

# CHURCH TODAY

Volume LII, No. 1

[www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org)

Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

January 25, 2021



## Meet the Diocesan staff

What exactly is the “Chancery” and who are the people who take care of the day-to-day goings on behind the scenes that keep the diocese operating? Meet the individuals whose ministry is to work at the St. Joseph Catholic Center to support the churches, schools and other ministries within the Diocese of Alexandria.

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#### March for Life to be virtual this year

For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home. This year, the pandemic and circumstances around the Capitol building made it impossible to hold the rally and march – read the story on page 2.

#### Catholic Schools Week: Jan. 31-Feb. 6

This year, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Alexandria began in a manner unlike at any other time in recent history. The pandemic certainly changed our lives and changed the way we conduct classrooms. See page 20 to learn how our Catholic schools are doing.

#### Ash Wednesday: nothing lasts forever, including this pandemic

Ash Wednesday reminds us that nothing lasts forever in this world, not material things and especially not us. The season of Lent is designed to separate us from “things” so we can focus on what is important – on our relationship with God. Read about it on page 6.

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CHURCH  
TODAY

Volume LII, No. 1  
January 25, 2021

P. O. Box 7417  
Alexandria, LA 71303  
churchtoday@diocesealex.org  
318-445-6424

Publisher:  
Most. Rev. Robert Marshall  
Publication Manager / Editor:  
Cari Terracina, ext. 255,  
cterracina@diocesealex.org  
Multimedia Manager / Advertising:  
Joan Ferguson, ext. 264;  
joanferguson@diocesealex.org  
Circulation: Sandi Tarver, ext. 209;  
starver@diocesealex.org

The CHURCH TODAY (USPS  
393-240) is published by the Catholic  
Diocese of Alexandria, once a  
month, free of charge to members of  
the parishes in the Diocese of  
Alexandria, Louisiana. Out of  
diocese subscriptions are \$20 a year.

The office is located at  
4400 Coliseum Blvd.,  
Alexandria, LA 71303.  
Periodicals postage paid at  
Alexandria, LA.

Postmaster:  
Send address changes to  
The CHURCH TODAY, P. O. Box  
7417, Alexandria, LA 71306

Website: www.diocesealex.org  
To receive a free subscription,  
call 318-445-6424, ext 255 or  
e-mail starver@diocesealex.org

## Heavy security in D.C., ongoing pandemic mean March for Life will be virtual

By Kurt Jensen  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — For the first time since 1974, when it first began, the message of the national March for Life to participants is: Stay home.

Like the satellite events connected to the annual National Mall rally and march to the Supreme Court, including the Rose Dinner, a youth conference and the Mass for Life, the rest of it will be online only Jan. 29.

March organizers had already hired a production company to make a livestreamed event possible in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and to enforce mask wearing and social distancing.

But the plan was still to have as large a live rally as could be arranged. Many of the bus caravans from the Midwest, long a staple of the event, were canceled last fall as a result of the pandemic, and the assault on the



**MARCH FOR LIFE.** Holy Savior Menard participates in March for Life in Washington, DC in January 2016.

U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 and threats of subsequent violence by domestic terrorist groups, as reported by the FBI, made security impossible.

“The protection of all of those who participate in the annual March, as well as the many law enforcement personnel and others who work tirelessly each year to ensure a safe and peaceful event, is a top priority of the March for Life,” Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Defense and Education Fund, said in a

statement issued late Jan. 15.

“In light of the fact that we are in the midst of a pandemic which may be peaking, and in view of the heightened pressures that law enforcement officers and others are currently facing in and around the Capitol ... the annual rally will take place virtually and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the march virtually.”

There will still be a small in-person presence. “We will invite

a small group of pro-life leaders from across the country to march this year,” Mancini said.

“These leaders will represent pro-life Americans everywhere who, each in their own unique ways, work to make abortion unthinkable and build a culture where every human life is valued and protected,” she added.

Marches in recent years had drawn at least 100,000 participants, and last year’s event, when President Donald Trump spoke at the rally, was believed to have had the largest attendance in its history. The smallest March for Life previous to this was in 1987 during a snowstorm, and drew an estimated 5,000.

The march is held on or near the anniversary of the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion on demand.

The National Park Service closed “core areas” of the National Mall Jan. 15. They will remain closed at least through Jan. 21.

## How to ‘bless the Lord’? / Sacrifice as substitute for Friday abstinence

**Q.** Please clarify something that I don’t understand when I am praying. In the Gloria at Sunday Mass, we say “We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you.” In Psalm 63, we pray, “I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands, calling on your name.” And in Psalm 103, we say, “Bless the Lord, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name!” My question is this: What does it mean for us to “bless the Lord”? How can we do that? (Indiana)

**A.** Your question makes sense: How can we, who have received all that we have from the Lord, bless God who possesses everything already? And the answer has to do with the Hebrew word for “bless.” It has the same root as the word for “kneel,” and it really means to “adore” God, to praise him for his magnificence and thank him for his abundant favors.

Psalm 103, for example, whose opening verse you quote, goes on to say: “Bless the Lord, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts, who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills... and crowns you with mercy and compassion, who fills your days with good things.”



## Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle  
Catholic News Service

When God blesses us, we are helped and strengthened and made better off than we were; but when we “bless” God, that adds nothing to God’s greatness but simply indicates our wholehearted gratitude for his divine favors.

**Q.** I understand that the prohibition against eating meat on Friday was lifted with the expectation that we would choose another penitential practice instead. If I don’t do an act of sacrifice and still eat meat on Friday, am I committing a sin? (Suffolk, Virginia)

**A.** To answer that question, we do best to go back to the statement issued by the bishops of the United States in 1966 when they lifted the mandatory obligation of Friday abstinence. (The church’s law concerning this is a matter that can be determined by each national bishops’

conference for Catholics of that region.)

In that 1966 statement, the U.S. bishops said: “Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason, we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that comes with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ” (No. 23). The use of the words “urge” and “freely” seem to me to be clear evidence that the obligation is not one binding under pain of sin. That conviction is further strengthened by a later section of this same document, which says, “We emphasize that our people are henceforth free from the obligation traditionally binding under pain of sin in what pertains to Friday abstinence” (No. 25)

Despite the lifting of the mandate, a fair number of Catholics continue to abstain from meat on Fridays, and that is surely consistent with the 1966 statement’s recommendation:

“Among the works of voluntary self-denial and personal penance which we especially commend to our people for the future observance of Friday, even though we hereby terminate the traditional law of abstinence binding under pain of sin... we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat. We do so in the hope that the Catholic community will ordinarily continue to abstain from meat by free choice as formerly we did in obedience to church law” (No. 24).

Among the other ways of voluntary sacrifice recommended by the 1966 statement are “doing volunteer work in hospitals, visiting the sick, serving the needs of the age and the lonely, instructing the young in the faith” (No. 27).

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

# Cardinal Gregory prays for all who died of COVID-19

By Richard Szczepanowski  
Catholic News Service



**MEMORIAL SERVICE.** The U.S. Capitol is seen reflected at the reflecting pool at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington Jan. 19, 2021, after President-elect Joe Biden hosted a memorial honoring those who died from the coronavirus disease. The 400 lights along the pool represent the 400,000 who have died from COVID-19 in the United States. (CNS photo/Callaghan O'Hare, Reuters)

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Saying the nation "reverently pauses in supplication to remember and to pray for the many thousands of people who have died from the coronavirus during this past year," Washington Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory offered the invocation at a pre-inauguration memorial service Jan. 19 to honor and remember the more than 400,000 Americans who have succumbed to COVID-19.

"We turn to the Lord of all to receive these, our sisters and brothers, into eternal peace and to comfort all of those who grieve the loss of a loved one," Cardinal Gregory said in his invocation at the memorial service, attended by President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. "Let us, with one heart, commend those who have died from this virus and all of their loved ones to the providential care of the One who is the ultimate source of peace, unity and concord."

The memorial service -- held the day before the presidential inauguration -- included prayer, music and a lighting of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool with 400 lights in honor of lives lost in the pandemic.

"To heal we must remember," President-elect Biden said just prior to the lighting. "It's hard sometimes to remember, but that's how we heal. It is important to do that as a nation. Between sundown and dusk let us shine the lights along the pool to remember all the lives we have lost."

Cardinal Gregory said the gathering was a time to "pray for those who have died and the families and loved ones that they left behind ... not as strangers or disinterested persons, but as fellow citizens who share some limited portion of their grief and sorrow."

In his invocation, the cardinal said the coronavirus has left Americans with "a sobering awareness that we are all united in the sorrow that we recognize today."

"Our sorrow unites us to one another as a single people with compassionate hearts," the cardinal said. "May our prayer strengthen our awareness of our common humanity and our national unity at a time when harmony is a balm that seeks to comfort and strengthen us as a single people facing a common threat that is no respecter of age, race, culture or gender."

In his prayer, Cardinal Gregory also remembered "the countless families and relatives who had to surrender their loved ones without the comfort and the consolation of a familiar funeral ritual according to their religious traditions or selection" because of quarantining and other strict preventative measures to slow the spread of COVID 19.

"That privation only added

to the sadness engendered by the death of a friend, a relative, or a colleague," he said.

"May our prayer this evening serve as a small expression of our national desire to comfort and strengthen those who have endured the loss of a loved one to this pandemic, and may it be a resounding gesture of gratitude for all those who have cared for the victims of this virus and their loved ones," Cardinal Gregory prayed.

Along with the Lincoln Memorial, hundreds of towns, cities, tribes, landmarks and communities across the United States were expected to participate in the event. Iconic buildings, including the Empire State Building in New York City and the Space Needle in Seattle, were illuminated. Other

locations participating in the memorial included Wilmington, Delaware; Oakland, California; Miami; Atlanta; Chicago; Dearborn, Michigan; Las Vegas; Philadelphia; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Charleston, South Carolina; Houston; tribal lands throughout the country; and others.

"We gather tonight, a nation in mourning, to pay tribute to lives that were lost," Harris said. "For many months we have grieved by ourselves. Tonight we grieve and begin healing together. ... The American people are united in spirit."

She added that "my abiding hope, my abiding prayer, is that we emerge from this ordeal with a new wisdom: to cherish simple moments, to imagine new possibilities and to open our

hearts just a little bit more to one another."

In addition to Cardinal Gregory and the incoming president and vice president, participants at the Lincoln Memorial event included Grammy Award-winning gospel singer Yolanda Adams, who sang "Hallelujah." Lori Marie Key, a nurse from Michigan who gained national attention when her singing to her patients became an Internet sensation, sang "Amazing Grace."

During the memorial, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception tolled its largest bell, the Blessed Virgin Mary Bell, 400 times. A statement from the National Shrine noted that the 3.6-ton bell rang every five seconds for about 20 minutes. Each toll of the bell represented 1,000 lives lost to the coronavirus pandemic in the United States.

Prior to the memorial ceremony, Tony Allen, chief executive officer of the Presidential Inaugural Committee, said the event was an opportunity to "pay tribute to those we have lost -- and their families -- and (to) come together to unite our country, contain this virus, and rebuild our nation."

The memorial ceremony was held on the eve of Biden's inauguration and was televised live across the nation and livestreamed on various social media platforms.

As of Jan. 19, nearly 24.2 million Americans have contracted COVID-19 with 400,103 coronavirus-related deaths. In the past two weeks, an average 3,286 Americans have died each day from the virus.

*Teach me your ways, O Lord.*  
Psalm 25: 4 | Responsorial Psalm for January 24

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## Meet the staff of the St. Joseph Catholic Center

The St. Joseph Catholic Center is the central location for the Diocese of Alexandria, and where work happens everyday to support the churches, schools and other ministries of the diocese.

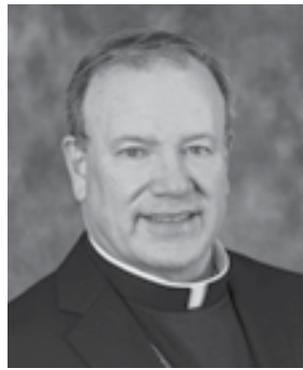
### The Chancery

A diocesan chancery is the branch of administration which handles all written documents used in the official government of a Catholic diocese. For the correspondence, registration, and care of the archives, the chancery is a necessary element of administration in every diocese.

In the Diocese of Alexandria, the Chancery consists of the Office of the Bishop, the Vicar General, the Chancellor and the Moderator of the Curia along with their administrative assistants.

The vicar general by virtue of office is the bishop's agent in administration, acting as second-in-command for diocesan executive matters. The Chancellor is the chief record-keeper for the diocese. The chancellor keeps the official archives of the diocese and as a notary, certifies documents.

The moderator of the curia, under the authority of the bishop, coordinates and oversees those who hold offices and minister in diocesan administration. He must be a priest. The office has been variously described as equivalent to



**Most Rev.  
Robert W. Marshall  
Bishop of Alexandria**



**Deborah Deorosan  
Executive Secretary  
to the Bishop**



**Rev. Scott Chemino, VG  
Vicar General**



**Deborah Beaudoin  
Exec. Secretary to the Vicar  
General and Chancellor**



**Rev. Chad Partain  
Chancellor**



**Rev. M. Craig Scott  
Moderator of the Curia**

a chief operating officer (COO). The Moderator of the Curia oversees Human Resources and personnel, and the general daily operation of the chancery and buildings.

### The Tribunal

As the judicial arm of the bishop, a diocesan tribunal cooperates in his ministry, namely, "the salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law of the Church" (canon 1752). The Tribunal's purpose is to fulfill the canonical responsibilities relative to petitions for declarations of nullity of marriage and

other canonical duties as outlined in the Code of Canon Law. The tribunal is led by the Judicial Vicar, an officer of the diocese who has ordinary power to judge cases in the diocesan ecclesiastical court. Working with the judicial vicar through these cases are the Ecclesiastical Judge and the Defender of the Bond. The Moderator of the Tribunal is the chief notary of the diocese's court.

### The Office of Vocations

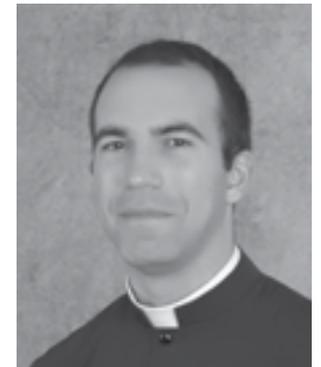
The Office of Vocations is commissioned to reach out to those who may be interested in pursuing priesthood or the religious life and to minister to those who have already made that decision. It is tasked to encourage, support and inform the men and women in the diocesan community as they discern the call of the Lord in their lives.



**Rev. Peter Faulk  
Judicial Vicar**



**Rev. Taylor Reynolds  
Ecclesiastical Judge**



**Rev. Luke Lafleur  
Director of Vocations**



**Rev. James Ferguson  
Defender of the Bond**



**Patricia Thomas  
Moderator of the Tribunal**

### The Office of the Diaconate

In the Catholic Church, the diaconate is the first of three ranks in ordained ministry. Deacons preparing for the priesthood are transitional deacons. Those not planning to be ordained priests are permanent deacons and are ordained to a life-long ministry of service. The Diocese of Alexandria is blessed with 18 active deacons and 13 men in diaconate formation.



**Lee Kneipp, PhD  
Clinical Psychologist  
/Assessor**



**Kathy Cole  
Transcriptionist  
/Receptionist**



**Deacon Richard Mitchell  
Director of the Diaconate  
Program**

### Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

**Tuesday, February 2, 6:00 p.m.**

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

**Thursday, February 18, 6:00 p.m.**

Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches

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.

*Praise the Lord,  
who heals the brokenhearted.*

Psalm 147: 3 | Responsorial Psalm for February 7

**The Business Office**

The Business Office for the Diocese of Alexandria is responsible for parish and school financial reporting, accounting functions, IT infrastructure, purchasing, risk management, and property and casualty insurance and in the Diocese of Alexandria, handles employee benefits.



**David Brook**  
Chief Financial Officer

**The Catholic Schools Office**

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Alexandria ministers to the religious and academic needs of the community by administering and supervising the Catholic School System as it fulfills its primary goal of teaching and modeling the Catholic Faith. The Catholic School



**Thomas Roque, Sr.**  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

System provides a sound academic education that addresses the individual needs of the students as completely as possible.

The Office of Child Nutrition oversees the operation of the school breakfast and lunch program and all ancillary activities in accordance with federally mandated procedures and programs for child nutrition.

**Development Office**

The Office of Development oversees the Bishop's Annual Diocesan Appeal, ongoing grantwriting and other stewardship programs that provide funding for the operation of Diocesan ministries. It also works to provide funding for the care of the Diocese's retired priests, seminarians and for other programs and events.

The staff of the Office of Development are also involved in developing stewardship programs for the parishes and other ministries of the diocese.

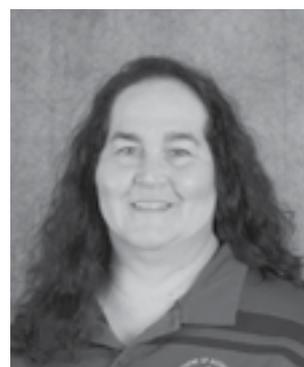
Sandi Tarver is also involved in coordinating special events such as ordinations.



**Lucy Pearson**  
Chief Accountant



**Sylvia Davis**  
Administrative Assistant



**Kelly Hatcher**  
Executive Secretary



**Janet Burgess**  
Director of Child Nutrition



**Cole Churchman**  
Director of Development



**Olivia Malone**  
Employee Benefits



**Samuella White**  
Admin. Sec. Child Nutrition



**Sandi Tarver**  
Coordinator Annual Diocesan Appeal

**Communications Office**

The Office of Communications performs necessary duties to advance the mission and vision of evangelization; continuing formation; communicating the activities of the diocese through print, internet, social media, visual media and other commonly used commercial media. The Church Today newspaper is published from the Communications Office.



**Joan Ferguson**  
Multimedia Manager



**Cari Terracina**  
Publications Manager and Dir. of Steubenville South

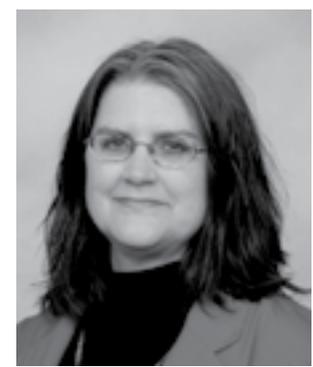
**Steubenville South**

The Steubenville Youth Conferences, an outreach of Franciscan University, are a series of 25 conferences across North America that

help teens encounter the love of Christ. Steubenville South, held in Alexandria, was the first such conference established in 1995 and draws thousands of youth every summer for a three-day encounter with Jesus.

**Safe Environment**

In 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) responded to the clergy sexual abuse problem by issuing the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (the Charter). The Charter requires that all dioceses institute "safe environment training and education for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others" These programs seek to prevent child abuse by educating ministers, parents, children, and those who work or volunteer with children. The Office of Safe Environment oversees all aspects of this program within the Diocese of Alexandria – including training, background checking and annual audits.



**Pamela Delrie**  
Coordinator for the Office of Safe Environment

**HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for February 2021**

**Violence against women -**

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.



**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/).

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:28-29

[lizdescant@gmail.com](mailto:lizdescant@gmail.com)  
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## Ash Wednesday reminds us that nothing lasts forever

*The following is an excerpt from one of Bishop Robert Marshall's past homilies:*

When I was pastor of a church in rural West Tennessee, a tornado destroyed the mobile home where one of our families – a mom and two teenagers – lived. Along with other parishioners, I visited the family on the afternoon after the tornado. Marveling that they had all survived unharmed, we spent the day trying to locate and salvage their belongings. Only one wall of the home was still standing – and what was left of their home – as well as everything that had been inside was now scattered all over the nearby soy bean field. Most of their belongings – dishes, furniture, lamps – you name it – was broken and mixed in with the rubble. Everything that wasn't ruined by the wind had been damaged by the rain. This family wasn't wealthy. Everything they owned had been in that little home – or in their car that had been parked outside and was destroyed when one wall of the house crushed it. In this rural area, there had been no sirens or warnings. The family was safely in their beds one minute and dazed, confused and homeless the next.

I think of that experience – of trying to help this family find anything they could recognize from their former life – I think

of that experience when I hear severe weather warnings. And I think of it when I see the news coverage of the disasters that have struck our world in recent years – hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, even house fires. You can be safe and secure one minute and in a matter of seconds, everything you own, everything that you worked so hard for, can be gone – washed away, or blown away, or crushed, or reduced to ashes.

That's what Ash Wednesday and the Season of Lent are meant to bring to our minds. We surround ourselves with things – the latest fashions or valuable antiques, technology or sentimental items or just the things that we use and rely upon each day. But Ash Wednesday reminds us that those things will not last. Ultimately, they are of no more value than ashes. They will pass away – in a natural disaster or just from ordinary wear and tear. Nothing lasts forever in this world – even us, especially us. That's the other thing that Ash Wednesday brings to mind. Like the belongings we hold on to, like the homes we live in, like the palm branches of last year that have become our ashes this year – we too will pass away. Our life in this world is temporary – only our soul is immortal. This season of Lent is designed to separate us from the things of this world in order to focus on

what is important – on the only thing that is important – on our relationship with God. Through the practices of Lent – prayer, fasting and almsgiving – we are invited to rely less upon the things that make us comfortable and more upon the one who comforts us. We spend so much time trying to fill our lives with activity, with prosperity, with the things that we think will give us joy. In Lent, we are called to separate ourselves from all of that in order to recognize that true joy will only be found in God. This world can be entertaining and fascinating and frenetic. And this world can be calm and peaceful and soothing. But ultimately, this world cannot bring us anything that lasts. What is bright and shiny and new in this world will – in a matter of weeks or months or years or centuries – will one day be no more than ashes. As we receive ashes on Ash Wednesday – as we remind ourselves that the glory of this world is fleeting – may we recommit ourselves to God, to the only one who truly matters. May we invite Him once again into our hearts – to live with us, to love us, to change and transform us once again into His likeness. May the journey of Lent remind us that our true goal in this life is not material prosperity, but eternal salvation – the salvation offered only by Jesus Christ.

*For an up-to-date list of events for Lent, please visit: [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org)*

## For Ash Wednesday, Vatican asks priests to 'sprinkle' ashes on heads

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments asked priests to take special anti-COVID-19 precautions this year when distributing ashes on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, including sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads rather than using them to make a cross on people's foreheads.

The congregation's note on the "distribution of ashes in time of pandemic" was published on the congregation's website Jan. 12 and directs priests to say "the prayer for blessing the ashes" and then sprinkle "the ashes with holy water, without saying anything."

"Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' or 'Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.'"

"The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to

those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places," it said. "The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything."

The usual practice would be to repeat the formula — "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" — to each person as the ashes are sprinkled on the top of their head or rubbed onto their forehead.

Sprinkling ashes on the top of people's heads, rather than marking foreheads with ashes, is the customary practice at the Vatican and in Italy. Given the spread of the coronavirus, the practice has the advantage of not requiring the priest to touch multiple people.

The Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish and Portuguese versions of the note also specify that the mask should cover the priests' "nose and mouth."

**Lenten Regulations:** Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. For more frequently asked questions about Lent, visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

Those that are excused from fast and abstinence outside the age limits include the physically or mentally ill including individuals suffering from chronic illnesses such as diabetes. Also excluded are pregnant or nursing women. In all cases, common sense should prevail, and ill persons should not further jeopardize their health by fasting.

Martha Neil Anthony



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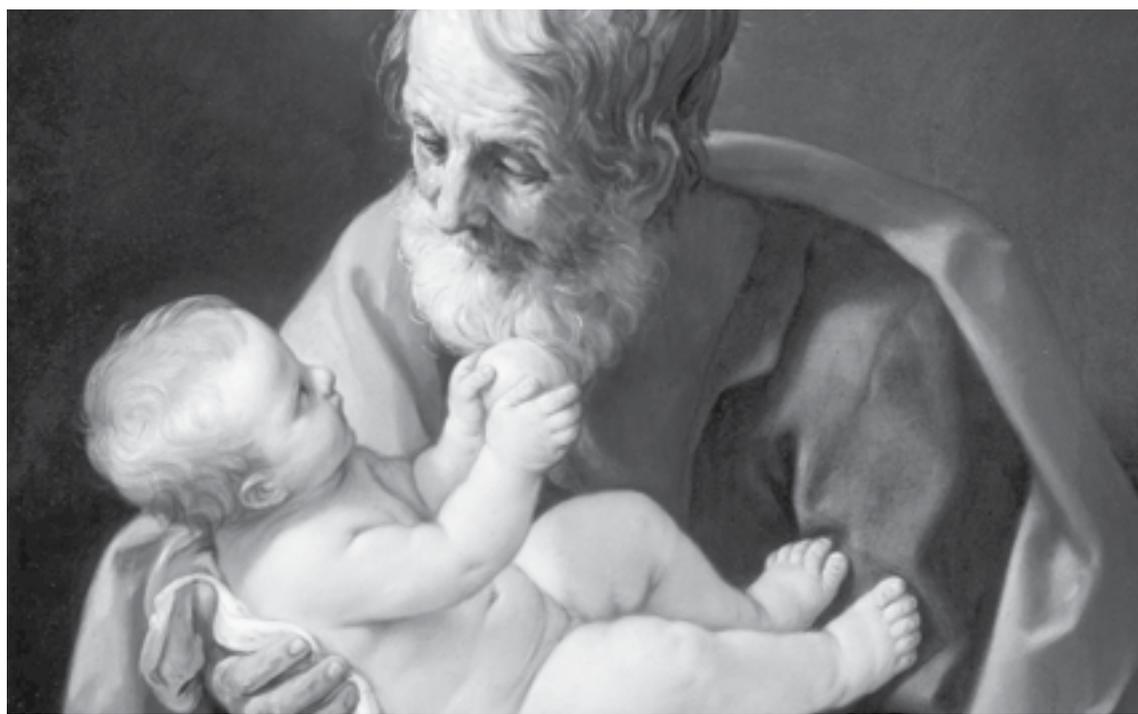
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*I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you will be with the joy of salvation.*

Psalm 32: 7 | Responsorial Psalm for February 14

# How to obtain a plenary indulgence observing the Year of St. Joseph

By Courtney Mares  
Catholic News Agency



Pope Francis has decreed a Year of St. Joseph in which Catholics will have the opportunity to obtain a special plenary indulgence.

Until December 2021, there are many new ways that Catholics can receive an indulgence, including entrusting their daily work to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker or reciting the rosary with their families.

These acts must be accompanied by sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the pope's intentions, the usual conditions to obtain any plenary indulgence.

## What is a Plenary Indulgence?

A plenary indulgence is an indulgence that can remove all the temporal punishment due to forgiven sin.

No one but God knows for certain when a plenary indulgence is actually gained, because only he knows whether a person's dispositions are adequate.

One norm for such dispositions is that "all attachment to sin, even venial sin, be absent." If these dispositions are in any way less than complete, the indulgence will only be partial.

The same provision applies to the three external conditions necessary to gain a plenary indulgence: sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. If these conditions are not satisfied, an otherwise plenary indulgence becomes only partial.

These conditions may be satisfied several days before or after the performance of the prescribed work, though preferably Communion should be received and the prayers offered for the Pope on the same day as the indulgenced work.

A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day.

Plenary indulgences remit all temporal punishment due to sin and must be accompanied by full detachment from sin.

According to the decree issued by the Apostolic Penitentiary on Dec. 8, there are 15 ways to receive an indulgence in the Year of St. Joseph:

- 1) Participate in a spiritual retreat for at least one day that includes a meditation on St. Joseph.
- 2) Pray for St. Joseph's intercession for the unemployed that they might find dignifying work.
- 3) Recite the Litany of St. Joseph for persecuted Christians. Byzantine Catholics have the option of an Akathist to St. Joseph.
- 4) Entrust one's daily work and activity to the protection of St. Joseph the Worker.
- 5) Follow St. Joseph's example in performing a corporal work of mercy. These include feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the imprisoned, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.
- 6) Perform one of the spiritual works of mercy, such as comforting the sorrowful, counseling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing the sinner, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving injuries, and praying for the living and the dead.
- 7) Pray the rosary together with one's family in order that "all Christian families may

be stimulated to recreate the same atmosphere of intimate communion, love and prayer that was in the Holy Family."

8) Engaged couples can also receive an indulgence from praying the rosary together.

9) Meditate for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, because St. Joseph "invites us to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will."

10) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on St. Joseph Sunday, the Sunday after Christmas in the Byzantine Catholic tradition.

11) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph on March 19 with an act of piety in honor of St. Joseph.

12) Pray an approved prayer to St. Joseph on the 19th of any month.

13) Honor Joseph with an act of piety or approved prayer on a Wednesday, the day traditionally dedicated to St. Joseph.

14) Pray to St. Joseph on the Feast of the Holy Family on Dec. 27.

15) Celebrate the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1 with an act of piety or prayer.

"All the faithful will thus have the opportunity to commit themselves, with prayers and good works, to obtain with the help of St. Joseph, head of the celestial Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that today afflict the contemporary world," the decree signed by Cardinal

Mauro Piacenza said.

The elderly, the sick, and the dying who are unable to leave their homes due to the coronavirus pandemic also have special permission to receive an indulgence by "offering with trust in God the pains and discomforts" of their lives with a prayer to St. Joseph, hope of the sick and patron of a happy death.

The decree noted that in this instance the person must have the intention of fulfilling, as soon as possible, the three usual conditions for an indulgence, as well as a detachment from sin.

The Apostolic Penitentiary permits any prayer to St. Joseph approved by the Church, mentioning in particular the "To you, O blessed Joseph" prayer composed by Pope Leo XIII:

"To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities."

"O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness."

"As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen."

**Pope Francis has declared the Year of St. Joseph Dec. 8, 2020 to Dec. 8, 2021**



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## COVID-19 current measures and vaccination information

On January 12, Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards extended his modified Phase 2 order, keeping COVID mitigation measures in place for another 28 days, and strongly recommended that all businesses in Louisiana move to remote work for as many employees as possible, as COVID cases and hospitalizations surge in Louisiana. The Governor's statewide mask mandate also stays in place.

"What we are seeing is a huge spike in COVID cases and hospitalizations across the state, putting us in a dangerous position where we are seeing major stress on our health care systems. These continued mitigation measures are completely necessary, but they only work if people follow them. Informal social gatherings are the biggest culprit right now and people need to understand that you should not be spending time with those outside of your household unless it is absolutely necessary," Gov. Edwards said. "We also strongly recommend that any employer who can should have their employees work from home whenever possible. We are very fortunate to live in a time when we have the technology to do many things from the safety of our own home that wouldn't have been possible just a few years ago. Let's take advantage of that technology in order to slow the spread.

"These are the things we were doing at the start of the pandemic. But as things have gone on, people have gotten more lax. It's time to buckle down with what we know works, and that's wearing masks, social distancing,

staying at home when you are ill and keeping to your own household."

Louisiana's COVID-19 restrictions include the below:

- All Louisianans are encouraged to avoid gatherings of individuals not part of their households.
- All businesses, private and public sectors, should have as many employees work from home as they can.
- All restaurants are limited to 50% of their indoor capacity. Restaurants should move as much dining outdoors as they can. Social distancing is required.
- For bars in parishes above 5% positivity, bars are closed to indoor sales and consumption but open for outdoor consumption at tables only and at 25% capacity, with a maximum of 50 people. Social distancing is required. Take-out and delivery will still be available.
- Retail businesses may open at 50% capacity, except for essential businesses, as defined by federal guidance from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.
- Gyms may be open at 50% of their capacity.
- Places of worship will remain at a maximum of 75% of their capacity or the number of people who can physically distance with at least six feet between each immediate household, whichever is less.
- Barber and beauty shops, and nail salons may open at 50% of their capacity.
- Movie theaters may open at 50% of their capacity.
- Indoor gatherings at event/receptions centers are limited to 25% capacity or up to 75 individuals.

• Outdoor gatherings at event/reception centers are limited to 25% capacity or up to 150 individuals when strict physical distancing is not possible.

• All sporting events will be capped at 25% capacity.

• Louisiana's statewide mask mandate is still in place.

For complete guidance on the current Phase 2, visit the Open Safely portal at [opensafely.la.gov](https://opensafely.la.gov).

The Louisiana Department of Health has announced a list of locations where those who meet the criteria may receive a Covid-19 vaccination. Individuals must currently meet one of these criteria in order to receive the vaccine:

- Persons ages 70 years or older in the community,
- Outpatient clinic providers and clinic staff,
- Urgent care clinic providers and staff,
- Community care clinic providers and staff,
- Behavioral health providers and staff,
- Dialysis providers and patients,
- Home health service providers and recipients,
- Dental providers and staff, and
- Students, residents, faculty and staff of allied health schools (if not already receiving vaccine or in a plan to receive from their respective schools)

Patients must contact a participating location and make an appointment at the location. Vaccinations currently are BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Do not arrive at a location without an appointment. The current full list of COVID-19 Vaccine Locations can be viewed at: <https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine-locations/>



**COVID-19 VACCINES ROLLOUT.** President Joe Biden received his second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at ChristianaCare Christiana Hospital in Newark, Del., Jan. 11, 2021. (CNS photo/Tom Brenner, Reuters)



**CHRISTUS ST. FRANCES CABRINI HOSPITAL.** Bishop Robert Marshall received the first dose of his COVID-19 vaccination at St. Frances Cabrini Hospital during the week following Christmas (pictured) and his second dose in January.

### 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.



**THIRD ORDER DOMINICANS.** Holy Savior Menard religion teacher and basketball coach, Jessica Sanders, (third from left) was received into the Lay Fraternity of St. Dominic, or Third Order Dominicans, on January 9, 2021.

## Menard teacher enters Dominican lay order

Jessica Sanders was received into the Lay Fraternity of St. Dominic on Saturday, Jan. 9, at Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic Church in Lafayette, LA. The Lay Fraternity, or Third Order Dominicans, is a community of lay men and women who devote themselves to the spirituality and charisms of the Dominican Order by prayer, community, study, and teaching in the secular world. In

the Mass of Reception, Jessica was officially received into the community and given her cross and rule of life, and it was the first major step for her as she continues her formation with the Third Order Dominicans in the coming years. The next big step will be making a 3-year promise to live the Rule of Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic, and the final step will

be the perpetual promise to live according to the rule of life of the community for the rest of her life. Jessica is currently a high school religion teacher and head girls basketball coach at Holy Savior Menard Central High School in Alexandria. Please continue to pray for more vocations to priesthood and religious life from our diocese.

### *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.

### *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)

## Seminarian Burses

### December 2020 Donations

<b>Knights of Columbus Council #9217</b> .....	\$25.00
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<b>In Memory of Mrs. Kathleen Voltz</b> .....	\$40.00
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<b>Mr. and Mrs. Deryl Guillory</b> .....	\$50.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Marion A. French</b>	
<b>In Memory of Mrs. Kathleen Voltz</b> .....	\$50.00
Father Gus Voltz Burse	
<b>Reverend Rickey Gremillion</b> .....	\$50.00
Deacon L. G. Deloach Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Schupbach</b> .....	\$50.00
Deacon Gary Schupbach Burse	
<b>Mr. Gene J. Hymel</b> .....	\$50.00
James Curley Burse	
<b>Mr. Gene J. Hymel</b> .....	\$50.00
Gus Voltz, Jr. Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Schupbach</b> .....	\$100.00
Monsignor Steve Testa Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Dan Vanderlick</b> .....	\$100.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
<b>Mrs. Barbara Rigby</b> .....	\$100.00
Leo P. Dobard Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. Miller</b> .....	\$200.00
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<b>Mr. Steve R. Gauthier</b> .....	\$200.00
Father Daniel O'Connor Burse	
<b>Mr. and Mrs. William Hayne</b>	
<b>In Memory of Mrs. Kathleen Voltz</b> .....	\$200.00
Gus Voltz, Jr. Burse	
<b>Deacon and Mrs. L. G. Deloach</b> .....	\$500.00
Father Rickey Gremillion Burse	
<b>Dr. Jeffrey J. Seiler, DDS</b> .....	\$1,000.00
Dr. Brenda V. Seiler Burse	
<b>Ms. Antonina M. Holmes</b> .....	\$5,000.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$7,790.00</b>

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

## Parish Spotlight: Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Mansura Established 1937

In the early 1930s, as the population of Mansura grew, Msgr. Michael Nothofer, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle Church in Mansura, made an appeal to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith for funds to erect a new church for the black Catholics of his parish. Fr. Richard Cushing of Boston, together with Dr. James Sullivan, answered the appeal and donated \$5000 towards the project of which \$4,500 was spent to erect a new woodframe church dedicated in honor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, patroness of all Louisiana. The altar was donated by Msgr. Nothofer's sister. The last \$500 was used to expand the small two-room schoolhouse that had been built by Fr. Anseuw in 1909.

In September of 1937, Bishop Daniel Desmond established the church as an independent parish and entrusted it to the care of the Holy Ghost Fathers. This congregation faithfully ministered in the Mansura parish until their



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR CHURCH, MANSURA.

withdrawal in November of 1969. From 1937 till 1944 the Holy Ghost Fathers tended the Mansura church while residing in Marksville. In the spring of 1944, Fr. Francis Walsh was appointed resident pastor of Prompt Succor. In 1945, Fr. Murnaghan secured the assistance of the Sisters of Divine Providence to help with the school. A new convent was built in 1945. In 1946 a new hall was added to the property. A rectory

was finally built around 1949-1950.

In 1959, Fr. Joseph Paga came to Mansura. He remained as pastor until 1967. It was during his administration that the new Cardinal Cushing School was built with the assistance of Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston in 1961. Fr. Martin Kirchbaum was the last Holy Ghost Father to serve as pastor, departing in November 1969.

He was replaced by beloved Fr. August Thompson who remained as pastor until 1985.

Under the care of Fr. Thompson, the school building was renovated and the church and rectory updated. All past bills were paid and the parish was placed on a more solid footing. In May 1973, a new multi-purpose building, the Uganda Center, was blessed and dedicated in memory of the Ugandan martyrs who died in Africa in 1886. In September, 1975, three Sisters of Divine Compassion came from New York and worked in the parish for three years. The school was forced to close in the 1970's but the life and work of the parish continued. The church was renovated in the 1990's. New pews and carpet were added and the sanctuary was redecorated in 2008.

Today, the church shares its pastor with St. Paul's and many of the activities are combined as this inclusive parish community continues to flourish in Avoyelles.

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.

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National Organization of Social Security Claimant Representatives,  
Legal Services for Purposes of Disability Committee (Louisiana State  
Bar Association).

PUBLISHED ARTICLES: "The Work-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  
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*Your ways,  
O Lord,  
are love  
and truth  
to those  
who keep  
your  
covenant.*

Psalm 25: 10  
Responsorial Psalm  
for February 21

## Student Spotlight

This month's student spotlight shines on Caroline ██████, a senior at Avoyelles Public Charter School in Mansura, LA.

"I am nominating Caroline for this recognition because she is most deserving based on a young life already full of a giving spirit," says Caroline's nominator, who wished to remain anonymous.

"She was gifted with a huge musical talent and has not buried that gift. She uses it for the glory of God every chance she has!"

Caroline attends St. Joseph Church in Marksville and has a deep love of Jesus Christ and wants to serve Him

through music and other ways. She is active in music ministry at St. Joseph Church and at Sacred Heart Church in Moreauville, was a member of Steubenville South Service Crew, was a speaker/musician at Camp Fierce and Sacred Heart Bible Camp and participated in Teen ACTS.

Caroline is the daughter of Keith and Amanda ██████ and is the oldest with three younger brothers.

She is very active in student organizations at school including: Student Council, 4-H, Choir, Theater, Student Prayer Group. Caroline manages her studies and student activities despite being an after school caregiver and also holding a part time job!



Caroline ██████

"She is a normal teenager with all the nuances that statement entails except one thing that sets her apart: her desire to serve, which she does."

**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:** If you know 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). Catholic students in either junior high or high school, attending our Catholic schools or public schools will be considered. 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.

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

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

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

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

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### Catholic Trivia?

When was veneration of the Holy Family first established?

See the Catholic Trivia answer on page 19.

YOU ARE A SPIRIT,  
 YOU HAVE A SOUL,  
 AND YOU LIVE IN A BODY.

### The Soul

by Marcus Descant

If we could only see the soul,  
 I'm sure it would be a sight to behold.

At the moment of conception,  
 The soul was given to us without exception.

The Soul, a gift from God to everyone,  
 Even to the unborn, the little one.

The soul is also brightly white  
 But the sins of man can put it to flight.

So, if we confess our sins, and change  
 our ways,  
 We can be sure of eternal life in heaven  
 one day.

[lizdescant@gmail.com](mailto:lizdescant@gmail.com)  
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# Snapshots around the Diocese



**ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHES.** A live nativity was performed at St. Mary's School in Natchitoches.



**ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, ECHO.** On Christmas Eve, the children presented pastor, Fr. Dwight de Jesus, with baby Jesus for the manger scene.



**CHURCH OF THE LITTLE FLOWER, EVERGREEN.** The altar of Church of the Little Flower, dressed up for Christmas, 2020.



**OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA.** Mrs. Jessica Viator of Manna House came to Our Lady of Prompt Succor School on Thursday Dec. 17 to accept a check from the Kindergarteners, 1st and 2nd graders from their Advent projects. They were to do chores and things to help raise money. Mrs. Viator showed our students a picture of a child their age that they serve daily. She was very appreciative of this donation and the help it will provide The Manna House in serving our community, and those in need. Great job OLPS Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders!



**ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHURCH, COTTONPORT.** On Jan. 3, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord at St. Mary's Assumption Church in Cottonport with pastor, Father John Wiltse.

**BELOW: OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA.** Our Lady of Prompt Succor School 6th grade Advent project was to provide cards and supplies for hospice patients in nursing homes and shut ins. The 6th grade classes also adopted a family with four children for which they provided Christmas gifts. Students raised money to fund these projects by doing extra chores at home. This was their seventh year to partner with Christus Hospice. Jennifer Wilder, director, came to the school to pick up all of the donations. She also interviewed some of the students and they were very excited to be able to hand over everything that they had gathered for those in need! Thank you to all the families that made this donation possible!!



**CONFIRMATION, NATCHITOCES.** Students from St. Mary's in Natchitoches and the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church recently had their sacrament of confirmation. It was postponed from last spring.



**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, NATCHITOCES.** Students at St. Mary's in Natchitoches and the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church recently received the sacrament of first communion. It was rescheduled from last spring.

## World needs Christians to show what journey toward unity looks like, pope says

**Carol Glatz**  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Unity requires prayer, love and fighting the devil, who always sows division, Pope Francis said.

The devil “fosters division everywhere and in every way” by tempting people “with the weaknesses of our brothers and sisters. He is astute: He magnifies others’ mistakes and defects, sows discord, provokes criticism and creates factions,” the pope said Jan. 20 during his weekly general audience.

God, on the other hand, “has another way. He takes us as we are, different, sinners and always nudges us toward unity,” he said.

In his audience talk, livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, the pope reflected on the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, celebrated Jan. 18-25. The theme for the 2021 celebration, “Abide in my love ... You shall bear much fruit,” is taken from the Gospel of St. John (15:1-17).

“The root of communion is the love of Christ, who makes us overcome our prejudices to see in others a brother or sister to be loved always,” the pope said.

In fact, the pope invited everyone to discover other Christian denominations — their traditions and their history — and see them as “gifts from God” present in one’s neighborhood or town.

“I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”

*John 17:20-21*



**POPE FRANCIS ON UNITY.** Pope Francis leads his general audience in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Jan. 20, 2021. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

“Let us begin to pray for them and, when possible, with them. We will thus learn to love and appreciate them,” he said.

The pope said that at this time of “serious hardship” in the world, the prayer for Christian unity was even more necessary.

“It is urgent that we set aside particular interests to promote the common good and so our good example is fundamental: It is essential that Christians pursue the path toward full visible unity.”

When Jesus prayed that his disciples “may all be one,” he was not ordering them to be united, but was praying “to the Father for us,” the pope said.

“This means that we are not able to achieve unity by ourselves, with our own strength. Above all, unity is a gift, it is a grace to be requested through prayer,” he said.

Unity is a difficult task, not just for Christian communities, but for each individual, he said.

“Even the Apostle Paul felt a lacerating conflict within himself:

wanting the good but inclined toward evil,” he said.

The root of so many divisions in the world — divisions in the family, society, a nation and among believers — is found inside the human heart, Pope Francis said.

From these internal struggles flow many of the conflicts and

tensions in society, which is why “the solution to these divisions is not to oppose someone, because discord generates more discord. The true remedy begins by asking God for peace, reconciliation, unity.”

Praying for unity also means fighting “because our enemy, the devil, is the one who divides,” he

added.

People need to ask themselves how they live each day and whether “we nurture conflict or fight for greater unity with the tools that God has given us: prayer and love.”

Christians also need to ask, “Do I pray for unity? It is Jesus’ will but, if we inspect the intentions for which we pray, we would probably realize that we have prayed little, perhaps never, for Christian unity. And yet, the world’s faith depends on it.”

The world will not come to believe in Christ and the Gospel because of “good arguments,” he said, “but because we will have borne witness to that love that unites us and draws us near to everyone.”

With all the positive steps forward in ecumenism, “we still need to persevere in love and in prayer, without lacking trust or tiring. It is the path that the Holy Spirit gave rise to in the church, in Christians, all of us, and from which there is no turning back,” the pope said.

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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)  
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or in Natchitoches on station 89.7 AM
- 5:00 p.m. St. Michael the Archangel, Leesville on Facebook

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

## A final requiem for an extraordinary nun and champion of Black Catholic history

By Shannen Dee Williams,  
Catholic News Service

2020 was a year of monumental losses for the nation's community of women religious.

Among them was the passing of 88-year-old Oblate Sister of Providence, Mary Reginald Gerdes.

On Sept. 7, Sister Gerdes, a former leader of Baltimore's St. Frances Academy, the nation's oldest historically Black Catholic school, and longest-serving archivist of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, died of heart failure at her order's motherhouse in Arbutus, Maryland.

In a racially and economically tumultuous year that saw a significant rise in calls for the church to acknowledge and make reparations for its largely unreconciled practices of slavery and segregation, the loss of Sister Gerdes, and her expertise in African American Catholic history, was especially wrenching.

That is, of course, for those who knew Sister Gerdes' story and all that she did to recover, preserve and disseminate the history of the church's Black faithful and their widely overlooked roles in the making of U.S. Catholicism.

Born Althea Mary Gerdes on Sept. 3, 1932, Sister Mary Reginald was a proud member of New Orleans' longstanding Afro-Creole and Black Catholic communities. Her mother, Elmira (née Raymond) Gerdes was a homemaker, and her father Louis Gerdes owned a roofing company that served Black and white households and businesses in the Crescent City's famed French Quarter.

As a member of one of New Orleans' largest Black Catholic parishes, Corpus Christi, and a pupil of historically white Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for elementary and high school, Sister Gerdes grew up in a vibrant community of faithfulness and was shielded from the most dehumanizing humiliations forced upon Black faithful in their racially segregated church for much of her childhood.



SISTER MARY REGINALD GERDES, OSP, 1932-2020.

Nonetheless, her journey, like most Black Catholics who came of age during the civil rights and Black power eras, would not be free from struggle against segregation and exclusion.

In 1952, Sister Gerdes opted to leave New Orleans and enter the historically Black Oblate Sisters of Providence in Baltimore. Over the next 30 years, Sister Gerdes, who earned a bachelor's

degree from Marillac College and master's degree in education from Duke University, became a well-respected biology teacher, school leader and champion of Black freedom and educational excellence.

During the civil rights movement, she participated in local desegregation campaigns while stationed at her order's Immaculate Conception School in

Charleston, South Carolina.

In the 1970s, Sister Gerdes, with the support of a diversity of sisters, OSP alumni and state officials, played a leading role in helping to reopen and secure the financial future of Baltimore's St. Frances Academy, her order's first school, which had closed in 1972 due to desegregation and lack of archdiocesan support.

After retiring from teaching and school administration in the 1980s, Sister Gerdes began her "second career" as her order's full-time archivist, where she undertook a monumental campaign to organize the OSP's invaluable repository of records, collect oral histories and research the life of her community's foundress, Mother Mary Lange, in support of her canonization cause.

In 1988, Sister Gerdes published a seminal article in the "U.S. Catholic Historian," documenting her order's pioneering role in founding Black Catholic schools during slavery and in the immediate decades following emancipation when much of the former slaveholding church abandoned the Black Catholic community.

Sister Gerdes also taught African American heritage at the Community College of Baltimore County, wrote a regular Black history column for *The Catholic Review*, and joined the Maryland Humanities Speaker's Bureau, offering dynamic lectures on the experiences of Black nuns in

the U.S. slave society across the state.

While Sister Gerdes's name may not be as recognizable as that of the late Father Cyprian Davis, the church's most prolific historian of the Black Catholic experience, or the late Father Peter Hogan, the longtime administrator of the Josephite Archives in Baltimore, she was undoubtedly one of the church's most important archivists and chroniclers of the American Catholic experience in the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Like so many members of her congregation, who pioneered the teaching of Black and Black Catholic history in the U.S. church, Sister Gerdes understood that the history of Black nuns and the larger Black Catholic community fundamentally mattered.

Moreover, her herculean efforts in organizing and safeguarding her congregation's archive made it possible for scores of academic and independent researchers to unlock countless secrets about the American Catholic past documented in their records.

As we move into the new year confronted with the enduring challenges of racism buttressed by miseducation and misinformation, I cannot help but to consider how much more difficult the fight ahead would be without the intellectual and archival activism of Sister Gerdes.

In face of scholarly silence, erasure and outright lies about

cont. on next page

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her order and the wider African American Catholic community, she chose to fight back with historical truth telling, education and unwavering grace.

\*\*\*

*Shannen Dee Williams is the Albert Lepage assistant professor of history at Villanova University and author of the Catholic News Service column, "The Griot's Cross." She is completing her first book, "Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle." Follow her on Twitter at @Blknunhistorian.*

# 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.

We can have recourse to many saints as our intercessors, but go especially to Joseph...

// St. Teresa of Avila



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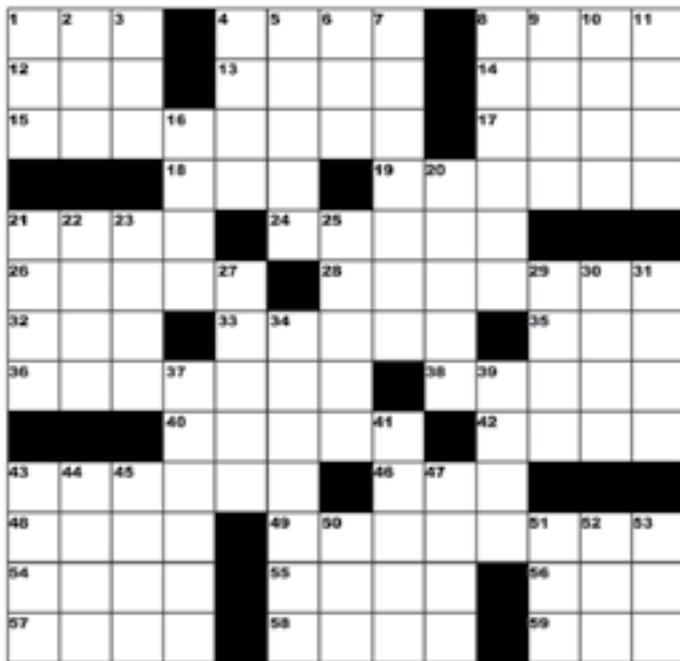
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# The Cross Word

February 7  
and 14, 2021



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**Readings:** 1Cor 9:16-19, 22-23; Mk 1:29-39 and Lev 13:1-2, 44-48; 1Cor 10:31-11:1; Mk 1:40-45

#### ACROSS

- 1 Constrictor snake
- 4 Among
- 8 Fish hook
- 12 Flow away
- 13 Had on, as clothing
- 14 Horse does on 2 legs
- 15 Jesus cured these
- 17 Canal
- 18 Easter egg color
- 19 New Orleans' food
- 21 African country
- 24 Would not allow demons to
- 26 Country next to Egypt

#### DOWN

- 28 Flavoring
- 32 College football conference (abbr.)
- 33 "Ladies and \_\_\_"
- 35 Communication Work -ers of America (abbr.)
- 36 Letter
- 38 Anesthetic
- 40 Leper did before Jesus
- 42 Leprosy mark
- 43 Low ranking naval officer
- 46 Epoch
- 48 Mark's animal symbol

- 49 Snubbing
- 54 Bridge
- 55 Space ship builders
- 56 North by east
- 57 Catch sight of
- 58 Dell
- 59 Tiger \_\_\_

#### DOWN

- 1 Mother-in-law was in
- 2 Kimono sash
- 3 Brake system
- 4 "\_\_\_ in a Manger"
- 5 "The Law of \_\_\_"
- 6 Wrath
- 7 Lineage
- 8 "Jews and \_\_\_"
- 9 Air (prefix)
- 10 Not succeed
- 11 No charge
- 16 Swirl
- 20 God did for Jesus
- 21 Chowder ingredient
- 22 Audio-system
- 23 Alphabet
- 25 Jury
- 27 Growing older
- 29 Reverberate
- 30 Pitcher
- 31 Challenge
- 34 "After sunset"
- 37 Too thin
- 39 Russian ruler
- 41 Uptight
- 43 Otherwise
- 44 Tiny sips of liquor
- 45 Comes in bars
- 47 Colored horse
- 50 "My \_\_\_ Sal"
- 51 Business title ending
- 52 BB association
- 53 Receive

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# The one certain truth of 2021

By **Laura Kelly Fanucci**  
Catholic News Service

*“A baby is God’s way of saying the world should go on.”*

My mother spoke this truth a thousand times while I was growing up. She said it every time we heard news of a friend or relative expecting a baby, but also each time the world darkened with terrible suffering or personal tragedy. She saw in each human life a great possibility: the prospect of new beginnings meeting the promise of hope.

Even in the worst times, if God was still creating, then we could keep going.

After a long, hard 2020, here we stand at the beginning of a new year. What will 2021 hold? What will happen next? We cannot know what the next 12 months will bring, but one truth is certain: If you’re reading these words, then 2021 has arrived and brought you with it.

God has decided the world will keep going for now.

Family life brims with beginnings. From marriage to birth, from baptism to confirmation, from the first day of school to the last graduation, we are always beginning again as families.

Each stage brings joys and sorrows, gains and losses, hardships and holiness. Through every season, families share one truth in common: They are always changing and beginning again.

Children arrive and grow.



Parents mature and age. New callings are born as children become parents and parents become grandparents. Generations begin and end, each one shaping the next.

Think about your nieces or nephews, children or grandchildren, parents or grandparents, cousins, aunts or

uncles. Think about your closest friends (the ones you cherish like a chosen family) or your brothers and sisters in Christ who belong to your church community.

Every family has someone who needs the hope of a new beginning right now. Not the shiny prospect of a new year, but the lasting hope of Christ’s love.

The renewal that comes from remembering the unshakable truth that we are beloved by God.

Scripture encourages us to keep this edge of openness to God’s love of beginnings. As St. Paul wrote, “So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: The old things have passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor 5:17).

We are always becoming new in Christ. Each time we renew our baptismal vows, receive the sacrament of reconciliation or recommit to the everyday work of our callings, we reaffirm the evernewness of life itself. Faith keep us growing and changing, greeting each fresh year and each day’s dawn with a prayer of gratitude for the chance to begin anew.

You are one of God’s ways of saying the world should go on. You are given this day to live into the hope of a new beginning.

The deepest truth about any year is that God has created it and God will watch over each creature within it. All earthly certainties may crumble, but eternal life and divine love will never end.

Within this assurance, we can begin again in hope.

God saw fit that creation needed each one of us and that the world should keep spinning, even through the darkest days until now. How can our families become places of faith and forgiveness where each member returns to be renewed and begin again? What resolution might we make in prayer to deepen our love for God and for each other this year?

\*\*\*

*Fanucci is a writer, speaker, and author of several books including “Everyday Sacrament: The Messy Grace of Parenting.” Her work can be found at [laurakellyfanucci.com](http://laurakellyfanucci.com).*

## Pope Francis dedicates year of focus on family beginning Mar. 19

As the fifth anniversary of his apostolic exhortation “Amoris Laetitia” approaches, Pope Francis announced that the Catholic Church will dedicate more than a year to focusing on the family and conjugal love.

Beginning March 19, he said, the year of reflection on “Amoris Laetitia” will be an opportunity “to focus more closely on the contents of the document.”

“I invite everyone to take part in the initiatives that will be promoted during the year and that will be coordinated by the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life,” he added. “Let us entrust this journey, with families all over the world, to the Holy Family of Nazareth, in particular to St. Joseph, the devoted spouse and father.”

According to the dicastery’s website, the “Amoris Laetitia Family” year “aims to reach every family around the world through several spiritual, pastoral and cultural proposals that can be implemented within parishes, dioceses, universities, ecclesial movements and family associations.”

The dicastery said that the goals of the celebration include sharing the contents of the apostolic exhortation more widely, proclaiming the gift of the sacrament of marriage and enabling families to “become active agents of the family apostolate.”

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# CHA letter to Biden reveals extensive list of health care priorities

By: Mark Pattison  
Catholic News Service



**SENIOR HEALTHCARE PRIORITY REQUEST.** An elderly couple emerge from a polling place after casting their votes on Election Day in Gypsy, Pa., on Nov. 3, 2020. (CNS photo/Alan Freed, Reuters)

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Catholic Health Association issued an extensive list of priorities it would like President-elect Joe Biden’s administration to pursue.

Those priorities include strengthening the Affordable Care Act, increasing access to affordable health care, making senior citizens a priority, removing barriers to health care access by immigrants, and increased focus on the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

“It will take a highly coordinated federal response to bring the virus under control and stabilize our nation’s health care delivery system,” said Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, CHA president, in a Jan. 7 letter to Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and the Biden transition team. The text of the five-page, 2,100-word letter was released Jan. 8 by the CHA.

Sister Haddad said she wants to see, among other things, improved supply and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines as well as that of personal protective equipment and COVID-19 testing kits.

“Our long-term care facilities and other programs,” she said, “did not receive protective equipment or testing when they needed it. Then, when help did arrive, the initial equipment was often of poor quality and not usable.”

Moreover, she said, “we recommend that this

administration place a priority on the needs of seniors and those who provide services for them. As efforts are made to address what led to the devastating impact the virus had in long-term care, we urge that the mental health and quality of life as well as the infection control needs be considered.”

To bulk up the Affordable Care Act and increase insurance coverage, Sister Haddad suggested that the incoming administration “open a special enrollment period in the federal health insurance marketplaces to provide health coverage options for those who have lost insurance during this pandemic,” and to “invest in public marketing and outreach activities to increase enrollment in ACA plans.”

Sister Haddad said the Biden administration should “work with Congress to make coverage truly affordable for individuals and families by providing a marketplace reinsurance program; addressing the ‘family glitch’ that disqualifies families from the marketplace premium tax credits when employer coverage

is available but unaffordable for families; increasing premium subsidies and capping premiums for those with incomes below 400% of the federal poverty level.”

She added the administration could also combat racism by addressing health equity issues. Two ways to do that, Sister Haddad said, would be to “address the disparate effect of COVID-19 on people of color and their communities by directing additional funding and support to states, localities and community-based organizations for targeted outreach, testing and treatment for vulnerable individuals and communities,” and to “increase language assistance resources and outreach for limited-English-proficient populations.”

She said Medicaid can be strengthened by rescinding the proposed Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule and recent rules that weaken the maintenance of effort protections for Medicaid enrollees; “eliminating Medicaid work requirements and other barriers to eligibility in state waivers”; and “working with

states and Congress to expand Medicaid coverage to ensure the most vulnerable have access to needed timely care, including 12-month post-partum care for pregnant women.”

To improve health care outcomes for immigrants and refugees, Sister Haddad recommended that the Biden administration “protect and continue” the Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals program and rescind “the harmful ‘public charge’ rule promulgated by the previous administration. The addition of Medicaid and other federal assistance programs to the definition of public charge for legal immigrants has been detrimental to their health and well-being and an additional burden on our health care system.”

Noting the disparity between rich and poor exacerbated by the pandemic, she said the administration should “provide flexibility in federal health programs to address health-related social needs” and “strengthen federal programs and policies that address the social needs of low-income individuals such as Supplemental Security Income, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the National School Lunch Program and housing benefits such as rental assistance,” among others.

Sister Haddad also asked that the incoming administration honor “reasonable conscience protections to allow Catholic health facilities to continue to provide health care in accord with our religious and moral convictions.”

“We urge your administration to work with us as you develop your legislative and regulatory agendas,” she wrote Biden, “to ensure that Catholic hospitals and health care facilities can continue to provide vital health care services to their communities and those most in need.”

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**Catholic Trivia Answer** ???

Answer: Veneration of the Holy Family was formally begun in the 17th century by Saint Francois de Laval, the first bishop of New France.

## Impact of COVID-19 on Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Alexandria

By **Thomas E. Roque, Sr.**  
Superintendent of Schools

This year, schools in the Diocese of Alexandria began in a manner unlike at any other time in recent history. The pandemic certainly changed our lives. It has caused us to cancel or modify beloved traditions. It has also caused us to radically adjust our methods to fulfill our Catholic education mission.

Preparing for the opening of school was the first challenge. Each school leader consulted with different health professionals. While all advice was good advice, all received varying opinions. Because of such various opinions, I contacted the Region 6 Medical Director of the Louisiana Department of Public Health. It was then determined that we would adhere to these CDC guidelines.

Before opening day, many precautions were implemented. School leaders had to conduct duties such as sanitizing the schools and purchasing thermometers and other safety equipment. Classrooms, libraries, and cafeterias had to be rearranged. Faculty and staff had to be trained.

When school began, all faculty and staff not only practiced safety procedures like wearing masks, checking temperatures, and sanitizing hands and desks, but they also made sure that all students followed the same



**CLASSROOMS ADAPT.** First day of classes, August 2020, Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria.

guidelines. Everyone worked together—from teacher to custodian—to keep all students safe.

Additionally, schools worked to limit outside exposures by implementing a variety of social distancing strategies. Some classes operated as a “homeroom unit,” not interacting with others outside their own class. This way, we attempted to isolate and contain potential infections. Some schools used desk shields, which offered additional protection.

Nonetheless, even with safety measures in place, a few students and staff were exposed. As students and teachers were quarantined, new challenges emerged. Schools felt the challenges of finding substitute teachers to continue class work. Students faced virtual learning or they had to play catchup after

they returned to school. All of these challenges have had an impact on morale, physical and mental health.

Through all of these challenges, it has been a blessing from our Heavenly Father that we have been able to have face-to-face instruction in our Catholic schools this year. This is a tribute to diligence in implementing infection control, learning new virtual teaching methods, and doing whatever is necessary to continue the education process for our students. I salute the faculty and staff because THEY made it happen.

Catholic Schools Week is January 31-February 6, 2021. It is a good time to reflect on our blessings as well as our challenges. Our Catholic schools will host a variety of activities to celebrate our Catholic school identity and to evangelize our

Catholic faith and educational mission. These activities include, but are not limited to, virtual open house events, sending inspiring letters to nursing home residents, decorating classrooms, singing Mass songs in class, participating in senior, living and patriotic rosaries, spelling bees, dressing up as Saints, Catholic school trivia, and much more. Contact your school about specific events.

In spite of the physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual sacrifices during this pandemic, our resilience has been rooted in

faithfulness and love. Perhaps the greatest lesson of this pandemic is that we must have faith and must sustain a fulfilling and unified relationship with God. As we wait with anticipation for the end of this pandemic, let us do so with profound faith and joyful hope, as well as the consolation of lessons learned.

*Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” Matthew 19:14*



### *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 and will continue to do so unequivocally. 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.

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# A Catholic education is a blessing!

*The following is the transcript from Bishop Robert Marshall's recent video about the importance of a Catholic Education.*



**ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL.** Students of St. Frances Cabrini School during Catholic Schools Week in 2019.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

In commercials and marketing materials, we often hear private and parochial schools proclaim their value. The value of this kindergarten, for example, is how effectively it prepares a child for first grade. The value of this elementary school is how effective it is in positioning its students for high school success. The value of a high school is the doors it opens to college or university scholarships. You get the point. In a time of economic uncertainty, we can understand the emphasis on value. No one wants to waste their money – everyone wants to be assured that they have spent their resources wisely. From a strictly value-added standpoint, Catholic schools certainly represent a sound investment. Throughout the country and here in the Diocese of Alexandria, Catholic schools invariably outperform area public schools by any measure of academic success – test scores, college admissions,

college scholarships awarded. Yes, a Catholic education is valuable, it is solid, but more than that – a Catholic education is a blessing.

Through the sacrifices made by my parents, I was blessed to have received a Catholic education from first grade through the completion of my bachelor's degree. I spent eight years in my parish elementary school, four years in a private Catholic high school, and I graduated from a Catholic college. I received a terrific education in math and science, in literature and grammar, in history and geography, and religion and all of the other academic disciplines. Yes, my mind was challenged and expanded. More importantly, I received that education in an environment in which my soul was nurtured. Not just one subject among many, Catholic Christianity permeated every facet of my education. I learned from an early age that I was a beloved child of God – precious in God's eyes – and, just as importantly, so was everyone

else. And we learned that God loved us enough to send his only begotten Son as our Savior and Redeemer. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh – and by the power of the incarnation he raised our lowly human nature to the realms of heaven. With this knowledge, with this great insight, we learned how important it was to treat one another with dignity and respect. That's a lesson in short supply in contemporary society.

A Catholic school immerses a student into a centuries-old heritage of wisdom and culture. My education was not just from the news of the day – although that was certainly discussed. My education focused on Sacred Scripture, on art and music, on great literature and a liturgical and sacramental understanding that God reveals himself in his created world – in light and darkness, in water and oil, in bread and wine. A Catholic education, therefore, is

broad – it addresses the needs and challenges of today across many academic subjects. Furthermore, a Catholic education is deep – one that draws upon ancient wisdom, one that rejoices in God's self-revelation documented in sacred texts, and one that is set in a culture that gave us great cathedrals and magnificent paintings and sculpture, and soul-stirring music. All of this, the depth and breadth of a Catholic education enables us not just to think critically, but to discern – to think with the light of God's Spirit, to make the moral decisions that move us from the selfishness of childhood and youth to an understanding of the importance of the common good. Imagine if contemporary American society actually moved from self-interest to caring for the common good. How much better – how much more decent, more just, more loving our world would be! That is the perspective that a Catholic education offers its students.

I encourage you to evaluate a Catholic education. Recognize the economic benefits of the investment that you make. More importantly, I invite you to see the blessing of a Catholic education, the horizons it will open, the cultural richness that just isn't available from our throw-away, "swipe left" society. We want our students to be successful, to be sure – but more importantly, we want them to be good, and decent, and holy. I think you will agree that a Catholic education is a great blessing to give a child.

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*The video from which this transcript came can be viewed at:*

[youtu.be/VHk70W7mVM4](https://youtu.be/VHk70W7mVM4)



Lynn Ray

## Long time director of campus ministry retires

Best wishes to Lynn Ray upon her retirement! Lynn served as Campus Minister for the Diocese of Alexandria for the last fifteen years. During her tenure, Lynn oversaw the coordination of campus ministry activities at three major universities in central Louisiana: Louisiana State University at Alexandria, Louisiana College and Northwestern State University

**Catholic Campus Ministry is provided at  
LSU of Alexandria, Louisiana College,  
and Northwestern State University.  
Contact any University for more information.**

LSU of Alexandria: Catholic Student Organization, 318-473-6494

Northwestern State University Catholic Student Organization  
Chaplain: Fr. Marc Noel. Phone: 318-352-2615 | [frmnoel@diocesealex.org](mailto:frmnoel@diocesealex.org)

Louisiana College: Catholic Student Organization, 318-613-0634

*I will walk before the Lord,  
in the land of the living.*

Psalm 116: 9 | Responsorial Psalm for February 28

**Men's Nocturnal Adoration - February 4**

Join us at St. Frances Cabrini Church for our monthly Men's Nocturnal Adoration, Thursday Feb. 4, beginning at 7:00 p.m. and ends Friday Feb. 5 at 7:00 a.m. Please contact Michelle at 445-4588 to sign up for one hour.

**Catholic Schools Week****- January 31- February 6**

Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2021 is January 31 - February 6. The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2021 is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service." Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners, and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities, and our nation.

**Special Collection for the Church Today - February 7**

There will be a special collection the weekend of February 7 for our diocesan newspaper, the Church Today. Every month, this 24-page newspaper is mailed FREE to every Catholic household in the diocese. All donations to this special collection go directly to the Church Today to help defray the cost of printing and mailing. If you, or someone you know, would like to receive the Church Today FREE each month, call (318) 445-6424, ext 209 to request it. Please be generous today and support our diocesan newspaper, the Church Today.

**Heart of St. Kateri Circle meeting - February 11**

The monthly Heart of St. Kateri Circle meeting will be Thursday, Feb. 11 at 5:30 p.m. at the Tekakwitha National Office, 2225 N. Bolton Avenue, Alexandria, LA. We will still need to wear a mask due to COVID-19. All are welcome to attend for we love having new members come. We've got old and new members coming back gradually so come one, come all! For more information, call Scotty Durio at (318) 483-3908.

**DIOCESAN BRIEFS****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 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).

**Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference - March 6-7**

The annual Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference is scheduled for March 6-7 at the Randolph Riverfront Center. More details to be announced! For more information as we make updates, please visit [www.steubenvillesouth.com](http://www.steubenvillesouth.com), or email Cari Terracina at [info@steubenvillesouth.com](mailto:info@steubenvillesouth.com).

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

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).

**Steubenville South High School Youth Conference - June 25-27**

The Steubenville South High School Youth Conference is scheduled for June 25-27, 2021. For more information as we make updates, please visit [www.steubenvillesouth.com](http://www.steubenvillesouth.com) or email Cari Terracina at [info@steubenvillesouth.com](mailto:info@steubenvillesouth.com).

**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/)

**New Radio Maria Program**

Fr. Dan Reehil, Radio Maria's new National Priest Director, will host a new program, titled *Battle Ready*.

Fr. Dan will strive to fortify, strengthen, and embolden the people of God, making them battle ready to advance the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.

The program will seek to guide ordinary people into the extraordinary future that God is currently unfolding before our very eyes.

"We are living in the most exciting of times as the Triumph of the Immaculate Heart is imminent, and the time is fast approaching for our Mother and Queen, The Blessed Virgin Mary, to crush the head of the serpent," he said. "Won't you please join in this battle?"

*Battle Ready* airs at 9:00 a.m. CST / 10:00 a.m. EST, Tuesday through Friday mornings.

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:  
February 22  
Deadline for news:  
Thursday, Feb. 11**

P.O. Box 5624  
Alexandria, LA 71307

3306 Giamanco Street

Phone: (318) 473-8751  
Fax: (318) 473-4045  
EMail: [DonaldJBaker@aol.com](mailto:DonaldJBaker@aol.com)



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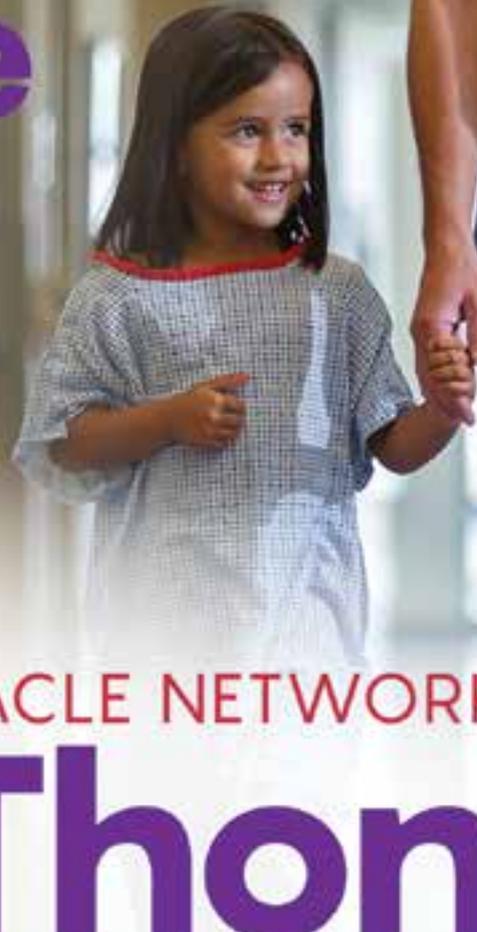


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**(318) 256-7000**

# February 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>FEBRUARY 1</b>	<b>2</b> VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center Alexandria	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Men's Nocturnal Adoration 7:00 p.m. (ends 7:00 a.m. Friday) St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Special Collection for the Church Today We are very grateful for your kind generosity.
<b>Catholic Schools Week, January 31 - February 6</b>						
PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD	FEAST of ST. BLAISE PRAY FOR FR. P. LAPALME	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. R. MATHEWS	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. MEADE	PRAY FOR FR. L. MELCHER
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Heart of Kateri Circle Meeting 5:30 p.m. Tekakwitha Conference National Office, Alexandria	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>  VALENTINES DAY PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL
PRAY FOR FR. A. MESSINA	PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHELS	PRAY FOR MSGR. B. MILLER	PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK	
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>  FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH
PRESIDENTS DAY PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIKWE	MARDIS GRAS DAY PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN	ASH WEDNESDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR	PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA	PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA	PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL	
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ
PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE	PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL	PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS	PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY	PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS	
<b>MARCH 1</b> Deadline for All American Scholar Award	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR FR. M.C. SCOTT	PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER	PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA	Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN

# Let's make miracles happen



## CHILDREN'S MIRACLE NETWORK MediaThon

**FEBRUARY 18, 2021  
6 AM - 7 PM**

Cenla Broadcasting  
1115 Texas Ave. Alexandria, LA

Tune in or stop by Cenla Broadcasting Studios on February 18th to support our 3rd Annual Children's Miracle Network MediaThon, reminiscent of the Telethon from year's past! This event will bring together Alexandria's premier media outlets, KALB and Cenla Broadcasting, for a full day raising funds and awareness for CMN in CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital. The funds raised will directly support life-saving medical care for local children.

**For Pledges Call : 318-528-3500**

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February 18th 11AM - 2PM

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