
CHURCH TODAY

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

February 22, 2021

INSIDE

Late delivery of the Church Today

This month's issue of the Church Today is late due to the extreme winter weather that occurred during deadline week. We apologize for any inconvenience. See photos from across the diocese on pages 3-4.

Lent begins but hasn't it really been going on already?

After the past 11 months, what more can we be expected to 'give up' for Lent? It's time to dig deeper. Learn how Lent can be a real discerning experience this year on page 6.

Lenten Activities across the diocese

Though we are still faced with the challenges of the ongoing pandemic, our traditional Lenten activities continue to take place. See page 14 for a schedule of Lenten Mission, Bible Studies, Penance Services, Stations of the Cross and Fish Fries.



Lent begins on ice

Unprecedented winter weather swept through the diocese February 15-17 bringing sleet, snow, freezing rain and extremely low temperatures, causing an already challenging Ash Wednesday to be almost totally inaccessible to anyone. Father James Ferguson, rector of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, removes snow and ice from the steps of a side entrance of the cathedral on Thursday, Feb. 18. More photos inside this issue.

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TODAY

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Brothers and sisters in Christ,

We began the beautiful season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 17. The gospels remind us that before he began His public ministry, Our Lord Jesus Christ spent 40 days in the desert in prayer and fasting. Our Lenten season is our annual imitation of this sacred practice – a time when we withdraw from some of the distractions of the world in order to deepen our spiritual lives. Most years, the season of Lent is a welcome respite from our hectic lives, a chance to decrease our social engagements and to increase our spiritual reading and our time of quiet prayer. This year, however, Lent may feel different.

For many of us, it may seem that we have been living in Lent for the past 11 months. As the world grappled with the burgeoning pandemic, most activities – both secular and religious – ceased last March. Even when we reopened, we did so with restrictions on the number of people who could gather, the distance that must separate one person or household from another, and with faces partially covered by masks. Those restrictions have changed over these past months, but have not been eliminated. It seems as though our lives have been

Enter into Lent intentionally

Live, Jesus, in our
hearts. Forever.

Most Rev. Robert W. Marshall, Jr.
Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria

significantly curtailed and many are wondering if these restrictions will need to become permanent. So how is our observance of Lent in 2021 different from our recent experience? Have we not spent these last months in the desert, so to speak, cut off from many of the people and activities that populated our lives way back in 2019?

What is different, I suggest to you, is that we are entering into Lent intentionally. We are choosing to walk with the Lord into the desert with the express desire to fast and pray. If you are at all like me, then we entered our months of quarantining most reluctantly. We were ill-prepared for the isolation that we would endure – we had not stored up on food, on prayer, or on patience. We found ourselves forced into learning new technology when we were perfectly content with the old – live-streaming and distance

meetings on various platforms were now expected of us. Even as we have been separated from one another and from the larger Body of Christ, we may find that our lives are more hectic and more frustrating than they were before. *We need Lent this year.* We need to embrace – at least temporarily – the limitations the pandemic has brought us in order to open our eyes to the blessings that we might have missed along the way.

Yes, we stay at home more. Yes, in many ways we are living a simpler life. But are we living an intentional life? Have we used the time away from our pre-pandemic existence to voice our endless complaints about our circumstances or have we come humbly and gratefully before the Lord to voice our needs in prayer? Have we been separated from the joys of our social lives in order to wallow in self-pity or have our eyes been opened to

the daily needs of the poor, to the loneliness of the homebound, to the burdens carried by the ill and infirm – all of which existed before the pandemic and will continue after the restrictions end? In other words, have we willingly embraced our time in the desert or are we still cursing the circumstances that brought us here?

The vaccines are offering us a little hope that this pandemic will end. As we spend time this Lent reflecting upon the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, he offers us the sure and certain hope that the hardships and sufferings of this life will give way to the eternal joys of heaven. This Lent, may we open our eyes and our hearts to the presence of God who surrounds us with his love. May we experience our true hunger and thirst – not for a vacation or for an evening at a restaurant again – but for the happiness that will last – for eternal salvation and for the Savior who has purchased our redemption with his own blood. This Lent, I invite you to walk humbly into the desert, confident that the Lord will guide us through the darkness into his own wonderful light.

Live Jesus in our hearts . . . forever.

What is Good about Good Friday?

Q. Why do we call the day Jesus was crucified “Good” Friday? Christ was made to suffer horribly, so this has always bothered me. (Radford, Virginia)

A. A fair number of people agree with you, and some have suggested that “Black Friday” would be a more appropriate designation. Interestingly, in the Greek Orthodox Church, the day is known not as “Good” but as the “Great and Holy Friday.”

Certainly, if you had asked the friends of Jesus on that day itself, they would have seen nothing good in what transpired. Christ had been tortured, then executed as a common criminal, and his followers had begun to scatter. But less than 48 hours later, all that changed. The tomb of Christ was now empty, Jesus had risen from the dead and had already begun to appear to those who had been close to him.

One theory, supported by the



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Oxford English Dictionary and some other linguists, is that the word “good,” as applied to the day of Christ’s death, comes from an antiquated meaning of the word, meaning “holy.” I prefer, though, the more traditional Christian explanation -- namely, that we call the day “good” because, through it, Jesus has won victory over sin and death, both for himself and for us as well.

Q. I have done something terrible. I committed a mortal sin and then I received the Eucharist. Am I going to be condemned? I

am very worried. I am 17 years old, and I was baptized just two months ago. If I go to confession, will I be forgiven?

(I was afraid that my parents would question me if I did not take Communion, so I went up to receive even though I knew it was wrong.) Please help me to know what to do at this point. (City and state withheld)

A. Please be at peace. You are not going to be condemned, and you will surely be forgiven in the sacrament of penance. It strikes me that some of our best-known

saints made their way back from moral wrongs to find healing and joy in God’s forgiveness.

I’m thinking of St. Paul, who once persecuted those who believed in Jesus; of St. Peter, who during Christ’s Passion denied that he even knew Christ; of St. Augustine, who had fathered a child out of wedlock. God can forgive anything, and he wants to. His very purpose in creating us was so that we could share eternal happiness in his presence.

Just go to confession and tell the priest of your sin and the fact that you went to holy Communion despite recognizing its gravity. And congratulations on your recent baptism. Like most Catholics, I was baptized as an infant, but I often find that those who entered the church later on have a faith that is more reflective and stronger.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI CHURCH. Fr. Chad Partain sent these photos of St. Frances Cabrini Church in Alexandria. (ABOVE) The snow at the sacristy entrance.



SACRED HEART CHURCH AND SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Fr. Jose Pallipurath sent in these photos of Sacred Heart Church and School in Moreauville.

Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.
Psalm 19 : 8 | Responsorial Psalm for March 7

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ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL, ALEXANDRIA. Deacon Richard Mitchell (background) and Deacon Candidate, Les Glankler, remove inches of ice still hindering access to the front doors of the Cathedral on Saturday, Feb. 20. Due to their efforts, Rite of Election was able to be held the following day. See photos of the catechumens and elect on pages 16-19.



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL, ALEXANDRIA. Cathedral parishioner, Kevin Viator, takes a break from shoveling some snow and ice off the steps of a side entrance of the cathedral on Friday, Feb. 19.



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL. Father James Ferguson, rector of the Cathedral, made a snowman from snow that STILL remains at the cathedral on Monday, Feb. 22. It looks just like him, don't you think?



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE. Pastor, Fr. Dan O'Connor, sent in this photo of trees damaged by the ice storm that crippled the Diocese of Alexandria the week of Feb. 15.

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*"For where two or three gather in my name,
there am I in the midst of them"*
-Matthew 18:20



St. Michael the Archangel Church, Leesville



Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth



St. Joseph Church, Cheneyville



Immaculate Conception Church, Dupont



After 11 months of ‘giving up,’ what is there left to give up this Lent?

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Since childhood, the typical U.S. Catholic’s response to Lent is giving up, as in “What are you giving up for Lent?”

If you haven’t been keeping track, Catholics in the United States and worldwide — just about everyone, really — have been giving up a lot since the coronavirus pandemic struck 11 months ago, with no clearly defined end in sight. You would need the fingers on both hands to name some of the things that have been lost, not to mention nearly a half-million lives lost in the U.S. alone.

So, given all that, how should a Catholic approach Lent this year?

“Maybe this Lent isn’t the year to give up something, because we’re already doing it involuntarily,” said Marie Dennis, senior adviser to the secretary general of Pax Christi International.

It’s time, Dennis said, to “dig deeper and to think more deeply about what are the lessons that we’re learning from this pandemic. For example, how we’re treating the earth and about the racism and inequality in our own society and inequality around the world when we’re looking at who is being most hurt by the COVID pandemic.

“That would be my practice during Lent,” Dennis said. “That would be to remind myself of the really deep changes that need to be made in our society and in our world as we move forth from this pandemic.”

“There is real discernment that is needed this Lent,” said Marian Diaz, a professor at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago who directs grants to aid Catholic professionals in ministry.

“Many people have been giving and sacrificing on behalf of others during this past year,” Diaz said. “And for those people, I would just ask them to consider what do they need to do to be able to sustain that service? If our God is a God of love who comes to serve us in our creation and incarnation, we also have to consider how we are serving our brothers and sisters, but also how we are serving ourselves. What must we do to sustain ourselves during this time?”



NO MARDI GRAS PARADES FOR 2021. A house in New Orleans is seen Feb. 7, 2021, decorated ahead of Mardi Gras, which was Feb. 16 this year. (CNS photo/Kathleen Flynn, Reuters)

“I just want to really express empathy for the situation that we all are going through, and the difficulty, not only in terms of the pandemic but the political situation in our country and the situations in our world,” Diaz said.

“It has felt like a long Lent,” said Rose Marie Berger, a senior editor at Sojourners magazine, adding: “I started thinking about this a while back.” How far back? “I wrote my Lenten spirituality column four months ago.”

Berger, who told Catholic News Service she misses physically receiving the Eucharist the most, said: “Maybe Lent this year is not so much doing something extra, giving something extra, it’s more spending some deep time in contemplation in

what has been taken from us, what we have been forced to sacrifice from the pandemic, what are the sacrifices others have made for us, and where have we been able to give in ways we hadn’t expected to — it’s a reflection on our almsgiving — and in what ways have prayed.”

“I’m a big proponent of what St. John of the Cross says: If you don’t find love, bring love, and then you’ll find it,” said Bishop William D. Byrne, recently installed to head the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts. “And so, in this time where we’ve had so much taken away from us, and ... to lose hope, to be discouraged, what we need to do is bring hope, and then we’re going to find it. Bring joy, and we’ll find it.”

Bishop Byrne said, “Let’s start with the blessings. It isn’t the negativity, but embrace the positive and bringing that to people each day. In order to do that, you have to look at the other two parts of Lent. There’s prayer and almsgiving. You can’t really bring positivity without prayer. Otherwise, it’s just play-acting.”

He added, “You’ve got to have something at the start of the day. Get your cup of coffee or tea, and get your rosary, get your prayer book and start. Make a conscious effort in the morning and say, ‘I am going to bring positivity to the people I’m going to meet this day. Disarm them with your joy, if you will. Bring hope where we’re feeling hopeless.’”

Jesus can be our companion in our suffering, said Becky Eldredge, a spiritual director and author of “The Inner Chapel,” who is based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. “I imagine Jesus reminding us, ‘I’m here. I’m with y’all. Tell me what you’re going through. Tell me what you’re

feeling. Engage me in it,’” she said.

Lent is “an invitation to fix our eyes on Christ right now, right? More than just a giving up, it’s a looking to Christ in the here and now,” Eldredge said.

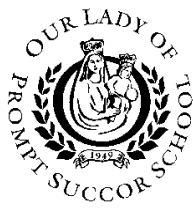
She suggested “letting Christ draw as near as possible to our suffering. A lot of what I’ve been seeing in retreat work and in (spiritual) direction, we’re keeping Jesus a little at arm’s length, we’re not letting him come close to our suffering.”

Eldredge added Catholics can follow Jesus’ “model of doing for others — reminding people, ‘Hey, I’m here for you. Tell me, I can listen to you.’ Show people a fixed point in Christ.”

“In the pandemic, we’ve probably settled into some routines. Some good routines, probably there may have been some unhealthy routines that we’ve settled into,” said Paul Jarzembowski, assistant director of youth and young adult ministries in the U.S. bishops’ Secretariat for Family, Marriage, Laity and Youth.

“If nothing else, it’s a good time to examine what we’ve settled into,” Jarzembowski said. “I know I’ve got some bad habits that have crept into my time. I’ve got the ‘COVID 19’ — I’ve gained 19 pounds. I’ve been more sedentary. I haven’t been as active because I can’t be.”

Lent, he added, is “a time for renewal, a time for reexamining. Lent is about giving up, but it’s a time of renewing, about making some new choices, making some resolutions, I look at it not so much as giving up as what can be renewed, what can be recharged.”



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Food from scripture: Fish – Center of New Testament stories, symbol of Christianity

By Nancy Wiechec
Catholic News Service

Fish stories capture our attention with suspense and metaphor. We love to hear about the big catch or the one that got away.

In fact, fish are at the center of some favorite Bible stories — Jonah and the great fish, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, Jesus appealing to fishermen to become his disciples.

Among the oldest of trades, fishing flourished along the Sea of Galilee at the place and time of Jesus' public ministry. Fish, fishers and fishermen are specifically mentioned more than 30 times in the New Testament.

After the Resurrection, the fish became a symbol of faith. Fish depictions were used as secret signs to mark the meeting places and tombs of early Christians who did not want to be discovered by their persecutors.

It was Christ himself who made the connection between fishers and followers.

"Jesus said to them, 'Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men'" (Mk 1:17).

Anyone who fishes knows it requires commitment, skill and patience. As the rod and reel folk like to say, "Good things come to those who bait." Discipleship demands similar traits.

Fish was a prominent protein of Jesus' time. Yet, because fish perished quickly, it was often



preserved by salting and drying or pickling. Although the Bible comes up short in providing actual recipes, the last chapter of John's Gospel recounts how fresh fish was cooked.

"When (the disciples) climbed out on shore, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it and bread. ... Jesus said to them, 'Come, have breakfast'" (Jn 21:9-12).

This recipe requires a fresh catch and follows that method. Both fish and bread are subtly flavored with olive oil, sea salt and a hint of smoke.

GRILLED FISH AND BREAD

Start to finish: About 1 hour

Servings: 4

Fresh-caught bass, perch, trout or mackerel work well with this recipe. You can substitute fish fillets. Put the lemon slices and thyme on top of the fillets, use a grill basket to keep everything together and adjust the grill time

as noted below.

2 lemons

4 whole fish about 12-14 inches long — gutted and cleaned

3-4 tablespoons quality olive oil

8 sprigs of fresh thyme

Sea salt

4 thick slices of french, sourdough or ciabatta bread

Cut one lemon in half crosswise. Cut the other lemon into eight thin slices. Pat the fish dry with a paper towel. Drizzle olive oil over the outside and inside the fish. Season each, outside and inside, with sea salt. Place two sprigs of thyme and two lemon slices inside the fish, cover them with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature while you prepare the grill.

Clean the grill grate well to prevent the fish from sticking. Prepare a fire using wood or charcoal briquettes. If using a gas grill, preheat it to 500 F, then turn the temperature to medium before cooking.

Brush olive oil onto both sides of each bread slice. Sprinkle a bit of sea salt on one side of each.

Place the bread and the lemon halves (cut side down) on the grill. Flip the bread slices after about 2 minutes and grill the other side. When the bread is nicely toasted, remove it and set aside.

Place the fish on the grill and cook each side for 7 to 10

minutes. Use a large metal spatula to turn the fish. Grilling time will depend on the size and thickness of your fish and the temperature of your grill. The fish are done when the meat flakes easily away from the bones. Fillets will cook much faster, about 4 to 6 minutes on each side.

Place the fish on a serving platter and squeeze the juice from the grilled lemon over the top of the fish. Serve with the grilled bread and a green salad.

Lent: fasting, almsgiving, discernment

During Lent, we are asked to devote ourselves to seeking the Lord in prayer and reading Scripture, to service by giving alms, and to practice self-control through fasting.

Many know of the tradition of abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, but we are also called to practice self-discipline and fast in other ways throughout the Lenten season.

In the early Church and, to a lesser extent still today, there were two fasts. There was the "total fast" that preceded all major feasts or sacramental events. The ancient name for this fast was "statio" from the verb "sto, stare" to stand watch, on guard or in vigil. The second fast was a fast of abstinence from certain foods, e.g., meats or fats. This was more an act of self-discipline and self-control.

The total fast is still kept today prior to reception of Holy Communion. On the other hand, the fast of abstinence was allowed on Sundays because the continuity of abstinence can be important for it to be effective.

These initial observations, then, teach us that the Eucharist is always the end of a preparation. It is always the fulfillment of an expectation.

Catholics are required to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday and to abstain from meat on all Fridays during Lent.

In addition, the giving of alms is one way to share God's gifts — not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them

and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2446*)

The foundational call of Christians to charity is a frequent theme of the Gospels. During Lent, we are asked to focus more intently on "almsgiving," which means donating money or goods to the poor and performing other acts of charity. As one of the three pillars of Lenten practice, almsgiving is "a witness to fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God."

There are several special opportunities for almsgiving through donations to Church ministries for which collections are conducted during the Lenten season. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2462*)

Many churches hold special appeals for local needs during Lent and there are countless other ways to offer your time, talent and treasure to needy individuals and organizations during Lent and throughout the year.

In Lent, the baptized are called to renew their baptismal commitment as others prepare to be baptized through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, a period of learning and discernment for individuals who have declared their desire to become Catholics.

The key to fruitful observance of these practices is to recognize their link to baptismal renewal. We are called not just to abstain from sin during Lent, but to true conversion of our hearts and minds as followers of Christ. We recall those waters in which we were baptized into Christ's death, died to sin and evil, and began new life in Christ.

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.

Q. Are there exemptions other than age from the requirement to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday?

A. 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.

For more frequently asked questions about Lent, visit the USSCB website at www.usccb.org.



Upcoming Retreats

All ACTS Retreats have been cancelled until further notice.

Please contact individual retreat organizers for more information about rescheduling.

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

A list of ACTS Retreat dates can be found at www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/.

Popes Francis, Benedict XVI received COVID vaccines

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Both Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI have received the first dose of the vaccine against COVID-19 after the Vatican started vaccinating its employees and residents Jan. 13.

The archbishop had told the German Catholic news agency KNA Jan. 11 that 93-year-old Pope Benedict XVI, who lives in a converted monastery in the Vatican Gardens, and his entire household staff wanted to be

vaccinated as soon as the vaccine was available in Vatican City State.

The Vatican's vaccination program was voluntary. The Vatican health service was giving priority to its health care workers, security personnel, employees who deal with the public and older residents, employees and retirees.

In early December, Dr. Andrea Arcangeli, director of the Vatican health service, said

they would begin with the Pfizer vaccine, which was developed in conjunction with BioNTech.

Pope Francis had said in a television interview broadcast Jan. 10 that he too would be vaccinated against the coronavirus as soon as it was available.

He said that he believed that from an ethical point of view, everyone should take the vaccine because those who did not would not only put their own lives at risk, but also the lives of others.



COVID VACCINE. The Vatican health service began vaccinating employees, residents and retirees with the COVID-19 vaccine mid-January. Pope Francis and retired Pope Benedict XVI had both said they will be vaccinated.

Catholic Health Association launches initiative to confront racism

Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) — In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation's movement for racial reckoning, the Catholic Health Association of the United States announced an initiative to confront racism in the provision of health care.

The initiative was announced in a Feb. 4 news conference on Zoom with Catholic health care leaders.

"With a deep sense of urgency, we feel called to act," said Mercy Sister Mary Haddad, CHA president and CEO. She said the pandemic's impact on people of color and the racial justice protests of last year demonstrated "our strides against racism have simply not been enough ... more must be done."

Similarly, Lloyd Dean, president and CEO of CommonSpirit Health, the largest Catholic health system in the U.S., said: "This is our moment" and added that this work Catholic health care groups are taking on

"can be a game changer."

He said the coronavirus pandemic has revealed deep disparities in health care, noting that people of color are four times more likely to be hospitalized and three times more likely to die of COVID-19 than others. "Shame on us if we do not seize this moment as a nation and a society to make measurable and demonstrable changes," he added.

CHA represents more than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities across the country. Already, 23 Catholic health care systems have signed a pledge stressing their commitment to confront racism in health care provision which includes equity in COVID-19 testing and care; looking closely at hiring, promotion and retention practices; forming stronger partnerships with communities of color; and advocating for policy changes that address racism and social injustice.

By signing the pledge, the health care groups agree to make sure COVID-19 testing is available and accessible in

minority communities and that treatments are distributed equitably as they become available. They also indicated they will work to make sure COVID-19 vaccinations are available for individuals and families at higher risk, especially elderly populations and communities of color.

One example of this already underway at CommonSpirit Health — in partnership with the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta — is a 10-year, \$100 million initiative to expand opportunities for Black and other underrepresented physicians and to improve COVID-19 testing, care delivery and vaccine allocation directed toward vulnerable populations.

"We believe that everyone has the right to be healthy," said Dean, noting that "health equity is impacted by factors inside and outside of our facilities — from access to housing, food and transportation to culturally competent clinicians who have common lived experience. It's time for us to come together to

solve these problems proactively and holistically."

Another part of this pledge is making internal changes. Member organizations will be looking at how they recruit, hire, promote and retain employees; and how they conduct business operations and hold leaders accountable.

"Catholic health care providers have long been a beacon of hope for our communities," said Ernie Sadau, president and CEO of CHRISTUS Health, a Catholic nonprofit health system with more than 350 services and facilities. With this initiative, he said, Catholic health care providers are leading by example and taking an active role in health equity, which he said starts inside each facility.

Dr. Tamarah Duperval-Brownlee, senior vice president and chief community impact officer at Ascension, a health care system with 67 hospitals in the U.S., did not deny the very real work ahead to end health disparities but she said she was proud of the effort that's already been done.

And as far as continuing this work, she said there are some obvious and very personal first steps.

"We need to listen better, especially with communities of color," she said, referring not only to patients but to employees. Building trust within communities takes time, but she said it will happen as "we engage with people where they are."

The Catholic health care leaders acknowledged in the news conference that what they are taking on will likely lead to broader reforms in housing, food and employment.

They also recognized that other health care groups across the country are similarly trying to take up this necessary challenge.

"The pandemic has taught us, we cannot do it alone," said Dean, stressing that working together on the local and national level will be "critical to address and build the infrastructure that was lacking."

More about this initiative can be found online at <https://www.chausa.org/cha-we-are-called>.

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/ 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.

Manna House Golf Tournament

Manna House has been in Central Louisiana for 30 years providing hot, nutritious meals every day to those in need. The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2 hurricanes last year created unforeseen expenses for Manna House. Through it all, Manna House continued to feed approximately 5,500 people each month.

The Hixson Ford Pro-AM / Coca-Cola Dr. Pepper APT Pro Golf Tournament is Manna House's main fundraising event. Please join in their mission to banish hunger by participating in the Hixson Ford Pro-AM golf tournament on Tuesday, March 9 and the Coca-Cola Dr. Pepper APT Pro Golf Tour March 10 - 13, 2021. All proceeds are dedicated to the Manna House.

The Hixson Ford Pro-Am Tournament on Mar. 9 will have each team of three paired with a professional golfer. The entry fee is \$1,000 per team and includes box lunch, green fees, golf cart, hole sponsorship, and the opportunity to play with a professional golfer. Due to COVID restrictions there will be no social gatherings. Entry forms can be found on the Manna House website - givetomannahouse.com. For more information please contact Theresa Slater, tournament chairperson at (318) 664-3603 or Jessica Viator at (318) 445-9053.

The Coca-Cola Dr. Pepper APT Golf Pro Tour is scheduled for March 10 - 13, will also be held at Oakwing Golf Course.

"We are so excited to once again be the beneficiary of this world-class golf tournament," said Jessica Viator, executive director of Manna House. Viator said a number of sponsorship packages are still available including Presenting Sponsorships, Shoot-Out, Cart Sign, Driving Range, Putting Green, Pro-Am Team Sponsorship, and Hole Sponsorship. All sponsor dollars for these tournaments will benefit the Manna House. Due to COVID restrictions there will be no social gatherings. Masks are required to enter the Oakwing Club House and social distancing is encouraged.

Again, for more information, contact Theresa Slater, tournament chairperson at (318) 664-3603 or Jessica Viator at (318) 445-9053.

Brother Paul Casey, F.S.E. dies

Brother Paul Casey, F.S.E., 81, passed away over the weekend. He was the senior-most member of the Brothers of the Holy Eucharist and had served at Saint Joseph School in Plaquemine most of his life. He lived over 60 years in professed religious life.

Visitation and the Funeral Mass was held at Mater Dolorosa Church in Plaquemine on Thursday, Feb. 11. Please remember Brother Paul in your prayers and Mass intentions.



Ordination set for May 22, 2021

Dcn. Thomas Kennedy and Dcn. Robert Johnson are scheduled to be ordained priests for the Diocese of Alexandria on Saturday, May 22, 2021 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral at 10:00 a.m. Because we do not know what the COVID restrictions will be at that time, it is likely that seating will be limited. More information will be released in the coming months.

Seminarian Burses January 2021 Donations

Ms. Lilla Armand	\$5.00
Father Taylor Reynolds Burse	
Ms. Lilla Armand	\$5.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Father Rusty Rabalais Burse	
Mrs. Claudette Couvillion	\$50.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Mr. Craig Leach	
In Memory of Mrs. Janet C. Leach	\$50.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Marion A. French	
In Memory of Mrs. Kathleen Voltz	\$50.00
Father Gus Voltz Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Schupbach	\$50.00
Deacon Gary Schupbach Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Schupbach	\$100.00
Monsignor Steve Testa Burse	
Ms. Elizabeth Holmes	\$100.00
Father Daniel Hart Burse	
Mr. Robert Bradshaw	\$100.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Ms. Margaret R. Juneau	\$100.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Mr. Thomas B. Wahlder	\$100.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Mrs. Barbara Rigby	\$100.00
Leo P. Dobard Burse	
Mr. Jerold E. Knoll	\$200.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Ms. Blanche Tarwarter	\$250.00
Father José Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Total	\$1,310.00

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

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

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

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Parish Spotlight: St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph, Louisiana Established 1940

The first pioneer missionary of Louisiana, Fr. Zenobius Membré, accompanied French explorer Robert LaSalle's first expedition in early 1682 in which he canoed the lower Mississippi River. It was near present day Newellton, Louisiana that Fr. Membré proclaimed the gospel to the Tensas Indians on the shores of Lake St. Joseph.

In 1883, the Catholic Directory lists St. Joseph as a mission of Lake Providence. In 1888, it became a mission of the church at Vidalia. In 1940, Bishop Daniel Desmond invited the Josephite Fathers to take over the apostolate in Tensas Parish centering their efforts in St. Joseph and the town of Waterproof. In 1941-1942, the Josephites expanded their efforts to include the missions at Newellton and Winnsboro. In 1943, the Josephites established the Blessed Martin de Porres Center in St. Joseph to help co-ordinate their efforts to aid hundreds of black sharecroppers



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH IN ST. JOSEPH, LOUISIANA

and migrant workers who came to work in the fertile fields in the delta region of the mighty Mississippi River.

In 1957, the Josephites retired from the area and diocesan priests were sent to staff the parish and its missions of Newellton and Waterproof.

The present St. Joseph's

Church was built in 1960 and was dedicated by Bishop Charles Greco. Msgr. Terrance Lennon served as the first diocesan pastor there.

Today, St. Joseph Church serves not only the locals, but also the many "Lake People" as they are affectionately known – the visitors who maintain hunting and

fishing camps and residences that are used year round by sportsmen and women and their families.

In 2013, it was decided that the time had come to replace the Waterproof mission's deteriorating church building so St. Francis of Assisi moved into a new one purchased from another church denomination.

Mission: St. Francis of Assisi - Waterproof



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI MISSION CHURCH, WATERPROOF, LA

Continue to support your church parish

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

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

The address to each church parish can be found on the diocese website at www.diocesealex.org. Your pastor will appreciate your continued support.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us.

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

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Morgan Newton, Owner

Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!

Psalm 137 : 1
Responsorial Psalm for March 14

Avoyelles KC Triple Star Council award

Fifth Ward/Moncla Knights of Columbus Council 9418 was presented the Triple Star Council Award at its last meeting by State Deputy Vernon F. Ducote.

To achieve the Star Council Award, a council must earn the Father McGiveny Award (Membership Growth), Founder's Award (Insurance Promotion), and Columbian Award (Culture of Life). "Triple Star, 300% of Goal" award is only achieved by less than 1% of over 16,000 councils.

This prestigious award was obtained under the leadership of Past Grand Knight Michael Guillory and fellow Brother Knights of Council 9418. Fifth Ward/Moncla Council 9418 continues the mission of the Knights of Columbus (Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism), with the leadership of Grand Knight Steven Bordelon.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS. State Deputy Vernon F. Ducote presents Triple Star Award to Past Grand Knight Michael Guillory, Fifth Ward/Moncla Council 9418, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Fifth Ward. Photo Credit: Derek Faust, Knights of Columbus Field Agent

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. 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 (visit www.diocesealex.org and look for "A Safe Environment For All" under the "Our Faith" tab). Here, you can find more information, 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

Who is the minister of the sacrament of matrimony?

(answer on page 18)

St. Joseph

Protector of Families

Pray for Us!

Composed by Marcus Descant

Good St. Joseph, guardian of the Most High,
A soul who wandered, but never asked why.
An Angel came down from heaven one night,
And told him he would aid him on his flight.

The night was cold with no place to stay,
The only bed was one of hay.
To the glorious Mother, a Child was born.
Into the world He came, and would
receive much scorn.

His name was Jesus, a Savior for all,
He was protected by Joseph, a mighty wall.
An Angel led them to safety one night,
With Joseph always there during the flight.


Thanks to St. Joseph, who was led by the dove.
He protected the Savior, the God of Love.
So I praise You, O Lord, from Your birth,
You, the King of Heaven and Earth.

You came down from heaven to help us all,
We who have sinned, because of the fall.
Through Your goodness, You gave us new life,
To handle problems, grief and strife.

Because of Your mercy and love for the lost,
Another chance was given to all who were lost.
We all confess and say from the heart.
Forgive us Lord, and thanks for a new start.

*If you would like to order copies of this poem as a prayer card,
please contact Liz Descant at lizdescant@gmail.com*

Advertisement paid for by Marcus Descant



Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Tuesday, March 9, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center,
4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria

Thursday, March 18, 6:00 p.m.
St. Anthony School (cafeteria), Bunkie

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.
For more information, call 318-445-6424, ext. 213.

Activities across the Diocese of Alexandria



(left) HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, SHREVEPORT. Parishioners of St. Frances Cabrini Church took a trip with Father Taylor Reynolds to Holy Trinity Church in downtown Shreveport to venerate the five priests recently recognized by the Vatican's Congregation for Saints' Causes which has reviewed their stories and granted the Diocese of Shreveport permission to begin the process of gathering evidence of the sanctity of the priests' lives. This is the first step toward sainthood for the five servants of God.

View more photos on the photo galleries
at www.diocesealex.org



ST. RITA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. Pastor of St. Rita Church in Alexandria, Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, blessed the newly planted trees on the church property along Bayou Rapides Road. Among those attending were parishioners who donated the trees in the name of loved ones.



ST. LOUIS CHURCH, GLENMORA. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at St. Louis Church with pastor, Fr. Kenneth Obiekwe, on February 7.



ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHEs. Catholic Schools week kicked off with school Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert Marshall and then each class conducted events geared to the theme: LEGO and Let God.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the school Mass for Sacred Heart School on January 29 to kick off Catholic Schools week.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK: Jan. 31-Feb. 6, 2021



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Bishop Robert Marshall visited with the students and staff at St. Anthony of Padua School in Bunkie on Wednesday, Feb. 3.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL. Friday, Feb. 5 of Catholic Schools Week, Bishop Marshall celebrated OLPS's First Friday Mass. The 5th graders were able to take a picture with him after Mass then he joined the whole school at a Spirit Jam put on by several of Prompt Succor School's very talented parents.



ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION SCHOOL, COTTONPORT. Bishop Robert Marshall visited with the students and staff at St. Mary's Assumption School in Cottonport on Wednesday, Feb. 3.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. Bishop Robert Marshall visited with the students and staff at St. Frances Cabrini School in Alexandria on Thursday, Feb. 4.



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, PLAUCHEVILLE. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Thomas Roque, Sr., accompanied Bishop Robert Marshall during a visit with the students and staff at St. Joseph School in Plaquemine on Wednesday, Feb. 3. The school was celebrating Religious Vocations day in conjunction with Catholic Schools Week.



HOLY SAVIOR MENARD CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. Bishop Robert Marshall visited all the Catholic Schools during Catholic Schools Week at the beginning of February. He visited classrooms at Holy Savior Menard Central High School on Thursday, Feb. 4.

Lenten activities across the Diocese

Lenten Missions, Stations of the Cross, Penance Services, Fish Frys

Lenten Missions

Every Thursday during Lent:

St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria

A Lenten Scripture Study will be held every Thursday evening in Lent beginning on the Feb. 18 at 6:00 p.m. in Ducote Hall.

Every Thursday during Lent:

Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen, LA

Join us for a Lenten Mission every Thursday in March (March 4, 11, 18, 25) beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the church.

March 1-4: St. Rita Church, Alexandria

St. Rita Church will have a Lenten Mission on March 1-4 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. with guest speaker, Fr. Augustine (Fr. Gus) Tharappel, MSFS. Fr. Gus will speak on the Season of Lent as the "Springtime" of the Church as well as the Lenten spiritual disciplines of repentance, penance, prayer, and almsgiving.

March 8-10: Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville

6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Church. Fr. Ramji Shoury will be conducting our Lenten Mission. The topics for meditation for the Mission will be: Prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane Why (need of) Physical suffering of Jesus Victory if Suffering and Resurrection of Jesus and Our resurrection from sin and death.

Stations of the Cross

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria

Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday in Lent at 5:30 p.m.

St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria

Stations of the Cross and Benediction will be held every Friday in Lent at 5:30 p.m.

St. Michael the Archangel Church, Leesville

Stations of the Cross each Friday during lent at 5:30 after the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

St. Joseph Church, Marksville

Stations of the Cross on the Fridays of Lent: 12:05 p.m. in the church and 5:30 p.m. in the outdoor prayer garden behind the adoration chapel (weather permitting).

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Mansura

During Lent, Mass will be celebrated at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church in Mansura at 8:00 a.m. followed by Stations of the Cross.

St. Paul the Apostle Church, Mansura

During Lent, Stations of the Cross will be at 5:30 p.m. at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Mansura.

Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen, LA

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament through the day on Fridays beginning at 9:00 a.m. and concluding at 5:30 p.m. with Stations of the Cross on March 5, 12, 19, 26.

Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches

Stations of the Cross on Fridays at 5:15 p.m. during Lent

Fish Frys

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria

TAKE OUT or DELIVERY ONLY

Knights of Columbus Council 3200 will have their Lenten Fish Fry in Xavier Hall from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each Friday during Lent from February 28 through March 26. Due to Covid regulations there will be no dining in the hall, and masks will be required for pick-up. For delivery call 447-3663 with a minimum of three orders. Menu includes fried fish, french fries, hush puppies, and coleslaw. (Please note that the Fish Fry will not be served on Good Friday)

St. Rita Church, Alexandria

DRIVE THRU/TAKE OUT ONLY! at FRONT DOORS Holy Family Center 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. February 19, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26 (no Fish Fry on Good Friday) \$8.00 a plate : US Catfish, French Fries, Hush Puppies, Coleslaw. Sponsored by the KC Council #1134.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville

Knights of Columbus Council 14657 will serve catfish plates on Feb. 26, March 12, March 26. Includes fried fish, fries, hush puppy and corn on the cob. Shrimp Creole plates will be served on March 5 and March 19. Plates will consist of Shrimp Creole, corn on the cob and roll. Cost is only \$9/plate. You may pick your plates up at Mac's Fresh Market 3005 Hwy

28 East Pineville. Serving will begin 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. free delivery for orders of 10 plates or more, must be within 5 miles of Mac's Fresh Market. Call: Robert (318) 613-8577 or Mike (225) 588-3144 for orders.

St. Michael the Archangel Church, Leesville

All are CARRY OUT only

St. Michael the Archangel Fish Fry Dates for 2021: Feb 19, March 5, March 19. \$10 a plate.

Penance Services

St. Rita Church, Alexandria

Penance service on March 4 beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen, LA

Penitential Service/Confessions will be every Friday after 5:30 p.m. Stations of the Cross.

St. Anthony of Padua Church, Bunkie

Lenten weekday Masses are Monday through Friday at 7:30 A.M. Confessions are available before all Masses.

Other Devotions

St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria

Sunday Recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Prayers in Reparation to the Holy Face will be offered every Sunday in Lent at 3:00 p.m.

Church of the Little Flower

Penitential Pilgrimage - Date TBA. St. Joseph's Shrine in Gretna, the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Seelos, and Our Lady of Prompt Succor in New Orleans. For more information, contact the Church office at (318) 346-2840.

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for March 2021

Human fraternity -

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.



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Mass is being offered online and on radio

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

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

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

Sunday

- 7:00 a.m. Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville KZLG-FM 95.5
- 8:00 a.m. Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville - KLIL-FM 92.1
St. Rita Church, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube
Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth on Facebook or YouTube
- 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. (time varies) Radio Maria | www.radiomaria.us (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 (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 (click the play button) or tune in on your radio in Alexandria on station 580 AM or in Natchitoches on station 89.7 AM
- 5:00 p.m. St. Michael the Archangel, Leesville on Facebook

View recorded Mass on YouTube:

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

Holy Week
is
March 28 to
April 3

Go to
www.diocesealex.org
to view a schedule of Holy
Week activities across the
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for updated
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from the
Diocese of Alexandria.

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

Rite of Election 2021

... and call to continuing conversion

The annual Rite of Election of Catechumens and the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates Who Are Preparing for Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church was celebrated at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral on Sunday, February 21, 2021.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 restrictions and the winter storm that had just occurred the week prior, Bishop Robert Marshall was able to welcome the soon-to-be-Catholics who will be welcomed into the Church at Easter Vigil and blessed and thanked those who have supported them through their journey so far.



ST. RITA CHURCH. Catechumens and Candidate with Bishop Marshall: Donna Johnson, Kala Warren, Jason Bell, Christina Johnson.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI CHURCH. Catechumens and Candidates with Bishop Marshall: Kalem Miqbel, Jayden Tillman, John Richardson, Michael Cohen, Brenna Griffin, Marilyn Rabalais, Ricky Cleveland, Tonya Dinnat, Christopher Byrd, Samantha Callahan, Marissa Mercer.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. Catechumens and Candidates with Bishop Marshall: Jonathan Stokes, Lesley Saucier, Barett Byrd, Billy Gentry, III.



MATER DOLOROSA CHURCH, PLAUCHEVILLE. Catechumen, Mary Plauche and Bishop Marshall



ST. PATRICK CHURCH, FERRIDAY. Catechumen Zach Sharp with Bishop Marshall.



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE. Candidates: Amanda Rhodes and Jordan Walker with Bishop Marshall.



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL. Catechumen, Tina Ducote and Candidate, Randy Hull with Bishop Marshall.



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH, LEESVILLE. Candidate Ben Fakes with Bishop Marshall.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH, PINEVILLE. Candidate Sandy Milliner with Bishop Marshall.



ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHURCH, COTTONPORT. Catechumen, Sara Rose Dausat and Candidate, Jacqueline Tullos with Bishop Marshall.

Create a clean heart in me, O God.

Psalm 51 : 3 | Responsorial Psalm for March 21

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Trivia Answer

Answer: The couple being married.

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Book review

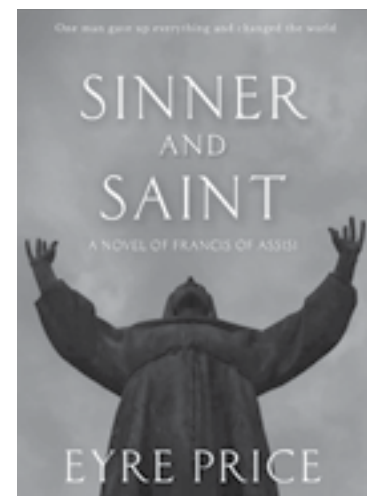
Sinner and Saint: A Novel of Francis of Assisi, by Eyre Price

"Sinner and Saint" takes on a big subject, the life of St. Francis of Assisi, about whom so much has been written. Yet, Eyre Price manages to give us a fresh take on the life of the revered saint. He eschews hagiography to give us a realistic, meaningful portrayal of the saint in all of his strengths and struggles.

We see the young Francis in

conflict with his wealthy merchant father, as a hard-fighting soldier and then a prisoner of war, and as a young man struggling to find his own way of simplicity and service to others.

Also well detailed is the story of his common efforts with St. Clare to help the poor, and of his lifelong commitment to the sanctity of the natural world and



the environment. Indeed, he was to become the patron saint of ecology, as St. John Paul II named him.

Price's depiction of Francis is always compelling. His dramatization of the saint's story is hard to put down, with dialogue that propels the narrative so well that you almost want to finish the book in one sitting.

Price, who has published three other novels, writes that he took "some factual liberties with what passes for the established history of Francis' life and times." His purpose in making these "embellishments" was to capture "more truly the nature of Francis' spirit — or at least, what his spirit represents to me."

And that is, "an (extra) ordinary man whose life of trials and tribulations remains ever relevant and whose courageous example continues to offer us a whispered, but persuasive answer to many of the questions that plague us today."

The book is available on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.



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Through the Holy Spirit by a virgin birth.

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His love for her was ever so dear.

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To bring forth Jesus during the Christmas season.

Joseph was chosen to protect them here,
Like a mighty warrior, they had no fear.

As Jesus grew in age, knowledge and grace,
He knew for sure this was His place.

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Orders restore humane treatment of immigrants, refugees, says bishop

WASHINGTON (CNS) — President Joe Biden's executive orders aimed at rebuilding the U.S. immigration system, restoring due process and recognizing the dignity of newcomers illustrate his "commitment to prioritize assisting our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters," said the head of the U.S. bishops' migration committee.

These orders "will help to ensure that immigrants and refugees are treated humanely and in accordance with their God-given dignity," said Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration.

The bishop's Feb. 3 statement

addressed the actions Biden took the previous day.

The president signed orders to address root causes of migration from Central America and expand opportunities for legal migration; create a task force to reunify families separated by policies of the Trump administration; and strengthen integration and inclusion efforts for new Americans.

The task force will be led by Alejandro Mayorkas, confirmed by the Senate Feb. 2 — and sworn in the same day — to serve as the next U.S. secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, which includes carrying out Biden's immigration agenda. Mayorkas is the first immigrant as

well as the first Latino appointed to the high-profile Cabinet position.

In his statement, Bishop Dorsonville said migration policies implemented by the Trump administration "have directly impacted and harmed immigrants' and refugees' lives, in many cases needlessly instilling fear and creating or perpetuating family separation."

"The Catholic Church teaches that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and that we must uphold the inherent dignity of each person," he said. "As a society, we must remain consistent in our openness and treatment of all persons, regardless of whether they were born in the United States or immigrated here."

Bishop Dorsonville said the U.S. bishops "know that changes will take time but (we) applaud President Biden's commitment to prioritize assisting our immigrant

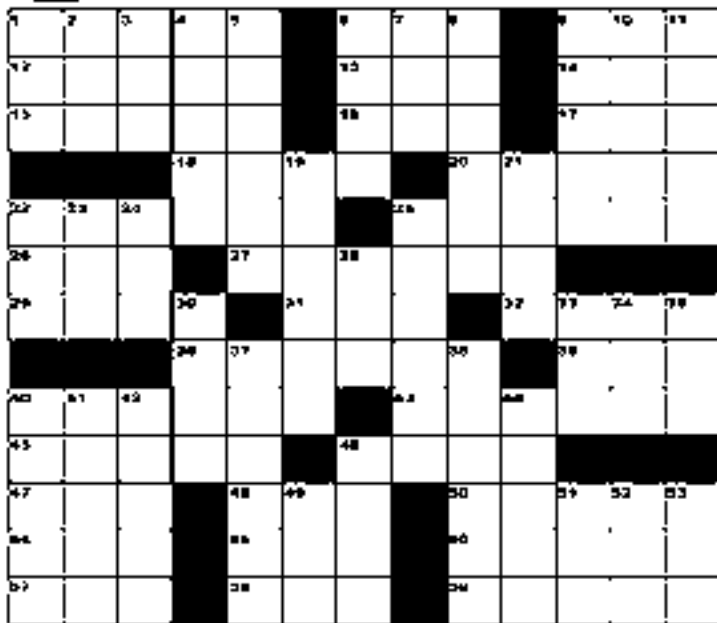
and refugee brothers and sisters. We also offer our assistance and cooperation on these urgent matters of human life and dignity."



IMMIGRATION AND DIGNITY. A Customs and Border Protection agent monitors single-adult male detainees at a Border Patrol station in McAllen, Texas, July 12, 2019. (CNS photo/Veronica G. Cardenas, Reuters)

The Cross Word

March 7 and 14, 2021
answers on pg 6



Readings: Ex 20:1-17; 1Cor 1:22-25; Jn 2:13-25 and 2Chron 36:14-16, 19-23; Eph 2:4-10; Jn 3:14-21

ACROSS

- 1 "___ porridge hot..."
- 6 Exercise place
- 9 Tree
- 12 Forefinger
- 13 Popular pope name
- 14 Also
- 15 Music speed
- 16 Hearing part
- 17 Judge title
- 18 A fox's hole (2 wds.)
- 20 Woke up
- 22 Phonograph needle
- 25 Silken
- 26 "Raven" author

27 Frightener

- 29 Mary's mother
- 31 Lyric poem
- 32 Unbroken
- 36 Knows from practice
- 39 Rowing tool
- 40 "___ crucified"
- 43 Eagerly
- 45 Churns
- 46 Association (abbr.)
- 47 No room here
- 48 Am. sign language
- 50 Musical composition
- 54 Distress call
- 55 Russian type of boat
- 56 Tree product

- 57 Before (prefix)
- 58 Observe secretly
- 59 Tendency

DOWN

- 1 Cherry stone
- 2 East northeast
- 3 Adminal (abbr.)
- 4 Forms flower calyx
- 5 Book 2 of Bible
- 6 Dale
- 7 Affirmative
- 8 Mood
- 9 Community's culture
- 10 States
- 11 "___ changers"
- 19 Travel with
- 21 Don't do on Sabbath
- 22 Resort hotel
- 23 2,000 pounds
- 24 Japanese money
- 25 They look for wisdom
- 28 Advertisements
- 30 "Their works were ___"
- 33 Billion years
- 34 Friend
- 35 Test
- 37 School writings
- 38 Jesus spent 40 days here
- 40 Crunchy
- 41 "___ your father and mother"
- 42 Gargle
- 44 Come on stage
- 46 Partner nation
- 49 Exhaust
- 51 Employ
- 52 Obnoxious noises
- 53 "The ___ of the age"

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Catholic Schools continue to excel



(left) SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Sacred Heart School Overall Catholic School Week Religion Fair Winner- Emma [redacted] daughter of Heath and Angie of Moreauville.



(right) OLPS SCIENCE FAIR. On Monday January 25, 2021 the 6th grade students at Our Lady of Prompt Succor School competed in their school Science Fair. This is a culmination of many hours of researching, experimenting, writing research papers, and presenting their projects. Some of the students even presented their projects virtually. The students did an awesome job, on some really original topics. The 3 overall winners are 1st Place Megan [redacted], 2nd Place Griffin [redacted], and 3rd Place Emma [redacted]. Pictured are Left to Right, Emma [redacted], Principal Mrs. Megan Beck, holding her phone with Griffin [redacted] virtually, Megan [redacted], and 6th grade Science Teacher Ms. Sarah Branton.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Sacred Heart School seventh grader, Olivia [redacted], won the Overall Catholic School Week Spelling Bee. She is the daughter of Jamie and Susan [redacted] of Mansura.

4TH DEGREE KC ASSEMBLY #2333 PATRIOTIC ESSAY CONTEST. Catholic students in 7th and 8th grade attending public, private, or parochial schools, or home schooled were eligible to submit a 500-750 word essay on: "What the United States Flag represents and What It Means to Our Country and Me." 1st place winner: SHS student Emma [redacted]. 2nd place winner: SHS student Chloe [redacted].



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A note from the Catholic Schools Office

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

Our Catholic schools have a long history of providing a top-quality Catholic education 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.

SEEK21 speakers share own faith experiences, say Christ has all the answers

By Maurice Beaulieu
Catholic News Service



ORLANDO, Fla. (CNS) -- A bishop and a religious sister who shared the keynote spotlight on the opening night of SEEK21, this year's national conference of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, discussed their own faith journeys and how Catholics from around the world can improve their faith by accepting Jesus' divine character.

SEEK21 drew over 27,000 participants for its virtual events Feb. 4-7 and included college students, missionaries, FOCUS alumni, parishioners, young adults, FOCUS benefactors, clergy, religious and others.

Speaking from Texas, Sister Miriam James Heidland, a member of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, began the first half of the keynote address on "Who Am I?" with a story of her own.

Observing a homeless man under an overpass one day, she had pondered the life of the man and what had brought him to that situation.

"That young man, he just found a place in my heart," Sister Heidland said, wondering which choices led the man there. She used this example to bring light to the Catholics watching her now by asking, "How did you get here? Mentally, emotionally, spiritually, physically. So often in life we end up places and we have no idea how we got there," which

eventually leads to the bigger question, "Who am I?"

She encouraged the viewers to seek out this answer with Christ. "Christ is such a great teacher because what he does is actually teach by asking questions. He elicits the answers from us perhaps even when we don't know what they are ourselves."

Searching oneself for the answer is the key, Sister Heidland added. "There is something (special) about an answer that comes from deep within. ... It's only when we find him, when we continue to turn our face to him that we find out not just who he is but who we are."

"It's such a glorious thing," she said of human life. "We are made to know and to love. We have an intellect and a will. We can perceive what is good and we can choose what is good and we can travel along that path. That our emotions power us ideally

when they are healed to what is good, true, and beautiful, to our deepest desires. To the reveal the deepest questions that we have."

"He welcomes you and I," Sister Heidland said. "And he delights to answer that question in various forms every single day of who am I? How did I get here? Because we are asking that question constantly." Asking those questions is natural and common every day, she said.

She referenced the possibility of venturing down negative paths when Catholics forget who they are. "When we forget who we are we are easily led astray. We easily fall into cancel culture and outrage. In my heart, I don't believe for a second that is what we really want."

Los Angeles Auxiliary Bishop Robert E. Barron, founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, spoke to viewers from Los Angeles about the character of Jesus. "There is nothing I would rather talk to you about than Jesus," Bishop Barron said. "He's everything. He's the alpha

and omega."

"In the singularity of his person, he is the coming together of divinity and humanity. ... Jesus is the fulfillment and culmination of all the great institutions of Israel," he explained. "Think of temple, think of prophecy, think of Torah, think of law, covenant. All that was designed to bring divinity and humanity together, to reconcile God and his people."

This identity of Jesus is "why we say he is our salvation ... our salvation depends on the coming together of divinity and humanity," he said, noting that Catholics cannot be saved by one and not the other.

Referencing the Gospel of Matthew, Bishop Barron quoted: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away. ... Unless you love me more than your mother and father, more than your own life, you are not worthy of me." The emphasis here is that Jesus is "the eternal word ... the highest good" and a complete representation of divinity and humanity, he said.

"We can understand the famously weird question that Jesus poses: 'Who do the crowds say that I am?'" Bishop Barron said. "It makes the point that the Gospels are not first and foremost interested in the moral teaching of Jesus. They are interested in who he is?"

Discussing the humanity of Christ, Bishop Barron said, "The two natures of Jesus come together without mixing, mingling or confusion. In other words, God's coming close does not result in the suppression or eradication of Jesus' humanity, but in the enhancement and elevation of it. ... Look at the claim of Christianity that God in Christ comes close but does not overwhelm the humanity to which he comes close," immediately comparing Jesus' closeness to the forever burning bush.

"As God comes close to a creature, the creature's beauty and integrity is enhanced, not overwhelmed. So we say Jesus is true God and true man."

"There is no philosophy, ancient or modern, that proposes a greater humanism than Christianity," Bishop Barron said. "We claim the divinization of our humanity ... is raised up, enhanced, rendered more beautiful and radiant by the presence of God."

In closing, Bishop Barron had encouraging words for Catholics against any oppressing situations of current times.

"Go forth with this incarnational confidence that it's when you proclaim the divinity of Jesus that you are also by the same token proclaiming the greatest possible humanism. ... Don't be ashamed of Jesus, everybody," he said. "Proclaim Jesus with divine and human with confidence, with joy, with panache, and you will find your missionary vocation fulfilled."



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*My God, my God,
why have you abandoned me?*

Psalm 22 : 8 | Responsorial Psalm for March 28

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
FOCUS Ministries: <https://nsucatholic.org/focus>

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

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. 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.

Marriage Help Program - March 5-7

Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on March 5-7, call 985-232-5963 or email: retrovibrcomcoor@gmail.com or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com

ProAm/APT Pro Golf Tournament - March 9-13

The Hixson Ford ProAM / APT Pro Golf Tournament is Manna House's signature fundraising event. Please join us in our mission to banish hunger by participating in the Hixson Ford ProAM golf tournament on March 9 and the APT Pro Golf Tour March 10-13, 2021. All proceeds are dedicated to the Manna House. For a list of sponsorship levels and entry forms please contact Theresa Slater at (318) 664-3603 or Jessica Viator at (318) 794-6840.

Spring NFP Class Series - begins March 27

You are invited to attend a Natural Family Planning class series teaching the Sympto-Thermal Method through the Couple to Couple League International, the largest provider of NFP instruction in the nation. Natural Family Planning is effective, safe, and morally acceptable to delay or achieve pregnancy. Attendance of all 3 classes completes the course. Classes are on

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

the Saturdays of March 27, April 17, and May 15 from 10:00 – 12:00. There is a one-time fee of \$135 and includes Student Guide book, fertility charts, fertility thermometer, 6 months CycleProGo mobile app, award-winning Family Foundations magazine subscription, and ongoing consultation. For more information and to register for classes, visit www.ccli.org or contact Michael and Leah Pelto at (318) 730-2839 or michaellandleah@suddenlink.net. Registration deadline is March 22.

Transition NFP classes (After childbirth/Pre-menopause) are taught on an as-needed basis. Please contact Michael and Leah to schedule a class.

Ordination to Priesthood - May 22, 2021

Dcn. Thomas Kennedy and Dcn. Robert Johnson are scheduled to be ordained priests for the Diocese of Alexandria on Saturday, May 22, 2021 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral at 10am. Because we do not know what the COVID restrictions will be at that time, it is likely that seating will be limited. More information will be released in the coming months.

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.

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 or email Cari Terracina at info@steubenvillesouth.com.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land - September 14-23

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

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.

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Join in the Coronavirus novena at 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:
March 29
Deadline for news:
Thursday, March 18



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March 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
MARCH 1 Deadline for All American Scholar Award	2	3	Scripture Study 6:00 p.m. St. Francis Cabrini Church, Alexandria Lenten Mission 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen Penance Service, St. Rita	4 FISH FRY: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Cathedral 4:30-6:30 p.m. St. Rita 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Shrimp Creole Mac's Fresh Market (Sacred Heart, Pineville)	5	6	7
Lenten Mission: St. Rita Church, Alexandria - 7:00-8:00 p.m.			FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS		FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE		THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD
PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR MSGR. S. TESTA	PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS	PRAY FOR MSGR. J. TIMMERMANS	PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS	PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE	PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD	
8	9	10	Scripture Study 6:00 p.m. St. Francis Cabrini Church, Alexandria Lenten Mission 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen	11 FISH FRY: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Cathedral 4:30-6:30 p.m. St. Rita 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Fried Fish Mac's Fresh Market (Sacred Heart, Pineville)	12	13	14
Lenten Mission: Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville - 6:00-8:00 p.m.			MANNA HOUSE ProAm/APT GOLF TOURNAMENT: OAKWING GOLF CLUB				FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. J. ANTONY
PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ	PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE	PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER	PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH	PRAY FOR FR. A. AELAVANTHARA	PRAY FOR FR. W. AJAERO	PRAY FOR FR. J. ANTONY	
15	16	17	VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Anthony School Cafeteria, Bunkie Scripture Study 6:00 p.m. Cabrini, Alexandria Lenten Mission 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen	18 FISH FRY: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Cathedral 4:30-6:30 p.m. St. Rita 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Shrimp Creole Mac's Fresh Market (Sacred Heart, Pineville)	19	20	21
PRAY FOR FR. S. BRANDOW	PRAY FOR FR. D. BRAQUET	ST. PATRICK'S DAY PRAY FOR FR. J. BROCATO	PRAY FOR FR. S. CHEMINO	PRAY FOR FR. D. CORKERY	PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR FR. W. DECOSTE	
22	23	24	Scripture Study 6:00 p.m. St. Francis Cabrini Church, Alexandria Lenten Mission 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen	25 FISH FRY: 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Cathedral 4:30-6:30 p.m. St. Rita 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Fried Fish Mac's Fresh Market (Sacred Heart, Pineville)	26	27	28
PRAY FOR FR. D. DEJESUS	PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE	PRAY FOR FR. J. DESIMONE	PRAY FOR FR. A. DHARMARAJ	PRAY FOR FR. D. DUCOTE	PRAY FOR FR. P. FAULK	PALM SUNDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. FERGUSON	
29	30	31	APRIL 1	2	3	4	
PRAY FOR FR. W. GEARHEARD	Chrism Mass 12:00 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. J. GOOTEE	PRAY FOR FR. R. GREMILLION	HOLY THURSDAY PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	GOOD FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. HART	HOLY SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. HASIEBER	EASTER PRAY FOR MSGR. R. HOPPE	

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