

# CHURCH TODAY

Volume LI, No. 11

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

November 30, 2020

## The school year continues!

We truly thank our Catholic school faculty, staff, administration, students, and parents for continuing to support our Catholic schools and for managing all COVID-19 restrictions with prayer and humility.

Pictured here, Bishop Robert Marshall visits St. Anthony School students in Bunkie. Please visit our diocesan Facebook page to view a video from Bishop Marshall discussing the benefits and importance of a Catholic School education, or see pages 12-13 for pictures from the school year.



### INSIDE

#### Keeping the Advent season

Page 4 lists several ways to observe the season of Advent. But, whatever you choose to do this season, let's do the hard work of keeping our hearts, minds, and homes focused on the coming of Christ.

#### A treasure trove of prayers

The Catholic faith is a treasure trove. See pages 6 and 7 for an explanation of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe as well as several simple prayers that can be prayed on rosary beads.

#### Resources for Advent

This year, in new and different ways than ever before, we are on the search for hope and light. See page 14 for a list of resources to help you establish or improve your faith life this Advent season - the season of light and preparing our hearts to welcome the Christ Child.

INDEX

Bishop's Message ..... 2  
 National / World News .....3  
 Letter from the Editor ..... 4  
 Question Corner .....4  
 Diocesan News.....5  
 Feature Story.....6  
 Burses / Vocations .....9  
 Parish Spotlight .....10  
 Picture Spread.....12  
 Feature Story .....14  
 Parish Events .....15  
 Catholic All Year! ..... 16  
 Marriage and Family..... 18  
 Schools / Youth .....20  
 Diocesan Briefs .....22  
 Calendar .....23

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Little by little: a new name for this season

“There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out all fear.”  
- 1 John 4:18

This year has been full of hustle and bustle and worry and stress. And, as we come to the holiday season, it can be so easy for us to become even more overwhelmed. Worry can be the number one thing we waste time on. Let’s decide to shift our focus in this next season, shall we?

I keep landing on this fact: God does not call us to be a mess of stress; He calls us to peace and trust. And not for no reason. When you see someone at peace - truly at peace - in challenges, doesn’t that make you wonder where their peace is coming from?

Yes, there’s a lot of work ahead. Yes, our plates are so full. But, let’s decide to intentionally make little by little progress. Have the difficult conversations.



Letter from the Editor

Mrs. Cari Terracina  
Publications Manager for the Diocese of Alexandria

Make the daily decisions. Get back up after we’ve fallen. And, truly decide to do things differently to make the coming seasons more fruitful than they’ve ever been.

In the Latin Catholic Church, the liturgical calendar begins on the first Sunday of Advent, which means we begin each year with our preparations for celebrating the birth of baby Jesus! It seems very fitting. Advent is traditionally a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (it is sometimes called “little

Lent”), during which we prepare our hearts and our homes for the coming of Christ at Christmas. Advent recalls specifically the wait for the birth of the baby Jesus. It can be fun. It can be joyful. But it’s all expectant joy. May and Joseph waited and prepared for nine months for the birth of Jesus, and the Jewish people had been waiting and preparing for thousands of years for the birth of the Savior! Being pregnant with my second child, it is clear there is no skipping ahead, no matter how weary I am

with the waiting.

Page 4 lists several ways to observe the season of Advent, but whatever you choose to do this season, let’s do the hard work of keeping our hearts, minds, and homes focused on the coming of Christ.

To the waiting,  
Cari

Follow Cari on Instagram  
@cariterracina

Go back to parish or not?

**Q.** Our bishop has suggested that the elderly and those with compromised immune systems not attend Mass in person right now. Since I fit into both of these categories, I have not been going to Mass. I do watch a Mass on television every week, and to be honest, I get more out of that than I do from going to my parish -- except, of course, that I can’t receive Communion.

About four years ago, our pastor was replaced by a priest from Africa. While he is a nice person, I can’t understand him. He gives lengthy homilies (about 30 minutes) and then spends 10 minutes at the end of Mass talking about events or lecturing us on how to be a better parish. (Most parishioners refer to it as his “second sermon.”)

This has been my home parish for more than 40 years; I raised my children here and took part in many parish ministries until I got sick. Our parish numbers have been dropping, and several of my friends have been discussing what we are going to do when we are expected to return to church. Do you have any suggestions? (City and state withheld)

**A.** First, let me say how



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service

grateful I am that many foreign priests have volunteered to come and serve in the United States. In much of Africa and in certain parts of Asia, vocations are plentiful -- and without the generous sacrifice of these men, a fair number of American Catholic parishes would have had to close their doors.

I do acknowledge, though, that language can sometimes be a barrier to understanding and to productive worship. Do you know anyone on your parish council? Why not share your concern that attendance is dropping -- in part, you feel, due to the lengths of homilies and to the language difficulty.

Hopefully, that person could then speak directly to the priest -- in a sympathetic and understanding fashion -- suggesting that American

Catholic congregations are more accustomed and receptive to shorter homilies. (Perhaps the priest might even be open to having someone else -- a deacon or lector -- read the homily that the pastor has prepared.)

Your last resort, of course, is to find another Catholic parish nearby. We all need to be nourished regularly by the Eucharist, and a televised Mass, while helpful, can never substitute for that. And if your health keeps you from attending, you can ask your parish that Communion be brought to your home.

Questions may be sent to Father Kenneth Doyle at askfatherdoyle@gmail.com and 30 Columbia Circle Dr. Albany, New York 12203.

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

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## Calls for unity after presidential election

By Cardinal Sean O. O'Malley, Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, Bishop John E. Stowe, Archbishops William E. Lori and Paul S. Coakley, and Bishop Alfred A. Schlert  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- As the nation awaited the results of the U.S. presidential election, Catholic leaders called for calm and unity after a fierce election season. Four days after Election Day, news organizations such as The Associated Press, The New York Times, and Fox News announced Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris had won the race. Biden is the second Catholic in U.S. history to be elected to the nation's highest office, following the late President John F. Kennedy, who was elected 60 years ago. Harris becomes the country's first female vice president-elect. Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston wrote, "We are now at a moment when a new beginning is not only possible but urgently necessary. The work at hand calls us to respect the opinions of others, to dialogue about differing perspectives, to seek reconciliation where there has been estrangement, to work for healing among the people of our country." In his Nov. 7 victory speech, Biden said he would try to unify a fractured nation. As of Nov. 11, President Donald Trump had not conceded the race and has leveled charges of fraud without providing proof. He has filed lawsuits that have been rejected and has promised more suits. Many senior Republicans joined the president in contesting the free nature of the election. Before Biden was projected the winner, and even before the election, many U.S. church leaders issued statements calling for unity after the election; a sampling follows:



**U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.** The White House is seen at dusk Nov. 8, 2020. (CNS photo/Erin Scott, Reuters)

### *Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley, Boston*

Today our country, one of the oldest democracies and most diverse societies in the world, should take pride in the success of the electoral process. We thank all the candidates who have participated in the elections and commend that historic voter turnout, a tribute to the citizens who voted in such striking number, in stark contrast to earlier elections.

That encouraging sign has opened the way to begin a process of participation among all citizens however they voted. As Catholics we are committed to the common good, social justice and the Gospel of Life. Participation in the political process is a sacred duty. In a country facing the threefold challenge of addressing a global

pandemic, repairing a fractured economy, and renewing a national commitment to the goals of racial justice and equality, the broad participation of citizens in the election should be a foundation for rebuilding our unity as a people.

The president and those who will serve with him have both the opportunity and the challenge of rebuilding civic trust, of providing a sense of hope in a time of social crisis, and of calling us all to share our best talents and energies in a common task. Our prayers should be with all those called to lead the country.

The task we face is not fully captured by the data; the numbers, charts and graphs. The task is also a spiritual challenge. As Pope Francis shared in the recent encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, we are called to

promote "friendship and an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere." Each citizen, each person, across lines of color, ethnicity, of faith and philosophy, can and should be asked to place solidarity over inequality, compassion over revenge, generosity over self-interest.

An election is never only about who wins and loses. It is always about a moment in time when a new beginning is possible. Such a beginning relies upon our best traditions and aspirations: belief in our common humanity and the unique dignity of each person in the land; beliefs which can bind us together, rich and poor, black and white, citizens and Dreamers, women and men.

We are now at a moment when a new beginning is not

only possible but urgently necessary. The work at hand calls us to respect the opinions of others, to dialogue about differing perspectives, to seek reconciliation where there has been estrangement, to work for healing among the people of our country. I confidently believe that as a nation we can achieve these goals, to rise above our differences, to embrace our unity as brothers and sisters whose lives are a gift from God and who share a mission to build a just society.

We must not succumb to resentments based in divergent political views and divisions that have emerged from the stress of recent months. The challenge is always to transform a crowd into a community, a people who share a commitment to building a civilization of love and a culture that can sustain democracy, freedom, and respect for human rights.

Let us remember the unity and charity we are called to at the celebration of the Eucharist and in the proclamation of the Scriptures. Let us witness to the ideals of the Gospel, striving to have a positive impact on our families, communities, and nation in these crucial days. Let us follow Jesus' call to love one another as He has loved us.

*Editor's note: Additional commentaries are available from Archbishop Paul D. Etienne, Bishop John E. Stowe, Archbishops William E. Lori and Paul S. Coakley, and Bishop Alfred A. Schlert.*



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and mailing address.

## Catholic all year: keeping Advent

*Continued from page 2*

**Consider decorating a process rather than a box to check.**

Decorate throughout Advent. Start by taking out all of the Nativity sets, adding a few pieces at a time, as well as the Advent calendars to mark our days, and Christmas books to read with the kids. Then, slowly add things over the coming days and weeks.

### Advent Calendars

When you are observing Advent as a time of waiting, your kids are sure to want to know how much longer? They will probably want to know how much longer a couple of times per day. A good way to satisfy that desire and to thwart at least a few of the questions, is to have an Advent calendar around the house.

There are dozens of types to choose from - homemade or storebought, disposable or reusable. The key, I think, is finding one that encourages the spirit of waiting and preparing that we are hoping to foster in this season, rather than a spirit of receiving.

### Advent Wreaths

The exact origins of the Advent wreath are unknown. It appears that pre-Christian Germanic peoples used wreaths lit with candles during wintertime as a sign of hope that warmer and longer days would return in the spring. During the Middle Ages, some Christians were using wreaths with candles to prepare for the coming of Christmas, and the practice was observed by both Protestants and Catholics in the 1600's. Advent wreaths were then brought to the United States by German immigrants.

The Advent wreath is really an archetype of liturgical living in the home. It was used in Catholic homes and schools for decades before an official blessing of the Advent wreath was included in the 1976 revision of the *Rituale Romanum*, the Church's official book of prayers and blessings, which meant it could be used in churches. Pope St. John Paul II was the first to bring the



***“Human minds and hearts are stimulated by the sounds, sights, and fragrances of liturgical seasons, which combine to create powerful, lasting impressions of the rich and abundant graces unique to each of the seasons.”***

***// National Conference of Catholic Bishops,  
Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship //***

tradition of the Advent wreath to the Vatican, since it's not a historically Italian tradition, and the Vatican has had one ever since.

An Advent wreath is a beautiful way to talk about religious symbolism with kids. The circle of the wreath, with no beginning or end, symbolizes God's eternal nature. The evergreen branches signify the immortality of the soul. Decorative pine cones or seed pods represent new life and resurrection. The four candles remind us of the four weeks of Advent and also the four thousands years from the creation of Adam and Eve to the birth of Jesus Christ. The candle flames symbolize the light of Christ.

The four candles are red in Germany and also in the wreath used at the Vatican. In the United States, it is customary to use three purple candles and one pink candle. The pink candle is lit on the third Sunday

of Advent, Gaudete Sunday, one of the two Sundays of the year when the priest may wear rose-colored vestments. Gaudete Sunday is celebrated as a day of rejoicing because we have reached the halfway point of Advent and are that much closer to Christmas! On Christmas Eve, the four Advent candles are traditionally replaced with one large white Christmas candle in the center of the wreath, to light during the Christmas season.

When choosing or creating an Advent wreath for your home, it's good to be mindful of all this great symbolism associated with the traditional shape and materials, so your family can appreciate each aspect of it.

It's also good to remember that there is a strong preference (but not an official mandate) in various Church documents for the use of natural rather than artificial materials for religious purposes whenever

possible. “Fake” greenery and “fake” (battery-operated, for example) are not ideal for use in a sacramental.

### Celebrate Catholic New Year's Eve

The beginning of the liturgical year is the first Sunday of Advent. So Catholic New Year's Day isn't January 1; it's at the end of November or the beginning of December, when the season of Advent begins. “Advent is a period beginning with the Sunday nearest to the feast of St. Andrew the Apostle on November 30, and embracing four Sundays.” The first Sunday of Advent can fall as early as November 27 or as late as December 3, either during the weekend of American Thanksgiving or the weekend afterward.

The Mass readings on the first Sunday of Advent are all about vigilance and waking up, and staying awake:

“Besides this you know what hour it is, how it is full

time now for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.” (Romans 13: 11)

“Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the householder had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore, you also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” (Matthew 24: 42-44)

“Take heed, watch and pray for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore - for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning - lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch.” (Mark 13: 33 - 37)

It really is the perfect night to try to stay up late!

***Struggling to find music to keep the focus on Advent before the Christmas season comes?***

***Download the Spotify app and search for “Diocese of Alexandria” to listen to our Advent Carols playlist***

***--- songs to center our hearts, minds, and homes as we await the birth of Christ.***

## In memoriam Reverend José Robles-Sanchez



It is with sadness that we announce the death of Father José Robles-Sanchez, who passed away Wednesday, November 18 around 6:00 a.m. at Rapides Regional Medical Center.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, November 24 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral with Bishop Robert Marshall. Fr. Edwin Rodriguez-Hernandez was homilist and the pallbearers were priests of the diocese. A full obituary is available on the Diocese of Alexandria website at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org).

We ask your continued prayers for the repose of the soul of Father José and for the consolation of his family.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, Oh Lord, and let Your eternal light shine upon him. Amen.*

*Lord, let us see your kindness,  
and grant us your salvation.*

Psalm 85: 8 | Responsorial Psalm for December 6

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## Dr. Gabriel Rodriguez passes away

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Dr. Gabriel Rodriguez on Saturday, October 24 at St. Rita Church in Alexandria.

Please remember in prayer his wife, Brenda, and all of his family. Dr. Rodriguez served the Diocese and our community humbly and joyfully through the Office of Life and Justice working to help the homeless and those less fortunate.

*Eternal rest grant unto him, Oh Lord, and let Your eternal light shine upon him. Amen.*



Emile P. Oestrieche, III, CPA

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#### HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for December

**For a Life of Prayer** - We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

# Our Lady of Guadalupe: Uncovering the mysteries of the tilma

Even in our time, the mystery of this miraculous Image remains. The tilma, a large apron woven by hand from cactus fibers, bears the holy Image, which is 1.43 meters tall. The Virgin's face is perfectly oval and is a gray color verging on pink. Her eyes have a profound expression of purity and gentleness. The mouth seems to smile. The very beautiful face, similar to that of a mestizo Indian, is framed by a black head of hair that, up close, is comprised of silky

locks. She is clad in a full tunic, of a pinkish red hue that no one has ever been able to reproduce, and that goes to her feet. Her bluish-green mantle is edged with gold braid and studded with stars. A sun of various shades forms a magnificent background, with golden rays shining out.

The fact that the tilma has remained perfectly preserved from 1531 to this day is inexplicable. After more than four centuries, this fabric

of mediocre quality retains the same freshness and the same lively color as when it was new. By comparison, a copy of the Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe painted in the 18th century with great care, and preserved under the same climatic conditions as Juan Diego's, had completely deteriorated in a few years.

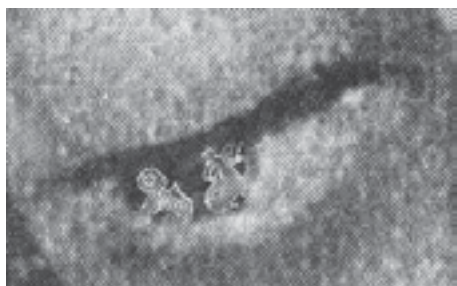
At the beginning of the 20th century, a painful period of revolutions in Mexico, a load of dynamite was put by unbelievers at the foot

of the Image, in a vase of flowers. The explosion destroyed the marble steps on the main altar, the candelabras, all the flower-holders. The marble altarpiece was broken into pieces, the brass Christ on the tabernacle was split in two. The windows in most of the houses near the basilica were broken, but the pane of glass that was protecting the Image was not even cracked. The Image remained intact.

## THE EYES

Ophthalmological tests have found that Mary's eye is a human eye that appears to be living, and includes the retina, in which is reflected the image of a man with outstretched hands—Juan Diego. The image in the eye conforms to the known laws of optics, particularly to that which states that a well-lighted object can be reflected three times in an eye (Purkinje-Samson's law).

A later study allowed researchers to discover in the eye, in addition to the seer, Bishop Zumárraga and several other people present when the image of Our Lady appeared on the tilma. And the normal microscopic network of veins in the eyelids and the cornea of the Virgin's eyes is completely recognizable. No human painter would have been able to reproduce such details.



## UNKNOWN COLORING AGENT

In 1936, an examination conducted on two fibers from the tilma, one red and the other yellow, led to an astounding finding—the fibers contained no known coloring agent.

Ophthalmology and optics confirm the inexplicable nature of the Image—it seems to be a slide projected onto the fabric. Closer analysis shows that there is no trace of drawing or sketching under the color, even though perfectly recognizable retouches were done on the original, retouches which moreover have deteriorated with time.

In addition, the background never received any primer, which seems inexplicable if it is truly a painting, for even on the finest fabric, a coat is always applied, if only to prevent the fabric from absorbing the painting and the threads from breaking the surface. No brush strokes can be detected.



After an infrared analysis conducted on May 7, 1979, a professor from NASA wrote, "There is no way to explain the quality of the pigments used for the pink dress, the blue veil, the face and the hands, or the permanence of

the colors, or the vividness of the colors after several centuries, during which they ordinarily should have deteriorated... Studying this Image has been the most moving experience of my life."

## STARS ON THE VEIL

Astronomers have observed that all the constellations present in the heavens at the moment Juan Diego opened his tilma before Bishop Zumárraga on December 12, 1531, are in their proper place on Mary's mantle veil. It has also been found that by imposing a topographical map of central Mexico on the Virgin's dress, the mountains, rivers and principal lakes coincide with the decoration on this dress.



## ADDITIONAL THINGS TO NOTE

Gynecological measurements have determined that the Virgin in the Image has the physical dimensions of a woman who is three months pregnant. Under the belt that holds the dress in place, at the very location of the embryo, a flower with four petals stands out—the Solar Flower, the most familiar of Aztec hieroglyphs, and which symbolized for them divinity, the center of the earth, heaven, time, and space.

On the Virgin's neck hangs a brooch, the center of which is decorated with a little cross, recalling the death of Christ on the Cross for the salvation of all mankind. Many other details of the Image of MARY form an extraordinary document for our age, which is able to observe them thanks to modern technology. Thus science, which has often been a pretext for unbelief, helps us today to give prominence to signs that had remained unknown for centuries and that science is unable to explain.

# A treasure trove of prayers to pray on rosary beads

By Sarah Damm  
Blessed is She Ministry

The Catholic Faith is a treasure trove. A treasure trove where upon exploration, we discover that it is bottomless. The precious gems and jewels within it - Holy Mass, Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, graces, prayers, devotions, traditions, teachings, and more - go on and on. These treasures exemplify the generous goodness of God and His desire to draw us closer to Him. It reminds me of what St. Paul writes to the Romans:

*“O, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!”*

One precious treasure of our Catholic Faith is the Blessed Mother, whom we honor on several feast days throughout the year. Another treasure is something she gave to us, her children, in order to keep us tethered to her motherly heart. And that gift is the Holy Rosary.

## The Traditional Rosary

Many Catholics are familiar with the traditional Rosary. Some grew up praying the Rosary with their family, while others adopted the practice in their adult year.

The Blessed Mother urged Catholics to pray the Rosary every day in the Fatima apparition in 1917. She has pleaded with us to pray the Rosary in other apparitions, too. Why? Because Our Lady desires to be our Mother and ask for her assistance. And when we do ask for her prayers and intercession, she goes directly to her Son, Jesus, who refuses her nothing (John 2: 1-12).

## Rosary Variations Draw Us Closer to the Lord

In addition to the traditional Rosary, there are other prayers we can say on traditional Rosary beads. Each draws us closer to the Lord in a unique way.

The most popular is probably the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, which Jesus gave to Saint Faustina in the 1930's. Catholics typically pray this chaplet at 3:00 p.m., which commemorates the death of our Lord, the hour of mercy.

Listed below are a few of the many Rosary variations.



Perhaps one will become a new treasure in your prayer routine.

## Chaplet of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

To begin, make the Sign of the Cross five times in veneration of Jesus' five holy wounds (two hands, two feet, and His side).

*On the large beads, pray:* Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for those who seek refuge in you.

*On the small beads, pray:* Holy Mother, save us through your Immaculate Heart's flame of love.

*At the end, repeat the Glory Be three times.*

## Rosary to the Holy Wounds

This devotion honors the five wounds of Our Lord. The prayers were composed by Jesus and given to Sr. Mary Martha of the Monastery of the Visitation of Chambery.

Many promises are attached to this devotion.

*Pray the following on the Crucifix and first three beads:*

- O Jesus, Divine Redeemer, be merciful to us and to the whole world. Amen.

- Strong God, holy God, immortal God, have mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.

- Grace and mercy, O My Jesus, during present dangers; cover us with Your Precious Blood. Amen.

- Eternal Father, grant us

mercy through the Blood of Jesus Christ, Your only Son; grant us mercy, we beseech You. Amen, amen, amen.

*On the large beads, pray:* Eternal Father,

I offer the wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

*R:* To heal the wounds of our souls.

*On the small beads, pray:* My Jesus, pardon and mercy.

*R:* Through the merits of Your Holy Wounds.

*Concluding prayer:* Lord Jesus, Man of Sorrows, we have meditated upon your suffering. We have considered those wounds we know and those unknown to us, and with confidence in your mercy, we ask you to grant us a greater purity of heart, true humility, and courage in our own suffering. We place ourselves and our loved ones into your holy wounds, trusting in your compassion and healing grace. Make us holy and worthy to call you Lord. Amen.

## Rosary in honor of St. Joseph

The rosary in honor of St. Joseph is a beautiful way to ask for this holy saint's intercession. This prayer is said like a traditional Rosary, but instead of the Hail Mary, pray the Hail Holy Joseph:

*Hail, Holy Joseph, spouse of the ever virgin Mary, foster father of God the Son, whom*

*our Father in Heaven chose to be head of the Holy Family, pray us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

## Joyful Mysteries:

- The annunciation of Joseph
- The birth of Jesus
- The circumcision and naming of Jesus
- The presentation of Jesus in the Temple

- The finding of the child Jesus in the Temple.

## Sorrowful Mysteries:

- Joseph's spouse Mary is found to be with child
- The journey to Bethlehem
- Joseph flees to Egypt with Mary and Jesus

- Jesus is lost in Jerusalem
- The death of Joseph

## Glorious Mysteries:

- The glorification of St. Joseph

- Saint Joseph, patron of the Universal Church

- Saint Joseph, protector of families

- Saint Joseph, patron of the sick and suffering

- Saint Joseph, patron of a holy death.

## Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows

This chaplet requires the use of special beads that are in groups of seven, but it follows the traditional Rosary format: Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

*The seven groups remember*

*the seven sorrows of Our Lady:*

1. The prophecy of Simeon
2. The flight into Egypt
3. The loss of the Child Jesus in the Temple
4. Mary meets Jesus carrying His cross
5. The Crucifixion
6. Mary receives the body of Jesus from the Cross
7. The body of Jesus is placed in the tomb

*To conclude the Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows, pray:*

*V:* Pray for us, O most sorrowful Virgin.

*R:* That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.

Lord Jesus, we now implore, both for the present and for the hour of our death, the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. Thy Mother, whose holy soul was pierced at the time of Thy passion by a sword of grief. Grant us this favor, O Savior of the world, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

Do you pray the Rosary or a variation of the Rosary? Has it drawn you closer to Jesus through Mary?

*Sarah Damm is a Catholic wife and mother of six children, living in Minnesota. She loves her faith, coffee, and good books. you can find out more about her at sarahdamm.com.*

**The feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be celebrated on Saturday, December 12**

**Devotions and venerations to Our Lady of Guadalupe can be found on page 17**

## Cenla Pregnancy Center donates to two Lake Charles centers

The Cenla Pregnancy Center of Alexandria has decided to send a \$5,000 check to each of two pregnancy centers in Lake Charles.

Two recent hurricanes, Laura and Delta, ravaged Lake Charles, resulting in a significant financial hit for the two centers there.

The CPC Board of Trustees reacted to this news with a decision to make these contributions to ABC Pregnancy Resource Center and New Life Counseling. The \$5,000 checks amount to roughly 40 percent of the monthly budgets for each of the two centers, according to CPC executive director Claire Lemoine.

“This is just a small gift to help them get through this tough time,” said Ed Tarpley, vice president of the CPC board. “Our job, whether it be in southwest Louisiana or Cenla, is to promote life and save lives.

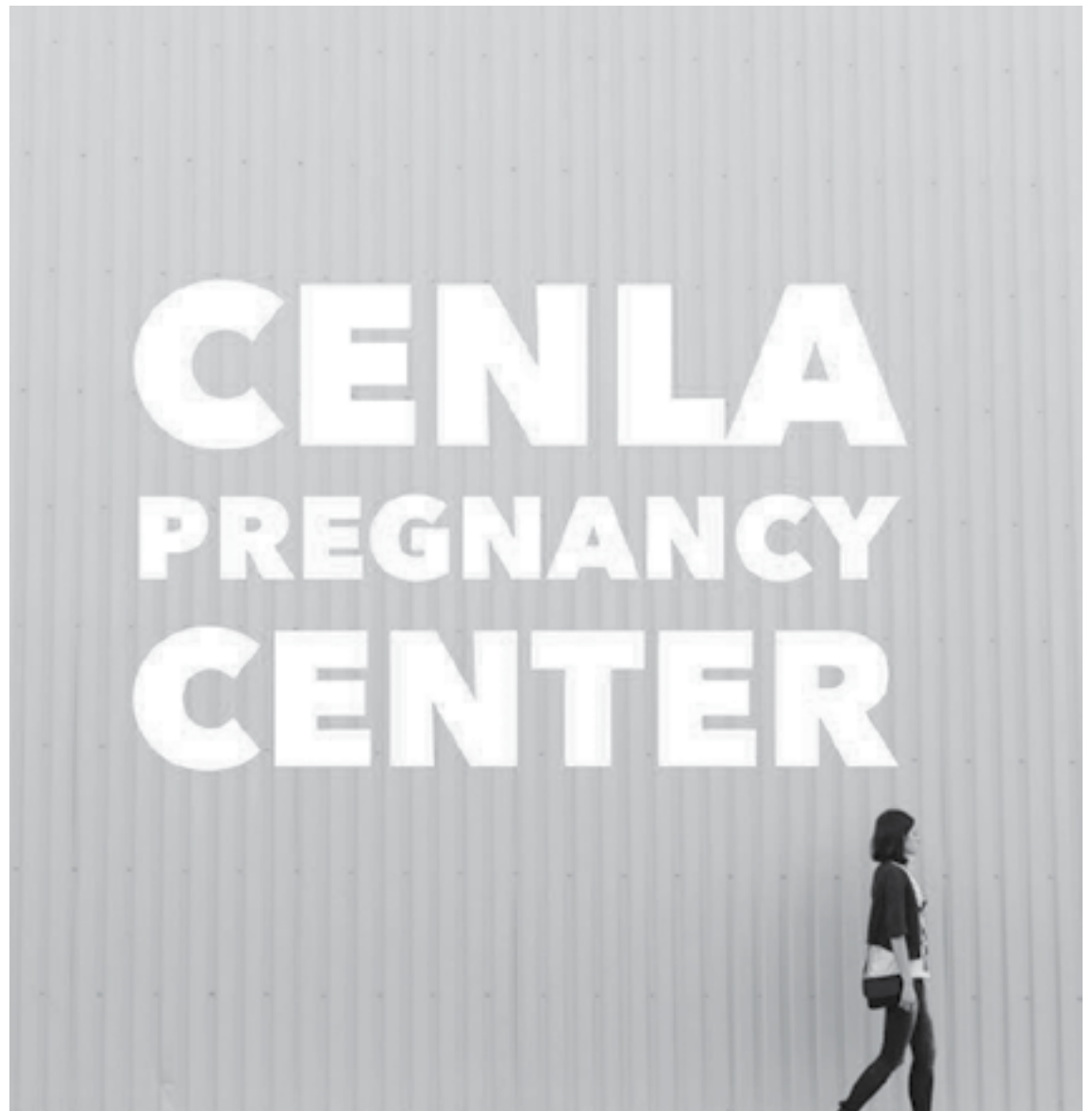
Lake Charles was devastated, and we’re trying to do our part to help in a small way.”

The Cenla Pregnancy Center, located at 1254 MacArthur Drive in Alexandria, is one of approximately 30 pregnancy centers across Louisiana. It is a nonprofit association and its mission is to provide unique support to help women understand their options during unexpected pregnancy.

For more information, send an email to [info@cenlapc.com](mailto:info@cenlapc.com) or call 318-314-3061.

**Solemnity of the  
Immaculate  
Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary**

**Tuesday  
December 8**



### DIocese OF ALEXANDRIA OFFICE OF LIFE AND JUSTICE

The Diocese of Alexandria Office of Life and Justice now provides a list of social services available while the Corona Virus measures are in effect.

The Office of Life and Justice lists this directory as a public service. It does not recommend, support, or guarantee any of the mentioned services.

Each consumer should be vigilant and ask questions of each provider, including costs (if any), confidentiality of medical or personal information, and to whom they can address complaints if necessary.

Please visit [www.diocesalex.org/latest-news/social-services-information/](http://www.diocesalex.org/latest-news/social-services-information/) for a directory of local services.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED:

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 first call the Louisiana Child Abuse / Neglect Hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437) and/or your local law enforcement agency.

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

### 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.diocesalex.org/our-faith/healing](http://www.diocesalex.org/our-faith/healing)** (visit [www.diocesalex.org](http://www.diocesalex.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.”



## 20 ways to support your church during the COVID-19 pandemic



Each of us is probably longing for certain things from our pre-pandemic life. But there is one thing that just about everyone in our diocesan community has in common - going to church together!

And, we're all concerned about helping our churches survive, and even thrive, during this pivotal time.

So, we've rounded up 20 creative ways that you can help your church thrive in the pandemic. Here are some ideas:

### 1. Remember the Sabbath:

According to a recent study, almost one third of churchgoers have dropped out during the pandemic. If you're growing weary of virtual Sunday mornings alone, consider organizing a watch party on Zoom or making it a special time for your immediate family to gather together.

**2. Put your giving on autopilot:** Without the collection basket, it can be easy to forget to mail or go online to give to your church. Contact your church office to set up automatic recurring payments for your regular donations to your church.

**3. Volunteer your skills:** Do you have accounting or business skills? Ask if you can help your

church manage their expenses. Are you good at administration? See if you can fill in when they are short-staffed. Handy with social media? Volunteer to make regular posts. Think of the gifts you have and ask if there's a way that you can put them to use for the good of your parish community.

### 4. Stay connected:

Encourage your own group of friends from your normal Mass time to continue meeting up virtually for coffee and donuts after you attend virtual Mass. Or meet somewhere outdoors, following safety guidelines. Create a contact list, and reach out by phone, email, or text to stay in touch and pray for each other.

### 5. Build your prayer habit:

Use this time to intentionally build your own prayer routine, establishing times and rhythms throughout the day to feed your soul. This way, when we can fully gather again as church communities, you will be better able to serve your community.

**6. Invite new people to virtual church:** Reach out via phone or text to people you know who aren't attending church anywhere, and ask them if they'd like to watch along with

you. Make sure they have the correct links and times to watch.

**7. Invest in tech:** Does your parish need an investment in technical equipment? Or training to serve your church community virtually? Contact your pastor to see if you can contribute financially or offer to invest your time if you have technical skills.

**8. Try something new:** If you've never done a virtual Bible study before, now's your opportunity! Use a tool like the online Bible through the USCCB website or the YouVersion Bible app to keep your friends from church connected. Invite them to do a study online and learn together each week.

**9. Coordinate a communication plan:** Does your church have a structure in place to ensure people are connected to a group who will care for each other's needs? If not, call your church leaders to ask if you can help assign each member with a list of people to regularly contact so that no one feels isolated.

See SUPPORT, page 11

## DONATE: Hurricane Relief

There are several ways you can help those who are recovering from the damage caused by Hurricane Laura.

You can donate to the Diocese of Alexandria by visiting the Diocese website, and clicking on the "Donate" button at the very top of the homepage. Choose "Hurricane Recovery" and type in the amount you'd like to donate.

Or you can also donate to Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. Complete and submit the form at [www.catholiccharitiesacadian.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesacadian.org)

You can also fulfill items from the Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana's Amazon wishlist, found at <https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3GD6RRQS0UKWP>.

Lastly, you can always mail a check, payable to Diocese of Alexandria, note on the check that it is for the Hurricane Relief Fund and send to Diocese of Alexandria, P.O. Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306.

A Seminary Burse is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men to the priesthood.

Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to the Chancery Office, Post Office Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306-0417.

-- Very Reverend Stephen Scott Chemino, Chairman

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A list of the October 2020 donations will be published in the next issue of the Church Today.

## Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, religious, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help us respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

A prayer card with this prayer can be downloaded and printed from [foryourvocation.org](http://foryourvocation.org)

## Parish Spotlight: St. Margaret Church, Boyce Established 1936

St. Margaret's history dates back to the early days of St. Francis Xavier Church in Alexandria. Under Fr. Robert Doogan, a mission station was established at a small landing on the Red River called Cotile. Under Fr. Leonard Menard a new frame chapel was built in the Cotile community.

New levee construction was begun after the 1927 flood and when completed in 1932, Fr. Robert Maure moved the chapel to its present site. Local tradition says that each piece of the old church was numbered during the dismantling to ease the reconstruction on the new site. The church was reassembled on land donated by Mrs. Irene Boyce Wettlemark. The first mass was offered by Fr. Maure on Easter Sunday, 1936.

In that same year, Bishop Daniel Desmond invited the Dominican Fathers to work in the Boyce/Cotile area. Fr. George



ST. MARGARET CHURCH, BOYCE.

Scanlon, O.P., a young former army chaplain, was assigned to the parish. Through his efforts, two Dominican sisters came to teach catechism and help in the work of the missions. In time, as the load grew heavier, another

Dominican, Fr. Carpentier, was sent to assist Fr. Scanlon. Shortly after his arrival, Fr. Scanlon was killed in a car accident as he was returning from an Army chaplains' meeting.

In the years that followed, new

missions were established in Flatwoods, Marco, Monet Ferry, Gorum and Emmanuel. All of these communities are located in an area of 2,100 square miles in the piney woods of the Kisatchie Forest. In 1954, Bishop Charles P. Greco founded the Marian Sisters of Dominican Catechists as a diocesan congregation devoted to catechetical instruction.

In the early 1960's, the interior of St. Margaret's Church was renovated. In 1968, a contract was signed for the construction of a new church which was dedicated by Bishop Greco on October 21, 1969.

Missions:  
St. Cyril Chapel  
Flatwoods, LA

St. Margaret Mary Chapel,  
Gorum, LA

*Continue to support your church parish*

Though you are not obligated to attend Mass during this time, please consider continuing to support your church parish with your tithing and donations.

Church parishes rely on these funds to continue to operate and provide programs and services to the faithful in our communities.


The address to each church parish can be found on the diocese website at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org). Your pastor will appreciate your continued support.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us.

P.O. Box 5624  
Alexandria, LA 71307

3306 Giamanco Street

Phone: (318) 473-8751  
Fax: (318) 473-4045  
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*My soul rejoices in my God.*

Isaiah 61: 10  
Responsorial Psalm for  
December 13

*See the Catholic Trivia answer on page 18.*

# SUPPORT

(continued from pg. 9)

used by kids for school work in the coming months of online learning.

hurting together can bring new purpose and life back to your church.

benevolence ministry is most likely overwhelmed with needs. Reach out to see if you can help with your community contacts, resources, or volunteer time for your parish's food pantry or other needs.

**international church:** There are brothers and sisters struggling in areas around the world. An investment, whether financial or prayer, in their churches and ministries can go a long way in helping to continue the fight against poverty as well as spread the Gospel message around the world.

**10. Remember the lonely:** Don't forget to check on people in your congregation who live on their own, whether they are elderly or young single members. Stop by their home for a chat from a safe distance outside, or send a hand-written card.

**12. Keep the peace:** Consider how you can meditate, pray, and sow peace within your self and among your church family, especially concerning social and political issues. Read and meditate on Romans 12:18 and 14:19.

**14. Care for other churches:** While your church may be facing its own challenges, there are probably other churches in your area who are facing even greater struggles. Help your church find out about churches in the state who are hardest hit by both the COVID-19 pandemic as well as any hurricanes, and reach out to see how you can help.

**16. Support your choir and worship team:** Contact your music ministry leaders to see what they need to thrive remotely. Ask them to build a special Spotify playlist of prayerful songs that you and others can share on social media, or other ways you can share their gifts.

**18. Ask:** Simply ask your pastor or ministry leaders at your church what they could use to make their job easier. Prayer? Technical help? A cup of coffee dropped off in the afternoon? Show your support in ways that your parish staff can feel loved and supported.

**11. Donate your tablet:** Consider donating or buying a tablet for someone who doesn't have a device, helping them to attend worship services virtually. Added bonus - these can be

**13. Look outward:** Talk with your pastor and members of the pastoral committee at your church about how you and other members can partner with local ministries who may be overwhelmed. Serving the

**15. Invest in your benevolence ministry:** With so many people struggling or unemployed, your church's

**17. Give to the**

**19. Shift your mindset:** It's helpful to remember that the church is who we are, not just a place we go. In this unfamiliar season, pray about how we can all shift our thinking from church-consumers to church-givers who serve as the hands and feet of Jesus to those around us.

**20. Pray:** Very simply, pray. Pray and remember that the Lord is working all things together for good.



## THE CHRIST

by Marcus Descant

Our Father in heaven,  
sent His only son  
Down to earth,  
for everyone.

His name was Jesus  
a savior for all,  
He came to save His people  
after the fall.

His love for mankind  
was ever so great,  
We know then  
It was never too late.

His suffering on earth  
caused Him much pain,  
By allowing this  
He knew we had much to gain.

His body and blood  
was then given to us,  
Because of this love  
we have someone to trust.

lizdescant@gmail.com  
Advertisement paid for by Marcus Descant

## 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. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.



If it is possible,  
so far as  
it depends  
on you,  
live peaceably  
with all.

// Romans 12: 18

## ? Catholic Trivia ?

Advent wreaths are comprised of four candles.  
What do each of the candles represent?

# Life in Christ



**CHRISTMAS IN OCTOBER. (ABOVE AND RIGHT)** St. Frances Cabrini Church was unable to host their annual Cabrini Fest due to COVID-19 restrictions, but hosted a paint party instead. Over 60 people attended Friday, Oct. 30 at St. Frances Cabrini's gym to paint door hangers for Christmas.



**ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL ALL SAINTS.** Students from St. Anthony of Padua School in Bunkie celebrated All Saints' Day with their annual Procession of the Saints. Each child picked their favorite saint to represent and shared information and stories with their peers.



**ALL SOULS' DAY MASS.** Father Paul LaPalme celebrated All Souls Day Mass at Alexandria Memorial Gardens on Monday, Nov. 2. He was assisted by Deacon Paul Sunderhaus. There were 74 people in attendance for this traditional celebration of the Mass, in which we remember and pray for all those who have gone before us.

Youth of the Diocese continue to learn, support each other, and celebrate their communities!  
See below or visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org) to see more pictures of life in the Diocese.



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL MASS.** Sacred Heart School has virtual Mass every Friday in the classroom as classes alternate weekly at church. Mrs. Claudia Crabtree's 2B class is shown to the left participating in virtual Mass using their "My Mass Book."

**SACRED HEART SCHOOL SCIENCE CLASS.** The norm in the classrooms today is that students are masked for any "class family" activity. They also have the option to be behind a desk shield for seat work.

Shown to the right are Brandon [redacted], Payton [redacted], Dalton [redacted], and Jack [redacted] as they work on candy corn catapults for their science project. We appreciate our faculty, staff, and students who have worked hard to remain motivated and in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL LIVING ROSARY. (ABOVE)** Sacred Heart School held its annual Living Rosary on Oct. 2. It was offered for world peace, a cure for the COVID-19 pandemic, and for those who have been affected by the pandemic. Organized by Sr. Cristina Angelini, Religion teacher, and Mrs. Karen Moreau, the living rosary featured students placed in their "class families" who were all masked for the outdoor prayer service.

**SACRED HEART SCHOOL CHEER CAPTAINS. (LEFT)** Sacred Heart School congratulates 8th grader Cheer Captain Lucy [redacted] and 8th grader Cheer Co-captain Madalyn [redacted]! SHS is looking forward to a sports program, hopefully in the near future!

## Awesome Advent resources

It absolutely goes without saying that this year - in new and different ways than ever before - we are on the search for hope and for light. As we keep on slogging through the year that just won't quit, we may have looked just far enough ahead to note that we are mere weeks away from the dawn of the Advent season - the season of light, preparing our hearts to welcome the Christ Child.

Rather than put anyone into a panic over the list of things to do, I hope to offer a handful of ideas worth indulging in, in an effort to nourish our legitimately weary hearts.

Traditional Christmas parties, family gatherings, travel, and pageants - even Masses - are necessarily going to take on a new look. Where the demand for going and doing decreases, we pilgrims find ourselves in a window of significant possibility.

### Advent resources worth your prayer time

Maybe, like me, you are approaching the Church's new year with a voracious appetite to be fueled up. In many respects, I wonder if our experience of preparation and celebration might not take on a simpler appearance for the changes that have come about in the midst of the ongoing pandemic? And if we might not be richer for it?

In hopes that that might be the case, I've put together a list of Advent resources that are worth your prayer time.

#### Daily readings

##### / devotionals: Maranatha

The 2020 Advent devotional offers a daily guide through the story of our Savior, Jesus. Through Scripture, stories, and journaling questions, you'll be invited to enter into guided prayer.

The attributes of Jesus you'll find emphasized each week include The Incarnation, Messiah, Ministry, Shepherd, Cross, Healer, Evangelization, Way.

#### Daily Readings

You can find the daily readings on all kinds of apps, on the USCCB website, or in missals like Magnificat and Give Us This Day. Following along with the readings of the day serves to enrich the Nativity story behind



### Maranatha // Come, our Lord! //

the Sunday readings alone.

#### Feast Days and Rituals

December is jam-packed with feast days to help prepare for the coming of the infant Jesus!

**Saint Nicholas Day, December 6**

Saint Nick's Day is an excellent opportunity to capitalize on the holiness of the season instead of/in addition to the story of Santa. Whether with your roommates, spouse, or children, everyone loves the fun of little treats in their shoes!

#### Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8

Gift yourself with a quiet hour to attend Mass in honor of Our Lady's conception.

#### Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12

Celebrate Mary's apparition to Juan Diego in Mexico. Learn about the beautiful imagery Mary left as a sign to create a space to worship God.

#### Saint Lucia Day, December 13

I was first introduced to Saint Lucia day in my memories of the American Girl's series. Traditions to celebrate Saint Lucy abound, including early morning candles and warm bread!

#### Opportunities

##### Eat dinner by candlelight //

Let candles at evening or Sunday meals remind all of your senses about the coming of the Light of the World.

*Have an Advent Sunday ritual //* An out-of-the-ordinary tea party/dessert is a really fun way to set apart Advent Sundays.

*Write letters //* Christmas cards will certainly take on a different appearance this year, perhaps it could be a good time to write a few real letters to those who you have not had the chance to see recently.

##### Support a favorite charity //

Like the wise men who wishes to give meaningful gifts to the Christ Child, spend some time in prayer asking God who might appreciate a meaningful gift that you can offer.

*Go caroling //* An outdoor tradition in making a joyful noise! Groups don't have to be large to spread a lot of cheer.

*Read //* There are an abundance of Advent books for adults and children alike. Often, I gravitate toward the simple truth and illustrations of classic children's stories to add to whatever preparation I am pursuing.

*Enjoy the sounds of the season //* Tune in to a virtual concert on TV, on the radio, or via Zoom! Advent is a season of

joyful anticipation. With theaters and music halls in flux this year, it should make for a great year to enjoy from your living room.

#### Hands-on

*Advent wreaths //* Whether you make your own or have an annual favorite, the Advent wreath is a beautiful and simple

way to make the coming of Emmanuel this season.

*Advent calendars //* Most notably this is a tradition children enjoy, but it's not just for kids! Advent calendars can be decorative, delicious, and/or spiritual in practice. For the DIYer's, creating your own might be a fun challenge as well.

*Creche //* Set up a nativity scene in stages. For instance, the Magi travel to get to the manger; the baby Jesus doesn't arrive in the manger until Christmas Day!

*Candles //* Advent wreath candles can be synonymous with candles, but the truth is that in this season of darkness (in the northern hemisphere), any and all light serves as a reminder of the hope of the coming Messiah and the darkness that "does not overcome it" (John 1:5).

#### Prepare your heart

While we prepare to embark on this holy season in an unfamiliar way, would that we do it with wonder and excitement that it's due!

If 2020 has revealed anything to us, it is that what once felt predictable and safe can change in an instant, inviting responses of creativity - one of my favorite attributes of Our Lord. May it be so.

Maranatha, come!

### A Christmas Carol poem by G.K. Chesterton

*The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap  
His hair was like a light.  
(O weary, weary were the world,  
But here is all aright.)*

*The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast  
His hair was like a star.  
(O stern and cunning are the kings,  
But here the true hearts are.)*

*The Christ Child lay on Mary's heart,  
His hair was like a fire.  
(O weary, weary is the world,  
But here the world's desire.)*

*The Christ-child stood on Mary's knee,  
His hair was like a crown,  
And all the flowers looked up at Him,  
And all the stars looked down.*

# Mass is being offered online and on radio

Mass will be offered online on Facebook, YouTube, or on the radio at the following churches. Please visit the links listed below.

Our diocesan church parishes have been working hard to provide spiritual resources to the people of our diocese. Please continue to visit your church parish's Facebook page (you do not need a Facebook account, just click "not now" and view the content) or the diocesan website for updates, and pray for our diocesan priests and parish staff as they continue their ministry. Please inquire directly to your church parish concerning their requirements and guidelines for attending Mass in-person.

Thank you, parish secretaries and staff members for your hard work and dedication to continue to bring the message of Christ to all homes in our diocese!

## Sunday

- 7:00 a.m. Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville KZLG-FM 95.5
- 8:00 a.m. Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville - KLIL-FM 92.1  
St. Rita Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube  
Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth on Facebook or YouTube
- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (time varies) Radio Maria | [www.radiomaria.us](http://www.radiomaria.us) (click the play button) or tune in on your radio in Alexandria on station 580 AM or in Natchitoches on station 89.7 AM
- 9:00 a.m. St. Francis de Sales, Echo on Facebook  
St. Francis Xavier Cathedral on Facebook  
St. Edward the Confessor, Tallulah on Facebook
- 10:00 a.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville on Facebook or YouTube  
Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen on Facebook  
St. Patrick Church, Ferriday on Facebook
- 10:30 a.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube  
St. Augustine Church, Isle Brevelle on Facebook  
Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth on Facebook or YouTube
- 11:00 a.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube
- 11:30 a.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville on Facebook or YouTube

## Monday - Friday

- 7:00 a.m. Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth on Facebook or YouTube (Monday - Thursday only)
- 8:00 a.m. Radio Maria | [www.radiomaria.us](http://www.radiomaria.us) (click the play button) or tune in on your radio in Alexandria on station 580 AM or in Natchitoches on station 89.7 AM
- 8:30 a.m. Immaculate Heart of Mary, Tioga on Facebook or YouTube
- 9:00 a.m. Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine on Facebook  
St. Edward the Confessor, Tallulah on Facebook (Wednesdays), (9:30 a.m. talk - aka "The CU Catecast"; Wednesdays)
- 5:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube  
St. Edward the Confessor, Tallulah on Facebook (Fridays)

## Saturday

- 8:00 a.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube
- 9:00 a.m. (Latin) St. Edward the Confessor, Tallulah on Facebook
- 4:00 p.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube  
Radio Maria | [www.radiomaria.us](http://www.radiomaria.us) (click the play button) or tune in on your radio in Alexandria on station 580 AM or in Natchitoches on station 89.7 AM
- 5:00 p.m. St. Michael the Archangel, Leesville on Facebook

### View recorded Mass on YouTube:

St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria  
and St. Anthony of Padua Church, Natchitoches

Please continue to visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org) for updated livestream Mass times, as well as additional updates from the Diocese of Alexandria.

Other online Mass and service times are listed on the USCCB website.

*For ever  
I will sing  
the  
goodness  
of the Lord.*

Psalm 89:2 |  
Responsorial Psalm  
for December 20

## Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Thursday, December 3, 6:00 p.m.

St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria

Tuesday, December 15, 6:00 pm

Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception,  
Natchitoches (church hall)

Face masks MUST be worn during the entire session. The session typically lasts 2.5 to 3 hours. Seating will be one (1) person per table (spouses may sit together). A maximum of ONLY 15 adults will be allowed to attend each session. Minors are not allowed to attend because of the adult content of the videos and discussions.

To register, go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org).  
For more information, call 318-445-6424, ext. 213.



## Upcoming Retreats

All ACTS Retreats have been cancelled until further notice.

Please contact individual retreat organizers for more information about rescheduling.

Information will be updated periodically on the Diocese of Alexandria website as well.

A list of ACTS Retreat dates can be found at [www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/](http://www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/).

### Mass honoring St. Kateri Tekakwitha

**MASS OF THANKSGIVING.** Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Mass of Thanksgiving for St. Kateri Tekakwitha at St. Anne Chapel in Robeline on Friday, October 23 at 6:00 p.m. This mass is held annually in commemoration of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first Native American to be recognized as a saint by the Catholic Church. She was canonized on October 21, 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. Pictured left to right: Mike Durio, Robert Barbry, director of the Tekakwitha Conference Center, Scotty Durio, Bishop Robert Marshall, William Hammond, Ken Taffi, Mary Ann Reddoch.



Lord, if your people need me, I will not refuse the work. Your will be done.  
*// Martin of Tours*

.....

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# Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there,  
and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.

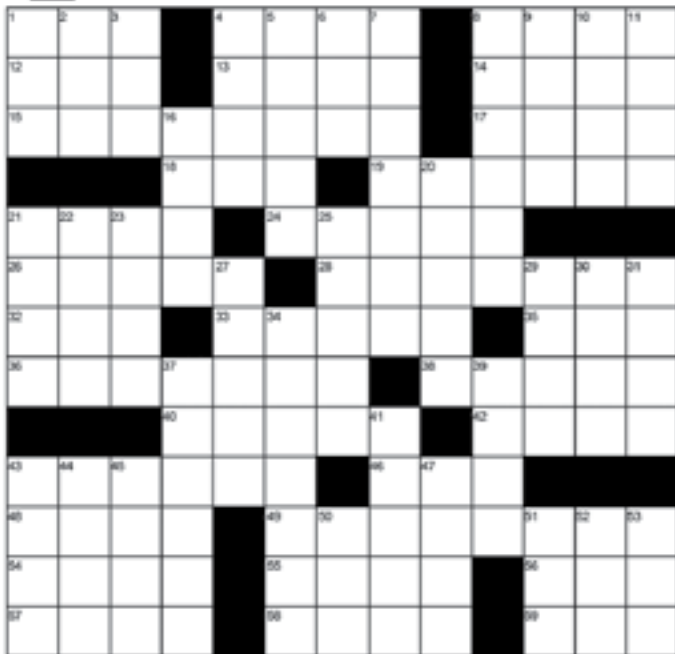
Amen.

## Devotions and venerations to Our Lady of Guadalupe

- A Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe is available on many websites. The novena is recited daily in the National Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Makati City.
- The shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe is the most visited Catholic pilgrimage destination in the world. Yearly, between 18 - 20 million pilgrims visit the Basilica, making it Christianity's most visited sanctuary.
- The Virgin of Guadalupe is considered the Patroness of Mexico and the Continental Americas; she is also venerated by Native Americans, on the account of the devotion calling for the conversion of the Americas. Replicas of the tilma can be found in thousands of churches throughout the world, and numerous parishes bear her name.
- Due to a claim that her black girdle indicates pregnancy on the image, the Blessed Virgin Mary, under this title is popularly invoked as Patroness of the Unborn and a common image for the Pro-Life movement.

## The Cross Word

December 6 and 13, 2020



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Readings: Is 40:1-5, 9-11; Mk 1:1-8 and Is 61:1-2a, 10-11; Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### ACROSS

- 1 Sliced
- 4 Jesus said it can corrupt treasures
- 8 When God \_\_\_ heaven and earth
- 12 Not amateur
- 13 Decorative needle case
- 14 Dialect for "against"
- 15 "The Christ"
- 17 The \_\_\_ God
- 18 Poem
- 19 Icons
- 21 Fresh
- 24 Grant an extension

- 26 Lion of \_\_\_
- 28 "Whoever is not for us is \_\_\_ us"
- 32 Also known as (abbr.)
- 33 Deep anxiety
- 35 Arrival time
- 36 Ouster
- 38 Ties sandal
- 40 Drive off
- 42 Brink
- 43 Discuss again
- 46 Peter's mother-in-law was
- 48 "The \_\_\_ One"
- 49 Homer's war saga
- 54 Glen
- 55 Goose cry

- 56 "We believe in \_\_\_ God"
- 57 "The \_\_\_ Begotten Son"
- 58 Church part
- 59 New York City

### DOWN

- 1 Certified public accountant
- 2 Holds ashes
- 3 Also
- 4 Tear
- 5 Speak
- 6 Take to court
- 7 Glad \_\_\_
- 8 African nation
- 9 Awe-struck
- 10 Dangerous
- 11 Don't justify means
- 16 Hawkeye state
- 20 Butcher's products
- 21 Open
- 22 Slang for nuclear
- 23 Swiss-like cheese
- 25 John the Evangelist symbol
- 27 \_\_\_ and have-nots
- 29 Brainy persons
- 30 Male deer
- 31 Package sealer
- 34 Flammable liquid
- 37 Verbally
- 39 William \_\_\_
- 41 Legal claims to property
- 43 Make over
- 44 Flat
- 45 Shall be made low
- 47 Enjoy
- 50 Skip
- 51 Charged particle
- 52 One of these
- 53 Advent month

*All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.*

Psalm 98: 3 | Responsorial Psalm for December 25

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PUBLISHED ARTICLES: "The Worn-Out Worker Rule Revisited," "Significant Work-Related Limitations of Function Under §12.05C," "Questionable Retirement and the Small Business Owner," "Crisis of Confidence: The Inadequacies of Vocational Evidence Presented at Social Security Disability Hearings," "An Unsolved Mess: Analyzing the Social Security Administration's Methodology for Identifying Occupations and Job Numbers."

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## Theology of Home II: The spiritual art of homemaking

By Lindsay Schlegel  
*Blessed is She Ministry*

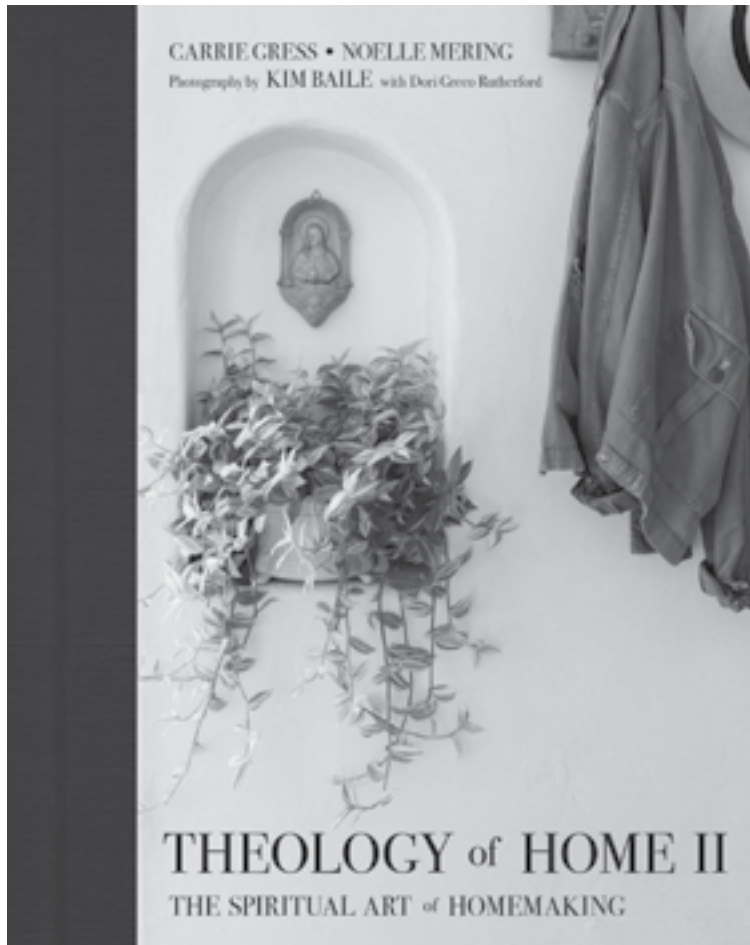
When my oldest son turned two, I made him a three-car train cake out of banana breads baked in different-sized rectangular loaf pans. I even carved out a space for a Teddy Graham conductor in the engine.

As I was crafting it, my husband and dad made good-natured jests on my progress. Once they were in another room, working on their own project, my mom leaned in to reassure me. It was okay if they didn't get it, she told me. This was what mattered.

What she meant was not that I had made something Pinterest-worthy (I don't think we knew what Pinterest was then), but that I had spent time and effort to create something that would make our son smile and that he would eat with delight. Something that would make him feel special. Something that told him - in quick bread - how much I love him. Even if he wouldn't remember this particular celebration later in life, that act of love was going to make a positive impact on him.

### The Spiritual Nature of Home

My mom's sentiment that day eight years ago came back to me as I reflected on *Theology of Home II: The Spiritual Art of Homemaking* by Carrie Gress and Noelle Mering, with



photography by Kim Baile with Dori Greco Rutherford. What I was gifting my son with that train cake was an expression of what it is to be home. And now I can see that there was a powerful spiritual element at work in it that too often flies under the radar.

As I read this book, it occurred to me (editor that I am), that the text could have been printed as a typical 6-by-9-inch paperback, all black and white. Instead, it's this gorgeous hardcover, filled with intentional, beautiful photography that begs you to slow down and appreciate the work in your hands. There's a wonderful interplay between the words and the images, so that the form and content together convey more deeply the message of this book.

That message is the far-

reaching value of generously inviting those around us to fully belonging in our homes.

### Realizing the importance of Home

This year, most of us have spent a lot more time in our homes than we used to. Remember when toilet paper was hard to find? One theory I'd read to explain that suggested that many people were so used to spending the majority of time outside their homes, they didn't know how much their families or roommates used in a week!

When toilet paper isn't an issue, there is something lovely, familiar, and comforting about being truly at home. We all long for it in one way or another. But perhaps we aren't all aware of how to build that, how to engage in what the authors call the "spiritual art" of making a home.

There is something lovely, familiar, and comforting about being truly at home. But perhaps we aren't all aware of how to build that, how to engage in the "spiritual art" of making a home.

This book doesn't give specifics on how to do that. You won't find interior design tips or recipes for brunch. That's because this book isn't a how-to; it's a why.

*Why do we need to recover this art of homemaking? What purpose does it serve?*

First, we need to expand the idea of what "homemaking" is. It's cooking and cleaning and folding laundry, yes, but more importantly, it's the heart behind all that. It's about being fruitful and receptive, generous and loving. It's about making space in our lives to serve others, especially those closest to us.

The seemingly mundane tasks of homemaking have gotten a bad rap in recent decades as mindless drudgery. But when we add a spirit of service and love for others back into the equation, we start to see a celebration of what it is to be feminine, what it is to discover and live a variety of vocations.

### Home is for Everyone

As I read, I wondered which of my friends I would share this book with. It resonated with me because it is written from a Catholic point of view and often makes reference to marriage and biological motherhood, all elements of my vocation. But

I also appreciated the ways in which it reflects on spiritual motherhood and the positive ripple effect of homemaking that extends beyond one's family.

Homemaking is about welcoming, loving, knowing, and seeing the other within the home, whether that's all day, everyday, or in the time that's not spent working outside the home. When the authors speak from experience, they don't make known whose voice is being expressed. And when they invite other women to share their stories, they are women with a variety of experiences.

Ultimately, this book isn't about specifics; rather, it's a rallying cry to start valuing what's worth valuing in our lives, and so properly ordering all the rest.

*Have you read this book yet? What was your biggest takeaway?*

*Lindsay Schlegel is a daughter of God who seeks to encourage, inspire, and lift up the contemporary woman to be all she was created to be. She's author of Don't Forget to Say Thank You: And Other Parenting Lessons That Brought Me Closer to God, as well as shorter nonfiction and fiction pieces, both online and in print. With joy, she speaks about recognizing God's voice and living the truth there-in.*

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?? Catholic Trivia Answer ??

The candles are lit in that order.  
Advent wreath symbolize hope, love, joy, and peace.  
are recognized for four virtues. The candles on the  
**Answer:** The four Sundays preceding Christmas

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# Together, apart for the holidays

*By Maureen Pratt  
Catholic News Service*

My mother lives in one of the nation's hot spots for COVID-19 activity, and my own health issues prevent me from traveling, so this holiday season will find us celebrating "together, but apart." It's not an ideal situation, but in these uncertain, unprecedented times, we are wise to be realistic and keep hope that soon, we will be able to visit "as of old."

No doubt others are reaching the same conclusion: Their visits with loved ones are also not possible this year, whether by traveling or even by gathering with groups of nearby family and friends. Still, the reality that drives our choices to be more safe than potentially sorry cannot overshadow the "reason for the season."

Holiday time is synonymous with togetherness, the fellowship that reflects and fosters the love



God has for us and the precious gift of his son Jesus Christ that is the focus of our faith. Looking

past our disappointment at being apart, there are creative ways that we can foster togetherness despite geographic distance -- even ones that do not rely on high tech talent!

Perhaps we cannot physically be in the same room with our relatives, but we can use time and intentional planning to our benefit. With or without a videoconferencing app, we can unite with loved ones far and near by scheduling certain events at the same time for everyone.

Meals, tree trimming, baking and cooking, gift exchanging and package opening -- these and other holiday traditions can be "shared" by our doing them at the same time as others living elsewhere.

Rotating activities can foster engagement from everyone. Recipe or photo exchanges, or

shipping batches of Christmas cookies and other treats brings in sensory sharing, including taste and smell -- nothing like the scent of holiday cookies to trigger smiles and warmth!

Crafts shared or long-held treasured bring visual remembrance to another's home. (That teddy bear you have cherished can travel when you cannot and provide joy to a new generation of family members.)

Faith-based opportunities to connect abound. Scattered family members can read the same Scripture verses and share their reflections online or over the phone. Common prayer times can unite individuals in like-purpose. Armchair travel, quite popular today, can be targeted to visiting sacred sites online and sharing experiences from each family member's perspective.

Worshipping can also bring families together in faith. Earlier this year, I "shared" Mass with friends in Oregon. A priest we know on the East Coast streamed Mass, and my friends and I tuned in for the "live" feed, even texting "Peace be with you" at the appropriate moment in the liturgy.

Then, it felt a little strange to worship in this way, but now, so many of us have "attended" Mass online regularly that the sense of common fellowship seems much more cohesive.

Intentionally synchronizing activities is not the perfect answer to distanced holidays, but there are blessings to be found.

In the absence of physical gatherings, we don't have to worry about not having enough space, chairs, parking spots, or dishes. We can widen our circle, and perhaps, reach out to those who would otherwise be entirely isolated from any festivities.

Intentional planning with all family and friends in mind helps us to reorder our priorities to what really matters to us. So, we might better appreciate each other and foster encouragement and love, rather than the "same old" arguments or patterns of disagreements.

Being apart this holiday season will undoubtedly be difficult. But by planning with care, we can enjoy a new kind of togetherness and continue to nurture our relationships with faith and love.

*Maureen Pratt writes for the Catholic News Service column "Living Well."*



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## Praying with scripture for beginners

By Patrick Neve  
Guest Contributor

### We don't know what the Bible is

I'm sure you've been in this place before: you're sitting and listening to your youth minister or priest talk about how important prayer is. You nod because you agree, but you're also anxious because you know when you go home to try and pray, you don't know where to start!

I've been there. I also need to confess that I've been that youth minister who talks about prayer without teaching where to start. The starting place is simple, but it's also intimidating. The starting point of prayer is Scripture.

Just like the world began with God's voice, so does our prayer. We need to read scripture to pray. What usually stands in our way is not the Bible itself, but the way we look at it. (That's called a "hermeneutic" for all my smarty-pants friends out there). We tend to think of the Bible as a rulebook or textbook. At first, these make sense. The Bible tells us how to live well and tells us about who Jesus is and how He lived. But "rulebook" or "textbook" isn't good enough to describe what the Bible is. It really is a storybook. Rulebooks and textbooks give us the plain facts of what to do and what to know. If God was only concerned with what we did and what we knew on Earth,



He would've given us one of those. But instead, He inspired the Gospel writers to write the story of human lives, particularly Christ's life, in all the glory, suffering, and drama.

You see, stories teach us things in roundabout ways. "The Tortoise and the Hare" teaches us a lesson about perseverance, even though on the surface it just looks like a story about the recreational exploits of woodland creatures. We figure out the moral "slow and steady wins the race" before it is explicitly told. Similarly, through the stories in

Scripture, we figure out who God is (and meet Him) long before we see Him face to face in Heaven.

Scripture exists for us to know Jesus personally. That's the purpose of prayer, as well. When we take Scripture to prayer, we should read it one story at a time, entering into that story and letting our own lives reflect it. Focus deeply on the human element of God's work on Earth. Christ became incarnate to encounter people in the flesh. The Gospels are there for you to encounter Him in the flesh as well.

How to pray with a Bible

story

If you've been to a Vacation Bible School, you probably can think of a few Bible stories off the top of your head. Noah's Ark, The Prodigal Son, Balaam, and the Talking Donkey. (Yep, that last one is real.)

But even if you know a ton of Bible stories, it's still possible you've never prayed with one before. That's okay, I was in the exact same position. Once I let myself slow down when reading these stories, it started to open up who Christ is. We just need to go over it a few times, like a

carpenter sanding down wood.

The steps are super simple:

1. Read it once to get a lay of the land. (It helps to pause and mentally put the story in your own words.)

2. Read it again and look for a word or phrase that sticks out to you.

3. Read it one more time and focus on that word or phrase.

4. Spend time in silence and ask God why that word or phrase sticks out to you.

Example: The Rich Young Ruler

Let's take the story of the Rich Young Ruler (Luke 18: 18-23) for example.

First time through I want to get a lay of the land. It helps to focus on the nouns and verbs. (In this story, who does what and why?) Then think through the story as if you're going to retell it to someone else. Like this:

A rich young man comes up to Jesus and asks Him, "What good things do I need to do to go to Heaven?" Jesus answers, "Why do you ask me what is good? Only God is good. If you want to go to heaven, keep the commandments."

The young man says, "I have! What else should I do?" Jesus replies, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor. Then come, follow me." The man became sad and left, because he had many things.

When putting the story in

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*A note from the  
Catholic Schools Office*

Information and guidelines for schools regarding safety with COVID are always evolving, changing, and generally present a challenging situation for all businesses and individuals. We know that parents have many questions, and are working with our Catholic schools to best answer those questions.

Our Catholic schools have a long history of providing a top-quality Catholic education. We look forward to continuing that education in the school year to come. If you have any questions, we invite you to contact your school administration or the Office of Catholic Schools.

Thank you for your patience and prayers as decisions are made daily to best care for the youth of our diocese.

my own words, I have a few questions. Why did the rich young man approach Jesus in the first place? Why did Jesus answer the way He did? What was Jesus' attitude towards the man (stern, loving, angry, patient)?

Second time through, I take these questions with me. It helps to put myself in the story. The Gospels are written to help you encounter Christ, so enter into them as if you were there with Him. For some reason, the words, "come, follow me" are sticking out. So, I pause for a few moments and read again.

Third time through, I know what I'm looking for. The Lord wants me to focus on those words, "Come, follow me." So, I pause when I get to them and I sit in silence for a moment asking, "Lord, why these words?"

This third read-through is the most important. It's a springboard into contemplative prayer, the kind of prayer Theresa of Avila called, "a close sharing between friends." It's the point where God's word leaps off the page and into your life.

Only He can answer the question, "Why these words?" because He wrote them for you before you were born.

Over time, you may notice a pattern. For instance, one of my students kept seeing themes of fatherhood in our bible studies.

He said he felt God reminding him that He is his Father. Another kept seeing the word "believe." He said he felt God calling him to grow in faith.

If nothing sticks out, persevere. Sit in silence for a while longer and recognize God's presence. I can't promise you that you'll have a life-changing prayer experience the first time you do this, but I can promise you this: God wants to speak to you.

You just need to be still.

"Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Wait for the Lord." - Psalm 27: 14

Below, I've included some stories to get you started. Sometimes, it helps to pick a story based on its theme. Some stories repeat, so I listed them, but just pick one and focus on that writer's words.

Advent is a  
great time to practice  
Scripture reading.

Let's make  
our time count!

### ***The Big Stories***

#### **The Annunciation**

Luke 1: 16 - 38

#### **The Nativity of Jesus**

Matthew 1: 18-20;

Luke 2: 1-14;

John 1:1-5, 14-18

#### **The Baptism of the Lord**

Matthew 3: 13-17

#### **The Last Supper**

Matthew 2:20-31;

Mark 14: 22-31;

Luke 22:14-23;

John 13: 1-20

#### **The Crucifixion**

Matthew 27: 33-56;

Mark 15: 22-41;

Luke 23: 26-43;

John 19: 17-37

#### **The Resurrection**

Matthew 28: 1-10; Mark 16: 1-8;

Luke 24: 1-12; John 20: 1-18

#### **The Ascension**

Mark 16: 14-20; Luke 24: 50-53;

Acts 1: 6-11

#### **Pentecost**

Acts 2: 1-13

### ***Stories about***

#### ***God's power***

#### **Calming the Storm**

Mark 4:35-41

#### **Feeding of the 5,000**

Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:34-44;

Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15

#### **Wedding Feast at Cana**

John 2:1-11

### ***Stories about healing***

#### **Healing of the paralytic**

Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26

#### **Man with the withered hand**

Mark 3: 1-6

#### **Healing of Jarius' daughter +**

#### **Woman with the hemorrhage**

Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8: 40-56

#### **Healing the official's son**

John 4:46-54

#### **Healing a blind man**

John 9

#### **Healing the deaf man**

Mark 7: 31-36

#### **Healing the crippled woman**

Luke 12:10-17

#### **Healing the ten lepers**

Luke 17:11-19

#### **Raising of Lazarus**

John 11:1-44

### ***Stories about mercy***

#### **The woman at the well**

John 4:1-42

#### **Pardon of the sinful woman**

Luke 7:36-49

#### **The Good Shepherd**

John 10:1-18

#### **The Good Samaritan**

Luke 10: 25-37

#### **Prodigal Son**

Luke 15: 11-32

#### **The lost sheep**

Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:1-7

#### **The pharisee**

#### **and the tax collector**

Luke 18: 9-14

#### **Zacchaeus**

Luke 19: 1-10

### ***Stories about faith***

#### **Parable of the mustard seed**

Matthew 13:31-32

#### **Peter's confession**

Matthew 16:13-20; Luke 9:18-27

#### **Healing of a boy with a demon**

Matthew 17: 14-21;

Luke 9: 37-43

#### **The syrophenician women**

Mark 7: 24-30

### ***Stories about the***

#### ***kingdom of God***

#### **Parable of the sower**

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23;

Mark 4:1-8

#### **Who is the greatest**

#### **in the kingdom?**

Matthew 18:1-5

#### **The narrow door**

Luke 13: 22-30

#### **The banquet**

Luke 14: 15-24

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*Blessed are those who fear the Lord  
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Psalm 128: 1 | Responsorial Psalm for December 27

**#iGiveCatholic****- December 1**

The Diocese of Alexandria's Development Office is preparing to participate in the #iGiveCatholic Giving Day to be held on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020. This day is an opportunity for your parish, school, or ministry to engage with the public and raise money.

All 501(c)3 Catholic church parishes, schools, ministries, and other not-for-profit Catholic organizations affiliated with the Diocese of Alexandria are invited to participate.

For more information, contact Cole Churchman at [cchurchman@diocesealex.org](mailto:cchurchman@diocesealex.org).

**Christmas at the Nest****- December 1**

Join us for a drive-thru Christmas at the Nest this year at Holy Savior Menard Menard High School. This free community event will begin at 5:30 on Tuesday, Dec. 1 and end at 7:00 pm. The first 300 Pre-K thru 6th Grade children will receive a free t-shirt and Christmas goodies! There will be a contactless photo-op with Santa! At 7:30 p.m. our award-winning storyteller, Sylvia Davis will conduct an online "Story at Home" on that Holy Savior Menard Facebook page: [facebook.com/holysaviormenardhighschool](https://facebook.com/holysaviormenardhighschool)

**Holy Land Pilgrimage****- January 15 - 23, 2021**

Join us for a journey of a lifetime on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Scriptures will come alive as you visit Our Lord's homeland. It is an encounter that has changed the lives of many pilgrims, and it is an act of faith and prayer. Your spiritual director for this trip is Fr. John Wiltse, pastor of St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport. For more information, call 337-291-1933 or visit [www.holytravels.org/tour/stmaryscottonport/](http://www.holytravels.org/tour/stmaryscottonport/).

**All American Scholar Award deadline****- March 1, 2021**

The All American Scholar Award is granted to 35 graduating high school seniors. Each scholarship is worth \$1,000 and is designed to help offset tuition costs for young Catholic Life members. Applicants must be

**DIOCESAN BRIEFS**

seeking to attend an accredited college or university the fall semester immediately following their high school graduation.

A complete list of criteria and application forms may be downloaded at [www.cliu.com](http://www.cliu.com). For more information, please contact Megan Real in the Communications Department at 800-262-2548 or 210-828-9921, ext. 141 or email [branch@cliu.com](mailto:branch@cliu.com).

**NEW DATE - Pilgrimage to France - June 2-11, 2021**

The pilgrimage with Fr. Martin Laird to Lourdes, France has been rescheduled for June 2-11, 2021. In Lourdes, experience the Grotto and Way of the Cross, and visit the Basilica of St. Therese in Lisieux. In Paris, see Sacre Coeur and the Miraculous Medal Chapel, as well as cruise down the Seine River. Request more information by calling 337-291-1933 or visit [www.holytravels.org/materdolorosa](http://www.holytravels.org/materdolorosa).

**Prayer Line - Ongoing**

Mary, Mother of Jesus Church in Woodworth has a dedicated prayer line. One of our Prayer Companions will pray with you when you call or, privately, if you prefer, following your call. Anonymity and confidentiality are ensured and respected. Our desire is to pray with you for the gifts of hope, and asking for the continued mercy and love of Jesus Christ. The prayer line phone number is 318-625-9195.

**Maryhill Legacy Bricks now available!**

A great gifting opportunity! These beautiful, personalized, and engraved commemorative Maryhill Legacy Bricks make the perfect year round gift! These commemorative paver bricks will be installed and displayed at the entrance of the main chapel as a permanent legacy at Maryhill Renewal Center. To order

your Maryhill Legacy Brick, contact Deacon Luke White or order online at [www.diocesealex.org/maryhill-legacy-bricks/](http://www.diocesealex.org/maryhill-legacy-bricks/)

**Upcoming ACTS Retreats**

All ACTS Retreats have been cancelled until further notice. Please contact individual retreat organizers for more information about rescheduling.

Information will be updated periodically on the Diocese of Alexandria website as well. A list of ACTS retreat dates can be found at [www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/](http://www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/).

**Introducing two new Church Today columns****Student Spotlight:**

The Church Today would like to recognize young men and women across our diocese for their achievements in school and community life, may it be fine arts, hobbies, athletics, church, school, club and community service, who have been faithful in lifestyle and service, but who aren't always recognized. We don't know them like you do!

We are seeking nominations from priests, Youth Ministers, Directors of Religious Education and other church parish staff members, and teachers for "Student Spotlight:" Catholic teenagers and/or students in both Junior High Schools and Senior High Schools, both those attending our Catholic schools or those attending public schools.

If you know of a teen you'd like to recognize, please fill out the form, found on the Diocese website at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org). Help us to introduce some of our wonderful youth to the rest of our diocese!

Once we receive your submission, we'll contact you (the adult leader) to ensure that the youth nominated is a good fit to be featured in this Church Today spotlight.

**Stump the priest:**

As often as possible, we will publish 5-10 rapid fire Q&A's with one of our diocesan priests. If you have any questions about Catholicism that you'd like to see answered in the Church Today, please email them to [cterracina@diocesealex.org](mailto:cterracina@diocesealex.org).

**Visit [www.praymorenovenas.com](http://www.praymorenovenas.com) to join in praying the Coronavirus novena.**

Join in the Coronavirus novena at [www.praymorenovenas.com](http://www.praymorenovenas.com), praying for all who are affected, all who are sick suffering, for all those who work in the medical profession, and for those who have died as well as for their grieving family members.

**Church Today News Deadlines**

**Next issue:  
December 28  
Deadline for news:  
Thursday, Dec. 11**

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**8 a.m. Sunday Mass**

**7 a.m. Sunday Mass**

# December 2020

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>NOVEMBER <b>30</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL</p>	<p>DECEMBER <b>1</b></p> <p>Christmas at the Nest 5:30-7:00 pm Holy Savior Menard Central High School ALEXANDRIA</p> <p>#iGiveCatholic All day today</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIEKWE</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>VIRTUS St. Joseph Catholic Center, ALEXANDRIA 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTURCHIRA</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>SOLEMNITY of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Holy day of obligation)</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>FEAST of OUR LADY of GUADALUPE PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS</p>
<p><b>14</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>VIRTUS Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Church Hall NATCHITOCHEs 6:00 p.m.</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. RYAN</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY</p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE PRAY FOR MSGR. S. TESTA</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>The NATIVITY of the LORD CHRISTMAS DAY PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR MSGR. J. TIMMERMANS</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY of JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS</p>
<p><b>28</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. GUS VOLTZ</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE</p>	<p>JANUARY <b>1</b></p> <p>SOLEMNITY of MARY the HOLY MOTHER OF GOD (Holy day of obligation)</p> <p>NEW YEARS DAY PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>EPIPHANY of the LORD PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH</p>



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