quién necesita

hablar.

Quinto paso: hacer una propuesta

Has hecho la investigación. La necesidad está ahí y puedes decir por qué. Tienes tanto la solución como la mano de obra para llevarla de la idea a la realidad. Incluso sabes a quién necesitas convencer.

Pero todavía tienes que convencerlos.

Reunir todo en una presentación de PowerPoint. ¿Te sientes experto en tecnología? Haga un video, incluido el testimonio de feligreses que respalde su esfuerzo. Asegúrese de tener una lista de los nombres de los voluntarios para

ayudar.

Si lo que estás proponiendo va a costar dinero, tienes un trabajo adicional que no tienes para ti. Pero no te rindas por completo. Investiga aún más. Conozca los costos. Tener nombres y contactos administrativos de empresas que deseen donar artículos para el proyecto. Si lo estás modelando en un programa en otra iglesia, muestra cómo se ve (y nuevamente, incluye contactos).

Muestra cómo tu propuesta es necesaria para la vida parroquial, pero también qué poco deberán hacer los sacerdotes para implementarla. Recuerda que tienen las manos llenas.

La iglesia nos necesita

La iglesia es más que un edificio. Somos tu y yo. Si queremos que nuestras iglesias lo reflejen en todos los aspectos, debemos estar dispuestos a hacer algo al respecto.

¿Sientes el llamado a ser más activo e involucrado en dirigir ministerios en tu parroquia?

Kristi Denoy es esposa de su pareja católica y madre de dos hermosas hijas, de 9 y 3 meses de edad, respectivamente. A ella le gustan las cafeterías de mamá y papá, la lectura y todo lo relacionado con el teatro. Descubre más sobre ella en hailmarry.org

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Call 318-776-9480 for more information or to register.

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Heart of Saint Kateri Circle

Do you have a devotion to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha?

Do you have a desire to learn and become more involved with this vital ministry to and with our indigenous brothers and sisters?

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The Cross Word

January 20 and 27, 2019



- 51 Took water from well
- 52 Building addition
- 53 Pop
- 54 # of stone water jars
- 55 Mesh
- 56 Prayer ending

DOWN

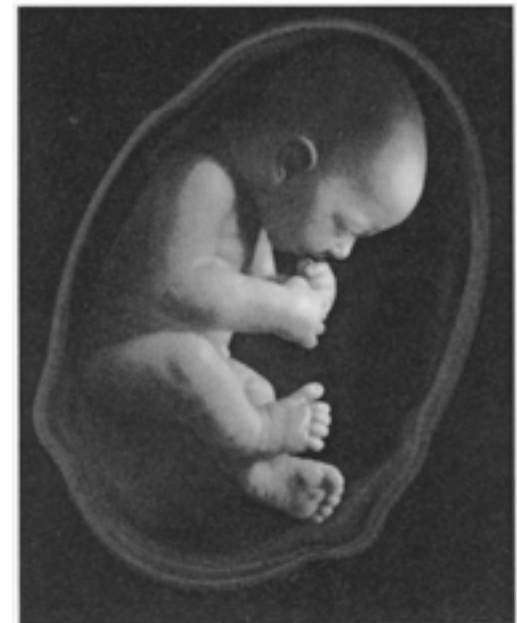
- 1 Sleep disorder
- 2 Mollusks
- 3 Victory shines like one
- 4 Eye infection
- 5 Easter symbol
- 6 Tangles
- 7 A disciple can be one
- 8 National police
- 9 Atmosphere
- 10 Compass point
- 13 That (possessive)
- 18 "___ life"
- 20 Pumps up
- 23 "___witnesses"
- 24 Thai
- 25 Globe
- 26 Vane direction
- 27 Beer container
- 29 White-tailed sea eagle
- 30 Flurry
- 31 Males
- 32 Pastry
- 33 Turf
- 35 Ad's song
- 38 "For___"
- 39 He "rejoices in his bride"
- 40 Church pathway
- 41 Devil
- 42 Prisoner of war
- 44 Popular gym/pool site
- 45 Spots
- 46 Day of the week (abbr.)
- 47 "Christus ___"
- 49 Sandwich

Readings: Is 62:1-5; 1Cor 12:4-11; Jn 2:1-11 & Neh 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10; 1Cor 12:12-14, 27; Lk 1:1-4, 4:14-21

ACROSS

- 1 "___ of the Apostles
- 5 Sixth sense
- 8 Foreign Ag. Service
- 11 Work against
- 12 African antelope
- 13 Wading bird
- 14 Not a one
- 15 Void
- 16 Exhaust
- 17 Master of ceremonies
- 19 Tears
- 21 ___ Wednesday
- 22 "Do whatever he ___ you"
- 24 Digit

- 27 Peter holds these
- 28 Many months
- 30 Unit of electric current
- 33 Ezra was one
- 34 Condescend
- 35 The fourth evangelist
- 36 "In ___ Spirit we were baptized"
- 37 To one side
- 39 Radon
- 42 Plot
- 43 Biblical Aram is now called
- 45 1970s hairdo
- 48 Former USSR's secret police
- 50 "___ Blessed Sacrament



The Little One

I hear a voice, a voice from above.
I wonder who, and if there will be love.
As I sleep here in my mother's womb,
I wonder if it will be my tomb.

My heart aches, and sometimes I cry;
Just from not knowing if I live or die!
I plead with my mom to have mercy on me,
And I pray to God that she may see.

For I have a soul - I am full of life,
And I don't wish to die via a blade of a knife.

I wish to be born and give glory to God.
And woe the man struck by the rod.
For when all is said and all is done,
He must pay - pay for the death
Of the little one!

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Incorporating Faith into Fitness and Fitness into Faith

By Kim Roberts
Guest Contributor

Did you know that fitness can help you on your path to holiness? It's true! If someone would have told me that 5 years ago, I might have laughed in their face. You see, for several years I wasn't plugged into my faith and kept a distance from the Lord. So, if you would have also told me I would be writing an article for the *Church Today*, I might have choked laughing! But here is what I know for sure: God was, is, and ever shall be - the one with the last laugh. Let me share with you how I know.

I am a cradle Catholic and attended Catholic schools, but I never really developed my relationship with God. One or two encounters maybe, but I never fed that flame. Some of it was due to lack of opportunity, but the rest was due to my poor choices. God was basically confined to church on Sundays, grace occasionally before meals, and prayer requests only when I really needed something.

My faith life was on cruise control for years. Then in my early 30's I suffered from grief and loss due to events out of my control. The pain unfortunately was due to hurts from within the Church. During this time, I was terribly sad and angry. Attending mass was difficult, but thankfully my husband Ted insisted we go for our family's sake. My faith life was drowning, but my



INCORPORATING FAITH INTO FITNESS. Three parishioners from Sacred Heart of Jesus in Pineville participated in and completed the Wild Azalea Trail 1/2 Marathon on Jan. 5.

precious convert husband fought to keep it afloat.

My unlikely faith and fitness journey began in 2013. At the repeated promptings of our loving friends, Ted attended a men's ACTS retreat at Maryhill. With his "yes" to that retreat, our family began a journey of profound ongoing conversion. I attended the women's ACTS

retreat shortly afterwards. These experiences brought us closer to God and each other more than I ever imagined possible.

As my relationship with the Lord grew, I wanted to invite Him into every part of my life. I wanted to "rejoice always and pray without ceasing" as St. Paul tells us. But incorporate God into my workouts? It seemed

awkward. But I loved exercise and I loved Jesus, so I took one tiny step: I started offering my workout as a prayer for a friend that was struggling. This new habit took root because it infused a supernatural peace and joy that far outlasted any endorphins I had produced from exercise. I soon began running online faith and fitness challenge groups for friends to share the goodness I'd found.

In 2016, a friend told me that I should really look into an online workout program called SoulCORE. I did not realize at the time what a gift she gave me in that simple suggestion. The website explained that SoulCORE "pairs core strengthening, stretching and functional movement with the prayers of the rosary."

I was intrigued, so I immediately downloaded the Sorrowful Mysteries Workout. I absolutely loved it. The workout was challenging yet peaceful. The beauty of the Rosary is that it is for anyone who wants to grow in virtue and gain interior peace. Growing in virtue helps us to grow in holiness. Gaining strength and flexibility is just a bonus!

I began excitedly inviting friends to pray and workout at my house. After several months, I felt called to attend a SoulCORE Leader Discovery Retreat to discern becoming an instructor. In October of 2017, I became certified. Since then, Mother Mary keeps gently inviting me

to draw closer to her son Jesus, and I now have a fire and joy that cannot be contained.

The fruits of this journey have been overwhelming and it defies all logic. In 5 years, I went from a desperate, dark place spiritually to a place of radiant light. And that just shows you how relentless and loving our Father in heaven is. He comes to us so personally. He knew my love for exercise and used it to reach His lost sheep of a daughter.

This brings tears to my eyes every time I reflect on it. God is so good, y'all. And He is a God of joy. In our journey together, He continues to have the last laugh... and I absolutely adore laughing with Him.

Thank you for listening to my story. **If this has sparked interest to start your own Faith and Fitness journey, here are a few ideas for you:**

- Offer your exercise time as a prayer for specific intentions.
- Give thanks to God for your health before, during, and/or after your workout.
- Listen to the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet or prayerful podcasts on your phone when you go for a walk. *Laudate* or *Catholic Daily Reflection* apps contain these resources.
- Follow along to a Christian workout DVD or online streaming workout such as SoulCORE.
- Listen to Christian music as you exercise. And sing! St Augustine has said, "When you sing, you pray twice." I don't know about you, but I need all the prayers I can get!

• Invite people to join you. "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20). We were created for community and fellowship. If it's not realistic to meet others in person, there are online communities to support your journey. If you can't find one, start your own group!

I encourage you to begin one small step at a time. Allow God to surprise you. Then we can all rejoice and laugh together!

Kim and her husband Ted have two active teenage sons. They live in Alexandria, LA and attend Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church. Kim is a Licensed Counselor and SoulCORE Fitness Instructor.

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'Thank you for your service'

**By Sister Constance Veit, I.S.P.
Director of Communications
Little Sisters of the Poor**



Together with another Little Sister I was invited to represent our Congregation at a somewhat exclusive reception during the Christmas season. We were happy to bring two of our Residents along with us. One of them, a 97-year old veteran of World War II, proudly wore his best tweed sport coat and his VFW Garrison cap decorated with a host of ribbons. The other, an immigrant and artist, is the widow of a U.S. Navy veteran.

During the reception we sampled the luscious buffet, admired the beautiful Christmas decorations and met a few notable personalities. But what really struck me was all the attention and affection the partygoers gave our two Residents, especially our retired airman. Women and men, both old and young, paused to let him pass through the crowd in his wheelchair, offered to wait on him and thanked him for his

service. More than a few people knelt beside him to ask about his military experience and his life story, listening attentively as he sketched out the details of his long life. Our Resident felt so special! He returned home beaming and is still talking about this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The reverence and esteem

of the V.I.P.s we met that day for our elderly Residents was moving. "Thank you for your service," they kept repeating. Without diminishing in any way, the unique contribution of our veterans, it struck me that this is something we should be saying to all of our elders. "Thank you for your service ... as

sons and daughters, parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles ... Thank you for your service as educators, nurses, factory workers, engineers, farmers and businessmen..."

More profoundly, we should thank our elders for their wisdom, their faithfulness and their selfless generosity toward us. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for all that they share with us and pass on to us – their faith, their life experience, their family history and the history of our communities and nations. We need to remember our elders, take a lively interest in them and offer them our support so that they will be able to go on contributing to the formation of new generations

Pope Francis has often said that a people that does not take care of grandparents has no future. Let's keep this in mind as we begin a new year, and especially as we gather from Washington, D.C. to San Francisco this month to march for life. These annual prolife events commemorate the passing of Roe vs. Wade in 1973,

the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in our country, so it goes without saying that they focus on the unborn. But the elderly need our protection, too.

The fact that physician assisted suicide is now legal in Washington, D.C. and California should drive this point home as we pound the pavement for life at these events. I would like to propose that after we have marched for life this January, we return home and reach out to the elders in our family, our neighborhood or our local nursing home to say thank you – Thank you for giving me life! Thank you for your service to family, community and this great nation! Thank you for passing on your wisdom, your experience and your faith to my generation!

Pope Francis has said that he longs for "a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!" In 2019, let's help make his dream a reality!

Celebrate with us in February 2019!

Join us next month to celebrate weddings and anniversaries! Celebrate the marriages of your children and parents or grandparents, 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 paper.

Submit one picture per email to cari.terracina@diocesealex.org by Friday, February 8 (the larger the image size the better). If you cannot email the photo, please contact us at (318) 445-6424, ext. 264 to discuss how to submit your picture. 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. We will attempt to publish as many photos as possible in the February Church Today, but due to limited space, your photo may be featured on the Diocese of Alexandria website and/or Facebook page instead.



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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
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Cabrini students surpass fundraising goal to build home in Haiti



STUDENTS RAISE FUNDS TO HELP FAMILIES IN HAITI. St. Frances Cabrini School students listen to Mrs. June Lawrence of Cross Catholic Outreach, as she presents videos and pictures of families who benefited from previous campaigns.

St. Frances Cabrini School students surpassed their goal of raising \$6,000 to help to build a house in Haiti.

Dean of students Clayton Cobb said the school helps missionary companies around the world during the Advent season through their annual Silver Coin Collection, raising funds to assist specific projects.

Cross Catholic Outreach is the non-profit organization the school chose to partner with this year.

"They have a project called Home for Christmas," said Cobb. "And our school is looking to provide the funds to build a home for a family in Haiti — the poorest country in North America." Cabrini school

priest from Abbeville, LA who has facilitated mission work in Haiti for over two decades.

Normally the school raises about \$2,000 to \$3,000 each year to fund an organization. But, by raising \$7155, more than double the amount normally raised, the students will help to support the other needs of Cross Catholic Outreach, said Cobb.

The fundraising for the house ended Friday, Dec. 21 with a pajamas day, while additional fundraising efforts included a middle school dance sponsored by the student council. Students also "collected funds from their families, opened piggy banks, and dug in cup holders in the car," notes Cobb. The first grade students of teacher Renee Gutierrez brought in a large portion of the donations, while other large donations were given by some of the students' families, as well as several individuals and businesses who wanted to see St. Frances Cabrini reach their goal.

While Cabrini school has several fundraisers and projects for local organizations during the year, "this one seemed special," says Cobb, "how often does a school provide a place to live for a family they will never meet?"

Cobb said the children will get to know the meaning of the Bible passage in Matthew 25:34-40:

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

staff felt it was important to help others through the corporal work of mercy: sheltering the homeless. Mrs. June Lawrence, a representative of Cross Catholic Outreach, spoke to the students in November, showing them images of the living conditions in Haiti, the great need that exists there, and how the organization provides for temporal and spiritual needs through the direction of Fr. Glenn Meaux, a

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Applications for Free and Reduced Meals now available

Applications are being accepted for Free & Reduced Meals. It's never too late, even within the school year, to apply for Free and Reduced Meals. If your family income has been adversely affected by the economy (specifically, the Federal Government Shutdown), please pick-up a Free & Reduced Meal Application in your school office, or contact our Child Nutrition Supervisor, Janet Burgess (318) 445-6424 Ext.234.

Applications are available at the Diocese of Alexandria Child Nutrition Program office at 4400 Coliseum Boulevard, Alexandria, LA 71303.

Catholic Schools Week: Jan. 27-Feb. 2

For information about school activities for Catholic Schools Week, please visit www.diocesealex.org

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February 15-17

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HOLY SAVIOR MENARD
OPEN HOUSE

We invite you to join the faculty & staff of HSM to tour our school, learn about our academic program & extracurricular activities, and answer any questions!

WHEN: Thursday, January 31, 2019
6:00 p.m. in the HSM Gym

WHO: All parents of children in upcoming grades 7th - 12th interested in learning more about Holy Savior Menard Central High School.



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318.445.8233

www.holysaviormenard.com

*Financial aid and Louisiana Scholarships are available.

Please contact Renee Hicks for additional information.

Upcoming VIRTUS sessions

• Jan. 22, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center,
Alexandria

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

To register,
go to www.virtus.org



HOLY CROSS YOUTH GROUP, NATCHITOCHE. Holy Cross Youth Group celebrates the Christmas season with a Life Night (Life Teen youth group meeting) on Sunday, Dec. 9.



SAINT MARY'S SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHE. St. Mary's High School religion students visited local nursing home residents to deliver Christmas art, handmade cards, wooden puzzles, and sing Christmas carols.



SAINT ANTHONY CONFIRMATION CLASS, BUNKIE. Members of the 2019 Confirmation Class from St. Anthony Church in Bunkie filled and wrapped food boxes for St. Anthony Food Pantry recipients.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR COMPETITION, MOREAUVILLE. One student was chosen to represent each class and the school. [redacted] the winners for 2019, going on to compete at the Diocesan level in January.



SAINT ANTHONY SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Students of the month for December [redacted]

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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 US ON FACEBOOK!

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

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

International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Jan. 18-25

The theme of this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is "Justice, Only Justice, You Shall Pursue." (Deuteronomy 16:18-20). The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has a history of over 100 years in which Christians around the world have taken part in an octave of prayer for visible Christian unity. By annually observing the WPCU, Christians move toward the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer at the Last Supper "that they all may be one." (cf. John 17:21) For more information, visit the USCCB website at usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/events/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity.cfm.

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of the Unborn Children - Jan. 22

Jan. 22 has been designated the "Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children." In all the dioceses of the United States, Jan. 22 is observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion. 2019 marks the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

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.

Winter Festival, St. Joseph, Colfax - Jan. 27

St. Joseph Church in Colfax will have its annual Winter Festival on Sunday, Jan. 27. It starts after 11:00 a.m. Mass and lasts until evening. This is a Church

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

fundraiser sponsored by the Altar Society members. Food will be served, Silent Auction and Bingo games feature among the activities. Come and join St. Joseph Church on this day of fun and social interaction.

Rapides Symphony - Jan. 27

The Rapides Symphony will present a concert on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 2:30 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Approximately twenty of the Symphony's musicians will be joined by piano soloist Nanette Kaplan Solomon. To purchase tickets, please visit rapidesymphony.org or call 318-442-9709.

Catholic Schools Week - Jan. 27-Feb. 2

Sponsored by the National Catholic Educators Association, Catholic Schools Week is an annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. Schools typically observe the week with Masses, open houses, and other activities for students, families, parishioners, and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to Church, local communities, and the nation.

TobyMac Hits Deep Tour 2019 - Jan. 29

TobyMac's popular "HITS DEEP Tour" will trek 34 stops nationwide in 2019, with Jeremy Camp, Jordan Feliz, Ryan Stevenson, We Are Messengers, and Aaron Cole. The seven time GRAMMY winner's headlining jaunt is a partnership with K-LOVE, Air1, Awakening Events, and Food for the Hungry. Tickets are available at the Rapides Parish Coliseum Box Office, Ticketmaster.com, KLove.com, Air1.com, and by phone at 1800-745-3000. Group prices are available at all points of purchase of 10 or more tickets.

Nocturnal Adoration - Jan. 31

St. Frances Cabrini Church will host a nocturnal period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in reparation for sins committed by clergy, to pray for priests and victims, and for the Church. We ask all Catholic men of good will of all parishes and organizations to consider keeping watch with us on Thursday, Jan. 31, 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. We are asking for two volunteers per hour. If interested, please call Michelle at 318-445-4588.

Louisiana Life March: Central Louisiana - Feb. 2

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 Cenla is sponsored by Louisiana Right to Life, Louisiana College, Louisiana Baptist Convention, Louisiana Family Forum, the Knights of Columbus, and Concerned Women for America. Visit www.prolifelouisiana.org for more information.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter - Feb. 15-17

A NEW YEAR: Let a New Year and a Renewed Love Be Reflected in Your Marriage. The holidays are over and the kids are back in school... now give some time to the two of you. Consider making a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend and bring joy and passion to your special love. The next weekend in Louisiana is scheduled for Feb. 15-17 at the Bishop Robert E. Tracy Center in Baton Rouge, LA. You can register online today at www.LAMS-wwme.org or by calling Matt and Gail Quinn at 800-586-5469.

"Mary Poppins, JR" - Feb. 15-17

Our Lady of Prompt Succor School will perform their annual play at Coughlin Saunders Center. This year's play will be "Mary Poppins, JR," to be performed Friday, Feb. 15 at 7:00 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 16 at 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 17 at 2:30 p.m. Tickets and more information will be available at www.promptsuccor.org.

Worship Night for Women - Feb. 25

A worship night for women will be held Monday, Feb. 25 at 6:00 p.m. through 9:00 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church in Marksville. The night will include worship music led by Angela McCann and a talk by Mary Wilson. Fellowship and refreshments will follow in the Church hall. The night is free and open to all women, ages 15 and up. For more information, contact Tammy Bernard at 318-305-1730 or Christy Reed at 318-305-8886.

Manna House Golf Tournament - March 12

Manna House will host their annual Hixson-Ford Pro-Am Golf Tournament on Tuesday, Mar. 12. The cost is \$1,000 per team, which includes a three-man team with a pro, plus a hole sign, lunch provided by Tony Chachere's, the Pro Am Party, and the Awards Party. Please call Jessica Viator at 318-445-9053 or Theresa Slater at 318-664-3603 for more information or to register.

Visit www.diocesealex.org for more information about school activities for Catholic Schools Week.

Church Today News Deadlines

Next issue: Feb. 18
Deadline for news:
Friday, Feb. 8

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Upcoming Retreats

The following ACTS retreats will be offered:

• Jan. 31-Feb. 3
Hispanic ACTS for Men
Contact Fr. Adam Travis
at 318-776-9480.

• Feb. 7-10
St. Alphonsus ACTS for Women
Contact Fr. Edwin Rodriguez
at 318-563-4550.



January - February

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
21 Martin Luther King Day Parade 10:00 a.m. Bolton Avenue, Alexandria	22 National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Babies VIRTUS Training, 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center	23	24 VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart School, Moreauville	25	26	27 Winter Festival St. Joseph Church, Colfax Rapides Symphony Concert 2:30 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral
International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity				Holy Spirit Women's Retreat -- Lafayette		
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHELS	PRAY FOR FR. B. MILLER	PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK	PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL	PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIKWE
28	29 OPEN HOUSE 5:30-7:00 p.m. St. Frances Cabrini School, Alexandria	30 OPEN HOUSE all day during school hours Sacred Heart School, Moreauville OPEN HOUSE 8:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria	31 OPEN HOUSE 6:00 p.m. Holy Savior Menard HS Alexandria	FEBRUARY 1	2 Louisiana Life March: Central Louisiana 10:00 a.m. begins at Louisiana College campus	3
Catholic Schools Week				Hispanic ACTS Retreat for Men -- Maryhill Renewal Center		
PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN	PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR	PRAY FOR C. OGBONNA	PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR BISHOP D. TALLEY	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL	PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE	PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL	PRAY FOR FR. G. POOKATTU	PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS	PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY	PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS
11	12	13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT	15	16	17
PRAY FOR FR. J. ROBLES-SANCHEZ	PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ	PRAY FOR FR. J. RYAN		Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference		
				OLPS Presents: Mary Poppins, Jr.		
				Worldwide Marriage Encounter -- Baton Rouge		
PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER	PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY	PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA				
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR	PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN	PRAY FOR BISHOP D. TALLEY	PRAY FOR MSGR. S. TESTA	PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS	PRAY FOR FR. A. THOMPSON	PRAY FOR MSGR. J. TIMMERMAMS

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