

CHURCH TODAY

Volume LII, No. 11

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

November 29, 2021

*Saints
in the
making*

The Our Lady of Prompt Succor School's annual Parade of Saints was held on Friday, Oct. 29. The 4th grade students each picked a saint whom they admire or with whom they have something in common. One student, for example, chose St. Hubert (patron saint of hunting) because of his own passion for the sport. The parents celebrated Mass with the students in grades 4 - 6, and then paraded through the school so that all of the students could see the Saints! See pages 12 - 13 for more saints in the making around our diocese!



INSIDE

Updated guidelines regarding masks

As a result of the lifting of the mask mandate for most indoor gathering, Bishop Robert Marshall recently issued updated guidelines for Mass attendance and participation in most other parish activities. See page 5 for updated guidelines, and page 20 for guidelines concerning our diocesan schools.

6 Ways to prepare for a quiet Advent

Advent ushers in a new liturgical year, a new opportunity to return to the Lord. But in order to truly experience the quiet, peaceful Advent that our hearts desire, we must be intentional. See page 6 for some suggestions on how to prepare for a quiet Advent season.

Come to the Table

We are so excited to see many of you back in our church parish communities! See inside this issue for pictures of life around our diocese.

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In-person meeting finds bishops more reflective on meaning of Eucharist

By Dennis Sadowski
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- Coming together for the first time in two years has been good for the bishops of the United States, in the judgment of Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The in-person gathering for the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore has allowed the prelates to reflect on the Eucharist and what it means to them, and consider the many thoughts offered about a statement on the Eucharist that has been under development for five months, the archbishop told reporters at the close of the first of two days of public sessions.

"We are being able to talk to each other and share our personal situation in our dioceses, in our personal lives," Archbishop Gomez said, explaining that the assembly is the first time he's been able to meet with the bishops since assuming the conference presidency after the 2019 fall gathering.

"It's been wonderful, sharing with bishops and seeing them. I think it's been very fruitful," he said.

The bishops scheduled an executive session for Nov. 15, the first day of their four-day assembly, to discuss the Eucharist statement. Church observers have speculated about whether it would take Catholic politicians who support abortions to task, going so far as to ban them from receiving Holy Communion.

However, Archbishop Gomez said such a step was never



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' MEETING. Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Va., Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, attend a Nov. 16, 2021 news conference during the bishops' fall general assembly in Baltimore. At the podium is Chieko Noguchi, USCCB director of public affairs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the first in-person bishops' meeting since 2019. (CNS photo/Bob Roller)

part of the plan.

He said the statement was meant to serve as a document to share and reinforce Catholic teaching about the real presence of Jesus in holy Communion.

Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, Virginia, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Communications, said during the afternoon news conference that the document falls in line with the goals of the USCCB strategic plan adopted in 2019.

"We've been at this document for a while, including accepting the recommendation that we would spend more time on it (on person)," Bishop Burbidge said. "Which is what we did."

He said there was extensive collaboration over the summer

and at regional meetings: "There were multiple opportunities for bishops to comment and make amendments."

He said that, following the previous day's executive session, the statement on the Eucharist was ready for a final discussion and a vote when the bishops reconvened Nov. 17. "God willing, I don't see any significant changes coming," he said.

The daylong executive session included prayer, time for the sacrament of reconciliation and round-the-clock Eucharistic Adoration.

Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul-Minneapolis, who was recently named bishop of Crookston, Minnesota, told reporters that bishops had

gathered late into the night in the special Eucharistic Adoration chapel in the hotel where the assembly is taking place.

"It's a blessing to be together," Bishop Cozzens said, adding that the statement on the Eucharist will serve as a resource for the bishops' planned eucharistic revival, which will see a variety of resources being introduced in the spring.

"The document is a beginning," he said. "You would expect we would produce other catechetical resources... It's an excellent document, capturing the mystery of the Eucharist, and we will build on that document so people have the understanding of the eucharistic life."

*Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus
prayer of invocation
to the Holy Spirit*

We stand before You, Holy Spirit as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our action.

Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.

All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the Communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.

Employers, courts examine religious exemptions to COVID-19 vaccine mandates

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Religion usually stays out of the workplace, but now with expanding COVID-19 vaccine requirements, employees' personal faith is front and center as many of them across the country say they have religious reasons not to get vaccinated.

To get a religious exemption, employees have to provide reasons for their claim and sometimes proof of it through a form signed by a church leader. Employers then have to determine whether these beliefs are sincere and if an accommodation for the unvaccinated employee would place an undue hardship on others by posing a direct threat to their health and safety.

Determining sincerity can be complicated because it is so personal. There is no checklist of religions that have come out as completely against the vaccine because no major religion has done so.

Members of different faiths have differing views though and some have raised questions particularly about vaccine mandates. The Biden administration, as part of its "Path Out of the Pandemic" plan, has ordered federal workers, workers at facilities that participate in Medicare or Medicaid and employers with 100 employees or more to require vaccination in the upcoming months.

These mandates are being challenged in multiple lawsuits, including one filed by a coalition of 10 states, while a number of employee vaccine mandates are being challenged in multiple circuit courts.

On Nov. 12, a federal appeals court upheld its previous order temporarily blocking President Joe Biden's vaccine and testing mandate for large companies; the Justice Department had challenged the court's block on the mandate.

In the meantime, religious exemption forms are piling up. One religious argument against the vaccine is that it goes against the New Testament passage which describes human bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit.

Another religious argument is a pro-life one, citing a connection the three U.S. vaccines have -- in



COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATE. A woman in New York City holds a placard Oct. 25, 2021, protesting the government's COVID-19 vaccine mandate. A federal judge ruled Oct. 12 that New York must continue to allow health care workers to seek exemptions from a statewide COVID-19 vaccine mandate on religious grounds as a lawsuit challenging the requirement proceeded. On Oct. 29, a federal appeals court panel upheld New York's vaccine mandate for health care workers and said providing a religious exemption wasn't necessary. (CNS photo/Carlo Allegri, Reuters)

varying degrees -- to an abortion-derived cell line.

Statements from both the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have said that current COVID-19 vaccines are morally permissible, but have stressed that Catholics are not obligated to get them.

Some bishops advised Catholics specifically not to get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, if they had a choice, saying it was linked to an abortion-derived cell line in its development, unlike the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which used these lines only in testing phase.

While Pope Francis recommended that people get vaccinated as "an act of love,"

heeded to competent medical authorities and to avoid the false narratives utterly unfounded in science."

Similarly, the three major branches of modern Judaism have released statements in support of COVID-19 vaccinations as did the Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America, which noted the COVID-19 vaccine "is a matter of great importance that goes beyond the interests of individuals to communal ones."

But while major religious groups are backing the vaccine, a growing number of individuals are getting a spiritual boost to their rejection of the vaccine straight from a federal law.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 says employers must make reasonable accommodations for employees who object to work requirements because of "sincerely held" religious beliefs. Those challenging government-imposed mandates -- on public hospital workers and military personnel -- look for relief from the First Amendment's free exercise of religion.

In guidance issued in late October, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission stipulated that when a person claims a religious exemption, their belief does not have to be recognized by an organized religion, but it can't be founded on political or social ideas.

This puts the employer in the judgment seat to determine if a person has a legitimate religious belief or a philosophical objection about the vaccine.

In claiming exemptions, employees are sometimes required to show signed letters from church leaders. Templates for these forms are available through the Christian legal advocacy group Liberty Counsel and the National Catholic Bioethics Center, which said this summer it does "not endorse mandated COVID-19 immunization" with the vaccines currently used in the United States.

The center's form said the "Catholic Church teaches that a person may be required to refuse a medical intervention, including a vaccination, if his or her informed conscience comes to this sure judgment."

As some Catholics have brought these forms to their pastors to sign, some Catholic leaders across the country have urged priests not to sign them, stressing the importance of getting vaccinated.

In October, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the U.S. Archdiocese for the Military Services said: "No one should be forced to receive a COVID-19 vaccine if it would violate the sanctity of his or her conscience."

With rules about religious exemptions for COVID-19 vaccines varying among religious leaders and by state and institutions, people are turning to the courts for some direction.

In late August, a federal district court ruled in favor of the University of Massachusetts in a suit filed against the school by a Catholic student for denying her a religious exemption to the vaccine requirement. An administrator told her the vaccine did not violate her faith, citing a statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that said the vaccines were "morally justified."

The court said the university was not under a constitutional obligation to offer a religious exemption and that the school did not administer its religious exemption policy in a way that burdens some religions but not others.

The great divide over these types of cases may ultimately need to be decided by the Supreme Court.

This fall, the court allowed a vaccine mandate for health care workers in Maine to remain in effect, rejecting an emergency appeal from some of the employees seeking a religious exemption.

Although the one-sentence order issued Oct. 29 did not give an explanation, the justices expressed their views in separate writings.

Justice Neil Gorsuch, in an eight-page dissent joined by Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, said that he would

CONTINUED

(see MANDATES, pg. 3)

My heart is so full

How are you doing, friend? If we haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet, I'm Cari, and I am so grateful to be writing you right now! Connection has never been so important, so I wanted to let you know that I am walking along side you as we look toward the beginning of a new liturgical year.

In 2020, we went from being over-scheduled, stressed, and having every minute accounted for ... all to a complete standstill. In 2021, the flood gates opened, and work, school, activities, and expectations of our time resumed.

We have a renewed yearning to be intentional. To feel like the driver of our own schedules, and to plan out the most important ways to tend to our goals and habits.

I'd love to connect with you over the next several months and hear how you are doing - what matters more to you now than it



Letter from the Editor

Mrs. Cari Terracina
Publications Manager for the Diocese of Alexandria

did before? There are no wrong answers!

For me, one of those things is margin: I'm slowly working out how to create space in my schedule to make time for what matters most, and it's making all the difference.

Sometimes, my days tend to reflect the instructions on the back of a shampoo bottle:

Get up. Work. Sleep. Repeat.

Often, a repetitive schedule, even if it's full of things I love, can cause me to lose focus. I can become somewhat like a machine if I'm not careful, mechanically

moving from one task to the next.

But we weren't created to be machines. When God formed humanity, He gave mankind a world to enjoy and placed them in a garden of abundance. While there may have been a concept of time in the garden, there wasn't an urgency with time. Then sin entered the world, and it was as if a stopwatch clicked for the first time. Now, humanity had to deal with something they had never dealt with before: death. Mankind would have to work to keep themselves alive, and live knowing that one day the breath inside their lungs would cease.

Moses reflects on and laments the temporality of life in Psalm 90: "For all our days ebb away under your wrath; we end our years like a sign. Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eight years."

But in lament, Moses asks this important request from God:

*"Teach us to number
our days carefully so that
we may develop wisdom
in our hearts"
(Psalm 90: 12).*

Instead of allowing the temporality of life to cause

Moses to be absent-minded of time, he wanted to be mindful of time - desiring to number each day rather than allowing each day to pass by.

Instead of allowing the days to pass us without a second thought, let's ask God to help us to be mindful of our days.

As followers of Christ, we are not machines, but instruments for God's glory. As believers, our time is valuable because we serve the Lord, and work for His Kingdom.

Let us see our time as valuable, intentionally using the time God has given us to give Him glory and make His name known.

Remaining in Him,
Cari

Follow Cari on Instagram
@cariterracina

The Sabbath: Saturday or Sunday? / Catholic view of 'the rapture'

Q. Why do some religions say that the Sabbath day is Saturday while others -- including Catholics -- say it's on Sunday? (Eldon, Missouri)

A. No, Catholics do not say that the Sabbath is on Sunday. The Sabbath is on Saturday, as it was in the Old Testament when God rested from all the work he had done in creation (Genesis 2: 2-3), and as it is observed by Jews today.

Christians, though, celebrate Sunday instead, because that is the day on which Jesus rose from the dead and the day on which the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains: "Sunday is expressly distinguished from the Sabbath which it follows chronologically every week; for Christians its ceremonial observance replaces that of the Sabbath. In Christ's



Question Corner

By Father Kenneth Doyle
Catholic News Service

Passover, Sunday fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish Sabbath and announces man's eternal rest in God" (No. 2175).

What Christians are celebrating instead of the sabbath is "the Lord's Day," and that has been happening since the first century. As the Acts of the Apostles relates: "On the first day of the week, when we gathered to break bread, Paul spoke to them" (20: 7).

So for Christians, Sunday is the preeminent holy day of the week, the day on which we refrain from servile work, devote ourselves to the Eucharist, to

prayer, and to family gatherings.

Around 110, St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and disciple of the apostle John, proclaimed: "Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord's Day as a festival, the resurrection-day, the queen and chief of all the days."

Q. Protestants believe in the rapture, and this was never really discussed in Catholic school. What is the Catholic Church's belief? It would be wonderful to know that we will not have to live through the tribulation. (Connersville, Indiana)

A. If, by the "rapture" one understands that, at the second coming of Jesus, all the faithful, living and dead, will undergo a bodily assumption into heaven -- then, yes, I would say that Catholics do believe this.

But there are other elements in what is sometimes understood as "rapture theology" that are not consistent with Catholic teaching -- especially the notion that there will be a "secret" coming of Christ where he will snatch believers up to heaven and leave others behind to experience a period of severe tribulation.

Supporters of this view point to the passage in Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, which says, "For the Lord himself... will come down from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the

air" (4: 16-17).

The Catholic understanding of this passage is simply that those believers who are alive at Christ's second coming will not experience death but will be transformed in glory and join the saints already with the Lord. Catholic theology finds no evidence to support a belief in a subsequent period of tribulation and chaos.

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information and resources
for our diocese.

Bishop Marshall's updated guidelines regarding masks

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

For the past eighteen months, we have been living with various restrictions on our personal interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the danger continues to exist - particularly for many of the most vulnerable members of our community - the impact of the recent variant has subsided over the last month. The mask mandate for outdoor gatherings was lifted some time ago, and now local public authorities have also lifted the mask mandate for most indoor gatherings. As a bishop without any medical training, I have resisted the urge to substitute my untrained medical judgment for that of the public health professionals. I have consistently instructed our pastors and others in ministry to abide by the then-applicable guidelines.

As a result of the lifting of the mask mandate for most indoor gatherings, I issue the following instructions for Mass attendance and for participation in most other parish activities. Because the mask mandate continues for K-12 schools (with the possibility of exemptions), the eight Catholic schools are not included in these instructions. Separate instructions are being issued for our Catholic schools.

1. As a general rule, masks are not required to attend Mass at a Catholic church in the



Diocese of Alexandria. Masks are permitted, however, and many of our parishioners may choose to wear them to protect themselves and others. **I ask that everyone respect the decisions made by others with regard to their personal health.**

2. Pastors are asked to ensure that worship spaces continue to be sanitized on a frequent basis and that hand sanitizer remains available to all worshippers and particularly to those distributing the Eucharist.

3. The moratorium on distributing Communion from the cup continues.

4. Churches may resume making Holy Water available, though only in containers that are washed and refreshed regularly (at least once a week).

5. All worshippers should respect the sensibilities of others. In particular, some may choose to wear a mask, maintain social distance, and refrain from engaging in physical contact

during the sign of peace.

6. The same guidelines and cautions should be in effect for all parish functions outside of Mass. Again, Catholic schools will be addressed separately.

7. People with any symptoms of the virus should stay home until they can be tested and/or recover their health. If someone tests positive, please abide by applicable instructions for quarantining and/or isolation.

8. Among the institutions where a mask mandate may remain in effect are hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities. No priest, deacon, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, or minister to the sick should seek to enter a medical or health care facility without abiding by the guidelines in place for that facility. Engaging in ministry does not give one the ability to flaunt the mask-requirement or other restrictions in place for a vulnerable population of

patients or residents. Indeed, all Catholic ministers should be eager to abide by any restrictions in place in order to carry out their ministry safely.

As the pandemic is not at an end, the removal of the mask mandate and the lifting of other restrictions may not be permanent. Another surge in our area - or in a particular community - may necessitate another mask mandate or other restrictions, either diocesan-wide or affecting a particularly hard-hit community. Please continue to respect the guidelines issued by public health authorities.

I recognize that this has been a trying time for all of us. I pray that the virus will soon be conquered and that healing, reconciliation, and forgiveness can take place among our brothers and sisters. May our loving God bless you and your family with good health and with a respect for the dignity of all human life.

Live Jesus in our hearts,

Most Reverend Robert W. Marshall, Jr.
Bishop of Alexandria

Please visit
www.diocesealex.org/covid
for all COVID-19
related updates.

MANDATES

(continued from pg. 3)

have agreed to the request of the state's health care workers, noting that many other states have religious exemptions in place for health care workers.

He said the firing of workers and shutting down of health care practices for noncompliance with the vaccine mandate is "worthy of our attention" because those seeking a religious exemption are "adhering to their constitutionally protected religious beliefs."

He also said the state's refusal to grant religious exemptions "borders on the irrational."

New York and Rhode Island are the only other states with vaccine mandates for health care workers that do not have religious exemptions, and both of these mandates are currently being fought in lower courts.

On Oct. 29, a federal appeals court panel upheld New York's vaccine mandate for health care workers, rejecting an appeal that the mandate should have a religious exemption.

The nation's high court has turned away other challenges seeking emergency relief from COVID-19 vaccine mandates including a challenge by students from Indiana University and from public school employees in New York City. Both of these mandates had religious exemptions.

Mat Staver, Liberty Council's founder and chairman who represented the Maine workers, said he would file a petition asking the Supreme Court to review the health workers' plea on it merits.

"This case is far from over," he said.

Come to the Table



After over a year of confusion, isolation, stress, and our lives being turned upside down by a virus we've known very little about, we are once again invited to Come to the Table!

The Mass is where we come together in communion as God's people. Christ brought

us together as a Church because we need each other. This is why God gives us the Church, and this is what we share in most completely at Mass.

We are so grateful to see everyone coming back together in our church parish communities!

To find the Catholic

Churches near you and learn of their Mass times, please visit www.masstimes.org.

To learn more about the Catholic Diocese of Alexandria, visit www.diocesealex.org.

Keep coming to the table - we'd love to see you there!

You're invited to join us at the table.

To see available Mass times near you, visit www.masstimes.org.

6 Ways to prepare for a quiet Advent now

By Sarah Damm
Blessed is She ministry



Advent invites us in
Advent ushers in a new liturgical year, a new opportunity

Every year around this time, I long to slow down, create space, quiet my heart, and find rest. Perhaps I am weary from the toll of this chaotic world. Perhaps I need to step back from the whirlwind of everyday life and realign my priorities. Perhaps my soul is ready to once again enter into this season of Advent - the season of prayer and penance, waiting and watching for the coming of Jesus.

Advent is the perfect liturgical season for my longing. I wait for the light and warmth of Christ to illuminate the darkness of the world, which can weigh so heavily on my heart. For just as the dawn comes after the long, dark hours of night, Jesus comes to bring light and love, to dwell among us.

to return to the Lord. Advent invites us to encounter Christ in the simple manger in Bethlehem. It encourages us to recreate that manger scene in our own hearts, putting Christ at the center of our own lives once again.

But a Christ-centered Advent does not magically happen. Nor does slowing down and creating space.

In order to truly experience the quiet, peaceful Advent that our hearts desire, we must be intentional. We must become still enough to set our gaze on the horizon and to wait and watch for the coming of Jesus. We need to remove anything that hinders our ability to remain in the quiet,

especially as the holiday hype tempts us away from the real reason for the season.

6 Ways to prepare for a quiet Advent now

How do we experience Advent like we truly want to this year?

Here are six ways to prepare for a quiet Advent season starting now:

1. Center on Christ

The most necessary aspect of the Advent season is prayer. How do we want to pray this Advent? How do we want to grow in our worship of the newborn King? Do we want to:

- Use lectio divina to pray with the daily Gospel?
- Meditate more deeply on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary?
- Find one or two days during the week to attend Mass?

2. Stay rooted in tradition

There are many rich traditions throughout the Advent season. One temptation can be to think we have to do them all. This can lead to overwhelm of busyness, and can distract us from our real desire for quiet and peace.

May I suggest a simple plan?

1. Set up an Advent Wreath to gather around for prayer.
2. Pick two or three favorite feast days to celebrate.
3. Consider only what is most meaningful to you personally or as a family.

3. Tackle to-do's

Often, we do not begin our Christmas to-do's until the Advent season. This creates unnecessary tension in our hearts, because our desire for quiet is confronted with a busy to-do list that seems impossible to complete in such a short amount of time.

This year, let's try something new. From now until the first Sunday of Advent, let's work on accomplishing some (if not most) of our Christmas to-do's:

- Order Christmas cards
- Update address list
- Buy stamps and wrapping paper
- Make and freeze cookie dough
- Finish Christmas shopping.

4. Steward the schedule

During Advent, there are many events vying for our attention: choir concerts, pageants, ugly sweater parties, and family obligations. If we say yes to it all, our schedule will not correspond with our heart's desire for peace and quiet this Advent.

So, let's consider a few helpful reminders when stewarding our Advent schedule:

- We don't have to do it all.
- Focus on what is necessary; not what feels impossible.
- Do what will support our decision to have a quiet, prayerful Advent.
- Create space for wonder, awe, coziness, and togetherness.

5. Simplify decor.

If we desire for all to be calm in our souls and in our schedules this Advent, we need that same quiet restful, prayerful theme to be reflected in our living spaces. So, keep Christmas decor simple this year.

- Prominently display a Nativity scene.

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• Wait to decorate the Christmas tree until Gaudete Sunday.

• Avoid too many Christmas tchotchkes, which can clutter our spaces, minds, and hearts.

• Incorporate seasonal touches (that can remain throughout winter) such as:

- Cozy blankets and throw pillows
- Quiet instrumental or sacred music
- Candles
- Cinnamon, orange, and clove scents.

6. Practice penance

The penitential aspect of Advent has been somewhat forgotten, but a few liturgical customs remain that hint at the anticipatory penitence of Advent. For one, the color violet symbolizes penance and

preparation. In addition, the Gloria is not sung at Mass during Advent. As in Lent, we consider Advent a season of preparation before a great feast, and this may include fasting.

As we create a quiet Advent, incorporating some penance into the season supports the quiet simplicity we desire. Here are a few ways to embrace the penitential this Advent:

- Go to Confession once or twice before Christmas.
- Fast from social media.
- Abstain from Christmas cookies, peppermint, mochas, and other treats.
- Look into abiding by the Ember Days of Advent.

Be present to the Advent moment

As we look ahead to Advent, let us acknowledge our longing

to slow down, create space, quiet the heart, and find rest in Christ. Let us lean into Jesus' invitation to pray and prepare, to wait and watch.

Together, let's prepare now for a quiet Advent so we can truly enter into the season of joyful anticipation for Christ's coming this Christmas.

First published at blessedisshe.net.

// Sarah Damn is a Catholic wife and mother of six children, living in Minnesota. She spends her days running errands, helping with homework, and keeping up with laundry and the family schedule. Sarah loves her faith, coffee, and good books. You can find more about her at sarahdamn.com.



CHURCH OF THE LITTLE FLOWER, EVERGREEN. The Altar Society of the Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen, created this beautiful display to give thanks.

“By the tender mercy of God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

// Luke 1: 78-79

**The first Sunday of Advent was November 28.
Check your church parish bulletin or website
for Advent reflections and penance services in your area.**



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS. The Catholic Daughters at St. Joseph Church, Marksville held a blessing of All Saints Day memorial candles on Nov. 1. Present were: Carolyn Bordelon, Sherrill Laborde, Christine Miller, Nora Bordelon, Catherine Bordelon, Karen Bordelon, Linda Marcelle, Claudette Couvillion, Nancy Couvillion, Judy Bordelon, Donna Porterfield, Christine Borrel, and Father Luke LaFleur.

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Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Thursday, December 9, 6:00 p.m.
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Mansura

Thursday, December 16, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria

NOTE: 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.

Father John Brocato named Executive Director of Catholic Charities Cenla



Fr. John Brocato

Father John Brocato was recently appointed Executive Director of Catholic Charities Cenla.

The Mission of Catholic Charities is to provide service to people in need, to advocate for justice in social structures, and to call the entire church and other people of goodwill to do the same.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities (NCCC) was founded in 1910 by men and women who believed that the collective efforts of the church

to faithfully serve people in need could change the course of poverty in our nation. The Catholic Charities organization focuses on affordable housing, immigration and refugee services, integrated health, food and nutrition, and more.

Fr. Brocato serves the people of St. Joseph Church, Colfax and its mission, St. Patrick Church, Montgomery.

More information concerning Catholic Charities Cenla will be available after the new year.

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Special collection for Retirement Fund for Religious

The Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows celebrated Sr. Kalen Sarmiento's 25 years of faithful service to God's people in religious life on Oct. 30.

A special collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious will be taken on the weekend of Dec. 12. Your gift to this collection helps to provide care, medicine, and more.

"I still remember the lessons the sisters gave us and how they instilled in us the love of our faith."
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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.

*The Lord has done great things for us;
 we are filled with joy.*
 Psalm 126: 3 | Responsorial Psalm for December 5
 Second Sunday of Advent

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."



OUR LADY OF SORROWS. The Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows celebrated Sr. Kalen Sarmiento's 25 years of faithful service to God's people in religious life on Oct. 30.

Sr. Kalen was born and raised in the Philippines. She felt called to give her life in service to God's people and accepted the invitation to enter the Congregation in 1992. After her initial formation in Shreveport, Sr. Kalen took her first vows on Aug. 31, 1996, and made her final vows on Sept. 8, 2001. During these 25 years of vowed life, Sr. Kalen has given her life in total obedience by serving God's children at Sacred Heart School in Moreauville, and St. Mary's Training School in Alexandria. She has also served the Congregation during these years by accepting the appointment as local superior, and by serving on the Delegation Council.

When possible, Sister avails herself to help with the fostering of vocations. The Lord continues to call Sr. Kalen to her ministry daily. Bishop Francis Malone of Shreveport was the celebrant for the Mass that was held at Sacred Heart Church in Moreauville. Co-celebrants included: Fr. Brian Seiler, Fr. Jose Pallipurath, and Fr. Matthew Long. A lovely luncheon reception was enjoyed by the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, friends, and family of Sr. Kalen.

Thank you Sr. Kalen for your years of Religious Life to our Diocese.

Pictured above: Sister Fatima Aphiri, Sister Lizbeth Gutierrez, Sister Johnette Brocato (Back), Sister Liza Gomez, Sister Sandra Norsworthy, Sister Kalen Sarmiento, Sister Nicole Cancel, Novice Angela Chaeruka, Sister Anthony Castellani, Postulate Ana Bojorquez, Sister Pori Murmu, and Sister Mary Coleman.

*"let your faithfulness be your thanksgiving,
since the more you receive, the more God will ask of you."
// elisabetta renzi, foundress of our lady of sorrows sisters*

Seminarian Burses

October 2021 Donations

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Ms. Elizabeth Holmes	\$50.00
Father Daniel Hart Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Marion French	\$50.00
Father Gus Voltz Burse	
Mr. John Richey	\$100.00
Father John M. Gayer Burse	
Mrs. Barbara Rigby	\$100.00
Leo P. Dobard Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. Miller	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Mr. Marlon Holmes	\$5,000.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Total	\$5,550.00

*"if you can't feed a hundred people,
then feed just one."
// mother teresa*

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.

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.

A Seminary Burse is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men to the priesthood. Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to the Chancery Office, Post Office Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306-0417.

-- Very Reverend
Stephen Scott Chemino,
Chairman



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Parish Spotlight: Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Fifth Ward Established 1948

When Fr. Joseph Jacquet, a native of France, was assigned to St. Francis de Sales Church in Echo in 1925, he was approached by five men with the request to erect a chapel in an area 8 miles north of Marksville in the rural community of Fifth Ward, commonly known as Eggbend.

The little town got its name from the crews of steamboats traveling on the Red River bringing supplies up from New Orleans to isolated settlements along the river. The people would gather at the bank along a bend in the river above Marksville at the boundary line between Rapides and Avoyelles Parish. They would bring baskets of fresh eggs to trade for sugar, coffee and calico (a type of fabric).

With the help of these five men – Christopher Kelone, Maurice Neck, Ulysses Lemoine, Cicero Bonnette and Jack Guillot – the first mission church was constructed. Fr. Jacquet died on December 25, 1925 before the construction was complete. He was buried, at this request, beside



OUR LADY OF LOURDES, FIFTH WARD.

the little chapel. In the years that followed, the Echo pastor would come to say mass once a month.

In 1948, Bishop Charles P. Greco agreed to make Eggbend an independent parish. He purchased

buildings from Camp Claiborne for a rectory and assigned to the new parish the mission of St. John the Baptist in Moncla. Fr. John Jansen served as the first pastor.

In 1969, a new church

designed by Barron, Heinberg and Brocato was built at a cost of \$93,000. The church was blessed by Bishop Greco on July 6, 1969. A new rectory was added to the parish plant together with a parish hall. Flower gardens and landscaping highlighted the areas beside the church and around Fr. Jacquet’s grave. In 2008-2009, renovations to the church were completed and the sanctuary was enlarged. A large new grotto and fountain were blessed to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the parish.

Mission: St. John the Baptist – Moncla



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE MISSION CHURCH, FOREST HILL. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass (in Spanish) for the community of Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission in Forest Hill on Sunday, Nov. 7. Pictured with the bishop is Father Marc Noel (or Padre Marco Antonio, as he is known there), and all of the parishioners. Bishop says everyone was both welcoming and patient with his limitations in the Spanish language. Gracias por su bienvenido.

Cry out with joy and gladness; for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 12: 6
Responsorial Psalm for December 12
Third Sunday of Advent



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ST. RITA GROUNDBREAKING. A new office building is being built on property adjacent to St. Rita Church. Groundbreaking was held Tuesday, Oct. 26, with Bishop Robert Marshall, pastor, Father Anthony Dharmaraj, Father Craig Scott, Father David Braquet, and Father Daniel Hart in attendance, along with St. Rita parishioners. The separate, 2000 sq. ft. building will include five offices, a reception area, breakroom, copy room, and covered parking for the staff. The old offices, on Bayou Rapides Road, will be sold and proceeds will be applied toward the new building.



BLESSING OF THE PRAYER GARDEN. On Tuesday, Oct. 26, Bishop Robert Marshall blessed the recently constructed Prayer Garden between St. Rita Church and the Holy Family Center. Approximately 225 people were present. The prayer garden was dedicated to long time former pastor, Father Craig Scott, who was also in attendance.



SAINT WILLIAM CHAPEL, OLLA. Bishop Robert Marshall made his first visit to St. William Chapel in Olla to celebrate the 5:00 p.m. Mass on Saturday, Oct. 30. Pictured with Bishop are Father Dale Meade and the parishioners at St. William.



BLUE MASS. The Blue Mass was held Nov. 12 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. During this memorial Mass, in addition to honoring those in these professions, the names of all first responders, fire fighters, and law officers who died this past year were read aloud.

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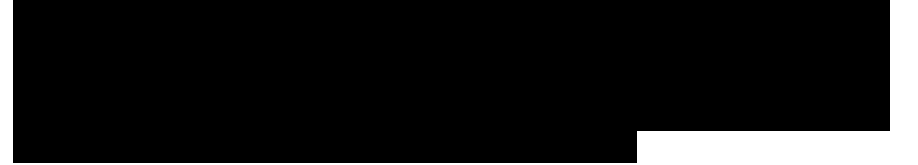
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ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHE, SAINT PARADE. First grade students at St. Mary's School participated in their annual Parade of Saints in honor of All Saints Day.



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, BUNKIE. Fr. Scott Chemino, VG, with the students of St. Anthony of Padua School during their annual All Saints Parade.



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, PLAUCHEVILLE. St. Joseph students celebrated All Saints Day with a "Saint Parade," before Holy Mass. Students were encouraged to dress as their favorite Saint. Pictured are students in grades PreK-6th grade.



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, ST. JOSEPH, LA. Fr. Taylor Reynolds and his group of Saints for All Saints Day.



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH, LEESVILLE. Our confirmation classes dressed as saints for the younger students to come visit with and learn about.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. On Nov. 1, All Saints Day, 8th grade students in Sr. Lizbeth Gutierrez's religion class, reported and portrayed their favorite Saint.



Saints in the making



S. FRANCIS DE SALES, ECHO. Children from St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo led the rosary on Oct. 27, in honor of Rosary month.



CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA. The Catholic Daughters of the Americas celebrated Mass on Oct. 17 at the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches.

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

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Bishops affirm dioceses' sainthood causes for three U.S. laypeople

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service



WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The U.S. bishops agreed Nov. 17 that the sainthood causes for three laypeople from the United States should be advanced by their respective dioceses.

Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel of Lafayette, Louisiana, presented the causes of Auguste Robert "Nonco" Pelafigue and Charlene Richard.

Bishop Larry Silva of Honolulu presented the third cause, that of Joseph Dutton.

The 2007 Vatican document "Sanctorum Mater" requires the diocesan bishop promoting a sainthood cause to consult with the body of bishops on the advisability of pursuing the cause.

The bishops affirmed advancement of all three causes via voice votes with no audible dissent on the second of two days of public sessions during their Nov. 15-18 fall general meeting in Baltimore.

All three sainthood candidates have the title "Servant of God," given to them when their causes were officially opened.

In Pelafigue's case, he joined the Apostleship of Prayer League of the Sacred Heart while a college student, and maintained a lifelong devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Mother.

"On Saturdays he taught religion to public school children, and during the summer, Christmas and Lent, he introduced children and adults of the area to the stage by inviting them to perform in Sacred Heart programs and plays he personally wrote and directed for the children," according to a biography of Pelafigue submitted by the Lafayette Diocese.

Pelafigue organized a League of the Sacred Heart with about 1,200 members, traveling on foot to spread the word. Offered rides "even in the poorest of weather conditions, he always declined, saying it was his way of doing penance for conversions and for the poor souls in purgatory," the biography said.

"As he grew up, he was given the nickname 'Nonco,' derivative of the French 'oncle' -- uncle. He was everybody's uncle," said Bishop Deshotel in addressing the bishops Nov. 17.

His house, the biography said, was basically a shed. Pelafigue only reluctantly accepted "the most rudimentary forms of electricity and plumbing; the house had only one lightbulb."

Pelafigue's ministry spanned 68 years, and ended only with his death June 6, 1977, the feast of the Sacred Heart. A foundation in his name was established in 2012 to carry on his work and explore the possibility of beatification and canonization.

Charlene Richard was described as a "laywoman," but she was just 12 and a half years old when she died in 1959 from acute lymphatic leukemia.

Charlene was described as "a normal little girl" who liked sports and went to church -- until four months before her death,

SERVANTS OF GOD. Auguste Robert "Nonco" Pelafigue, a sainthood candidate with the title "Servant of God," is seen in this undated photo. In the Diocese of Lafayette, La., he is known for his decades of ministry in the League of Sacred Heart, Apostleship of Prayer, which is now called the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. Charlene Richard is also a candidate for sainthood. Charlene, a young Cajun girl, died of leukemia in 1959 at age 12, is regarded by many in south Louisiana and beyond as a saint, saying her intercession has resulted in miracles in their lives. She is known as "the little Cajun saint." (CNS photo/courtesy Diocese of Lafayette).

when she read a book about St. Therese of Lisieux. She asked her grandmother if "she, too, could become a saint by praying like Therese," according to a diocesan biography of the girl.

The last two weeks of her life -- the only time she spent outside her rural town -- "were gifts of grace," Bishop Deshotel told his fellow bishops. "Priests who attended to her spiritual needs were asked by her who she could suffer for on that day."

The biography said when the hospital chaplain, a newly ordained priest, was sent to tell her of her prognosis, Charlene replied, "Father, when the Blessed Mother comes, I'll tell her you said hello."

Franciscan Sister Theresita Crowley, who witnessed Charlene's acceptance of her suffering, would later say, "I can't forget her. I feel her presence. I feel her smile," adding she prayed to Charlene daily.

The religious sister's devotion spread to others in the area, where people prayed to "the Little Cajun Saint," asking for her intercession for situations ranging from marital problems, to finding jobs to seeking good weather for their crops.

One story is told of another girl with cancer who kept asking for Charlene, even though she had never been told of her existence. When someone supplied her with a prayer card bearing Charlene's picture, the girl said, "Charlene," and her cancer went into remission. Although the case was never submitted as a potential miracle, many people in the area considered it one.

By 1989, the biography said, hundreds of people were visiting Charlene's grave each week. The cemetery installed a light so visitors could more easily identify the gravesite, and added a box so they could leave written requests.

"Her gravesite is visited by busloads of people," Bishop Deshotel said. Charlene is considered "near and far as an example of redemptive suffering ... this innocent child who has proven to be an inspiration to all of us as we carry the cross of illness," he said.

Joseph Dutton was born in Vermont in 1843, moved with his family to Wisconsin in 1847 and later served in the Civil War.

Bishop Silva, in addressing the bishops, said Dutton might have been victimized by what is now known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

"He married in Ohio in 1866, but separated a year later as his wife was "unfaithful and extravagant," according to a Honolulu diocesan biography of Dutton. A divorce was granted in 1881. Dutton then embarked on what he called "a degenerate decade" of which he spoke little afterward.

He joined the Catholic Church in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1883, and learned about the work of Father Damien DeVeuster -- now St. Damien of Molokai -- and his ministry to what Bishop Silva called "the pandemic of leprosy on Hawaii's islands."

Dutton made passage to Hawaii and joined the future saint, who himself had recently been diagnosed with leprosy, which today is called Hansen's disease.

"The courage of my dear brother Joseph Ira B. Dutton appears to respond very well to the special calling for which our Blessed Lord has chosen him. He takes a special interest in all that concerns the altars and sacristies of our churches," St. Damien wrote. "He also acts as our druggist, and he's truly a good confrere to me."

In 1892, Dutton, at the request of Mother Marianne Cope

-- now St. Marianne of Molokai -- was received as a Third Order Franciscan. In 1895, he took charge of the Baldwin Home for Boys, with a capacity of 120 and meant for troubled and abused boys, which he did until reaching the age of 87 in 1930. Dutton died the following year.

"In this year of St. Joseph, we propose (sainthood for) this other Joseph, who was the foster father of hundreds of young men at that time," Bishop Silva said. "He has many devotees throughout the world. Several books have been written about him. People from New York, from Baltimore, from Hawaii, from Indiana have suggested that we propose his cause of canonization.

"The importance of this cause for the local and universal church is very timely in light of the situation of the present day," wrote Bishop Silva to his fellow bishops.

"The poor and disadvantaged are often the objects of a 'throwaway' culture abandoned to their limited or practically nonexistent resources," he added. But Dutton, along with the two saints, "is a brilliant testimony of the presence and activity of Catholic Church for the downtrodden and abandoned."

About 60 sainthood causes of Americans are now working their way through the process toward canonization, according to Archbishop Jerome E. Listcki of Milwaukee, chairman of the bishops' Committee on Canonical Affairs and Church Governance.

In general, two miracles need to be accepted by the church as having occurred through the intercession of the prospective saint -- one for beatification and one for canonization.

Auxiliary Bishop John P. Dolan of San Diego urged his fellow bishops that during November, which is Black Catholic History Month, that they "beg our heavenly Father" to further the sainthood causes of six Black Catholic Americans: Sister Thea Bowman, Mother Mary Lange and Julia Greeley, who have the title "Servant of God"; and Mother Henriette Delille, Father Augustus Tolton and Pierre Toussaint, all of whom have the title "Venerable."

*Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face
and we shall be saved.*

Psalm 80: 4 | Responsorial Psalm for December 19
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Live-streamed Mass Schedule

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. Please inquire directly to your church parish concerning their requirements and guidelines for attending Mass in-person.

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
- 10:00 a.m. **Radio Maria** | www.radiomaria.us
(click the play button) or tune in on your radio in
Alexandria: station 580 AM
or in Natchitoches: station 89.7 AM
- 9:00 a.m. **Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church**, Alexandria
on Facebook or YouTube
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
- 10:30 a.m. **St. Augustine Church**, Isle Breville on Facebook
Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth
on Facebook or YouTube
- 11:30 a.m. **Sacred Heart of Jesus**, Pineville
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Monday - Friday

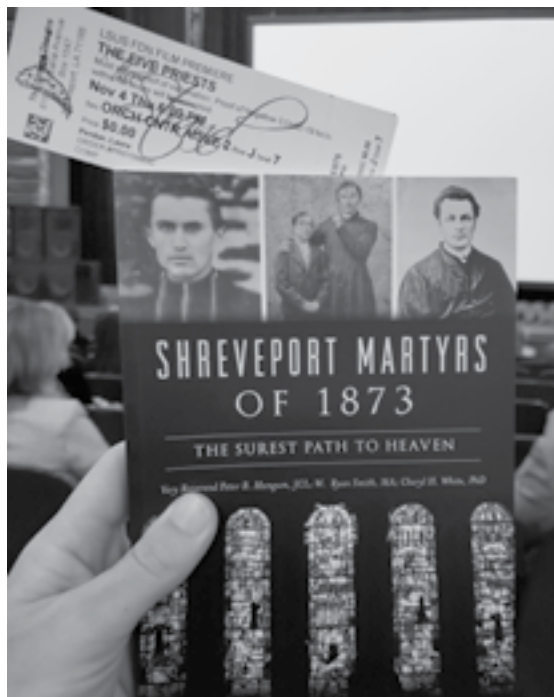
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Alexandria: station 580 AM
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- 9:00 a.m. **St. Edward the Confessor**, Tallulah
on Facebook (Wednesdays),
(9:30 a.m. talk - aka "The CU Catecast"; Wed.)
- 5:30 p.m. **St. Edward the Confessor**, Tallulah
on Facebook (Fridays)

Saturday

- 4:00 p.m. **St. Rita Church**, Alexandria on Facebook or YouTube
St. Anthony of Padua Church,
Natchitoches on Youtube www.youtube.com/channel/UCxWI4jt3uy8d64HwDpmMB6Q
- Radio Maria** | www.radiomaria.us
(click the play button) or tune in on your radio in
Alexandria: station 580 AM
or in Natchitoches: station 89.7 AM
- 5:00 p.m. **St. Michael the Archangel**, Leesville on Facebook

Find additional resources at www.diocesealex.org/come-to-the-table, including:

- How to find a church parish near you
- How to find Mass times at churches near you
- Divorce and annulments in the Catholic Church



THE FIVE PRIESTS. Between August and November 1873, Shreveport lost a quarter of its population to the third greatest yellow-fever epidemic in the history of the United States. On Nov. 4, the LSU Shreveport Foundation hosted a film premiere, showcasing "The Five Priests," the story of five priests who gave their lives during yellow-fever epidemic. The film is based on the book, Shreveport Martyrs of 1873: The Surest Path to Heaven.

Dr. Cheryl White, LSU Shreveport History Professor and co-author of the book, and the film producer, Chris Charles Scott, participated in a panel discussion immediately following the film premiere.

More information can be found at www.shreveportmartyrs.org, and the book is currently available for purchase at www.amazon.com.



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM. Sunday, Oct. 24. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral with the Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. Please remember to pray for the Christians in the Holy Land.



Upcoming Retreats

• Jan. 13 - 16, 2022
St. Patrick's Church, Ferriday
Men's ACTS

• Feb. 10 - 13, 2022
St. Patrick's Church, Ferriday
Women's ACTS

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

Latin America's bishops to confront increasing poverty after COVID-19

By David Agren
Catholic News Service

MEXICO CITY (CNS) -- During the pandemic, parishes in the Diocese of Valle de Chalco on the outskirts of Mexico City have made care packages, taken meals to families of COVID-19 patients and operated food banks.

But they are seeing more and more problems from the pandemic.

"You see poverty, you see it increasing, and what I especially see in the streets like never before is so much informal commerce," said Father Raúl Martínez Arreortúa. Such activity in the nontaxpaying economy -- people selling homemade food and drink from their vehicles, peddling items at intersections or doing odd jobs -- "is a sign of rising unemployment," he said.

The COVID-19 pandemic punished Latin America especially hard. Home to 8% of the global population, the region accounts for one-third of all pandemic deaths. Poverty deepened and inequality widened, worsening problems long plaguing Latin America. Schools stayed closed for longer in Latin America than any other part of the world, with the poorest unable to learn remotely over spotty internet connections. High dropout rates threatened



MEXICO POVERTY. A homeless man sleeps on a street in Mexico City, April 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Latin American bishops' council said the pandemic highlighted "the great income inequality in our societies." (CNS photo / Gustavo Graf, Reuters).

to truncate social mobility for millions.

Latin American economies contracted by 7% in 2020, the worst of any region, according to the International Monetary Fund. Forecasts for 2021 are mostly pessimistic -- unlike other parts of the world -- though recoveries are robust in some countries such as Chile, which projects 11%

economic growth. Vaccination campaigns also started slowly, but have taken hold, with rates in some countries equaling or surpassing the United States.

"The pandemic has certainly brought more poverty. There are people who have lost not only their loved ones, but have lost work (and) closed business," said Peruvian Archbishop Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte, president of the Latin American

bishops' council, or CELAM.

"One has to confront this situation. Certainly it's a call for governments and the church" to take action, he told Catholic News Service.

CELAM has made addressing poverty and the aftermath of the pandemic a priority. Both issues are expected to be prominent at the Sixth Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean in Mexico Nov. 21-28.

One of the assembly's preparatory documents describes the pandemic as a "sign of an epochal change," which prompts people to consider "a major transformation of our culture toward a way of life that is ecologically, socially, economically, politically and culturally sustainable."

The document also notes, "In our region, the pandemic has revealed with great force the serious problems we have been suffering for decades: the great income inequality in our societies, the unhealthy conditions for a worthy life in dignity, the limited access to quality health and education services, no access to clean water, sewage and electricity, as well as the problem of discrimination and exclusion of millions of people."

Analysts say Latin America was already suffering economically prior to the pandemic; poverty was worsening and economies were stagnating.

"The sharp rise in poverty in Latin America reflects the region's deep pre-pandemic economic troubles. Most of the region's big economies remain dependent on commodity exports, and they never recovered from the fall in commodity prices in 2014," said Benjamin Gedan, deputy director of the Latin American Program at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson International Center for

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Scholars.

Most notoriously in the region, the Venezuelan economy collapsed over the past decade, sending some 5.6 million migrants fleeing to other countries in the region and, more recently, the United States.

Quarantines during the pandemic hit precarious migrant populations hard, said Jesuit Father Mauricio García-Durán, executive director of Jesuit Refugee Service Colombia. A loss of informal employment and difficulties sheltering in place prompted migrants to move to smaller cities “where quarantines were much less strict,” Father García-Durán said.

Migration toward the United States slowed after the pandemic hit, but returned in large numbers. The pandemic only made matters worse, church leaders say.

“What people are looking at (through migration) is a means of material salvation,” said Cardinal Álvaro Ramazzini of Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

“Lots of informal businesses went broke. People were left without money, and they almost certainly have loans they can’t

repay,” he added. “So going to the United States ... is a path to being able to resolve these issues.”

Church leaders in Central America say an inept pandemic response -- rife with corruption -- deepened poverty and made outward migration worse.

The pandemic also exposed inequalities, including inadequate health systems that were underfunded and underequipped prior to the pandemic and lacking the capacity to care for people who needed intensive care.

Indigenous communities in parts of Mexico sealed off their communities to avoid contagion and often distrusted the authorities, the consequence of centuries of being lied to by governments, according to priests in Mexico’s southern Chiapas state.

In Mexico and also in the Amazon region, Indigenous communities turned to traditional medicine, according to priests in Mexico and Colombia.

“The pandemic showed the weakness and fragility of the health system, which was very precarious,” said Jesuit

Father Alfredo Ferro, executive secretary of the Ecclesial Conference of the Amazon.

Mexico took a contrarian approach to the pandemic: austerity, spending less than 1% of the gross domestic product in its pandemic response. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador spoke of families taking care of each other, but Mexico’s bishops warned of increasing hardships and rising domestic violence.

In Argentina, especially long quarantines -- more than 200 days in greater Buenos Aires -- proved unpopular as the pandemic dragged on and poverty rose to more than 40% of the population.

Early in the pandemic, Argentine President Alberto Fernández met with a group of priests known as the ‘curas villeros’; they ministered in the slums, provided meals from their soup kitchens and turned parishes into places for sick patients to quarantine.

The priests, however, expressed dismay at the limited role of the government in their communities, which have existed for decades on the margins of

society without proper access to services such as health.

“We cannot, nor do we want to, replace the state. But we can and do want to collaborate,” the priests said in a June 2020 statement.

“The church role was very important because Caritas ... didn’t stop helping or accompanying the poor,” said Nicolás Meyer, director of Caritas Argentina. “It was two years of our volunteers never ceasing to head out and risk their lives, because there were volunteers who also died of COVID.”

As archbishop of Buenos Aires and as head of the drafting committee for CELAM’s 2007

assembly document, Pope Francis spoke of a church going out to the peripheries to evangelize. CELAM is expected to renew its commitment to such practices.

“The church is very much engaged in a lot of the social issues,” said Rick Jones, a former migration adviser to Catholic Relief Services.

He pointed to the widespread consultation ahead of the CELAM assembly and the participation of priests, religious and laity in the assembly as something “that is going to mobilize the church like we haven’t seen in a long time. But it’s a process that’s being unleashed.”

“unless we believe and see Jesus in the appearance of bread on the altar, we will not be able to see him in the distressing disguise of the poor.”

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Responsorial Psalm
for December 26
Feast of the
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for Identifying Occupations and Job Numbers.”

318-717-1995

How Domestic Church changed my marriage

By Erin Franco

The Domestic Church movement for sacramentally-married Catholic couples began in Poland about 40 years ago—with the enthusiastic support of a certain not-the-pope-yet Pope St. John Paul II. Domestic Church gives couples lifelong formation in personal, marital and family spirituality.

Michael and I went on the introductory Domestic Church marriage retreat at a low point in our marriage—perhaps the lowest point of our marriage so far. Severe financial and personal stressors had driven us deeply apart. I remember there were weeks during that season of my life that I was so angry and confused that I could barely look at my husband, let alone have a safe, honest conversation about how we were doing as a couple.

We had heard about Domestic Church for a couple of years, because we are close friends with David and Kate Dawson, the couple who are responsible for bringing the movement over to the United States a few years ago. We had listened politely for a couple of years to David and Kate's enthusiastic descriptions of Domestic Church and its fruit in their own marriage, but we weren't interested.

Looking back—and I'll be honest—there were two reasons for that. First, Michael and I were not “movement” kind of people—or so we thought. We were wary of that term for some reason. Secondly, I don't think we were interested up until that retreat because we hadn't encountered enough struggle yet. I think we thought we could handle whatever life threw us in marriage with a little time to shake it off, all the good intentions in the world, and some old-fashioned Love Is All You Need.

As with many things, necessity was the mother of a change of heart.

Like I mentioned before, we weren't doing so well that fall before our retreat. Without going into the gory details (literally), the entire year had been one major stress after another, and the previous couple of years had been stressful as well with new babies and job changes and incredibly



DOMESTIC CHURCH MOVEMENT. Dr. Chris and Jenay Franco recently met with Bishop Robert Marshall and Father Dan O'Connor to discuss the Domestic Church Movement. The ministry originally began in Poland, had its first English-speaking retreat in Lake Charles in 2011, and has been active in our diocese for 4 years now. Chris and Jenay are the brother-in-law and sister-in-law of the author of this article.

scary leaps of faith. We were in severe debt, were living indefinitely with my parents by necessity (our three small children in tow), and we were at the end of our rope emotionally. Clinging to my faith and trying to keep Michael connected with his, I had begged him to go on a men's retreat at the beginning of the fall. After his retreat, he told me that he would go on a marriage retreat with me. He actually changed his mind soon after that as the afterglow of his retreat faded in the face of our struggles at home. But I informed him that I had already signed us up and paid for the Domestic Church retreat (and God reward the family who sponsored the scholarship for our retreat!). Sorry babe, we have to go now. I don't usually recommend that wives nag and drag their husbands to marriage retreats, but in this case, it was a Godsend of a move for us.

Neither of us arrived at the retreat center that weekend planning to “do” Domestic Church, but after the first evening of talks and prayer, we looked at each other square in the eye for the first time in months, and

confessed to one another that the Holy Spirit was whispering the same thing to each of our hearts: I want this for you.

More than two years into our journey with Domestic Church, this movement has been a great, great gift to our marriage. God used Domestic Church to begin a slow, but sure healing process that has unified Michael and me through the simple and faithful practice of our faith—together. We don't have the perfect marriage, and we won't be writing a book any time soon about how to have the perfect one. What we do have is good foundations, built on habit and faithfulness rather than just ideals or nice ideas. What we have is the gentle accountability of our circle and priest—and one another—to help us keep always trying, trying, trying to connect with one another and with God, and not give up.

Domestic Church actually uses the wheel - it doesn't reinvent it.

I want to share some of the nuts-and-bolts of Domestic Church, so many of which are

surprisingly familiar, basic spiritual habits that don't reinvent the wheel—they just actually use it. Daily personal prayer, couple prayer, daily study of Scripture, daily family prayer (and no specific prayers or ways you have to do it). Basic, fruitful, and surprisingly difficult sometimes! For this post, though, I want to focus on the prayer commitments of Domestic Church that were most helpful for healing my marriage.

First off, so often Christian couples have very separate and different prayer lives and spiritualities. That sure was Michael and I, and to a great extent, still is. Couples just don't have a place to meet in the middle spiritually. To keep God at the center of your marriage, we learned—and are still learning—that you have to talk *about* God together as well as *to* God together. Domestic Church has given Michael and me several powerful ways to intentionally, habitually meet in the middle with our faith lives, literally and spiritually.

One commitment couples make with Domestic Church is

to plan a date once per month for a marriage dialogue. Often, issues flare up in marriage at times when one or both of you don't have the energy, state of mind, or right disposition of heart to have a fruitful conversation. For a few days before a marriage dialogue, we pray individually about the conversation we will have, and we each work on a list of things we need to discuss. We actually bring a written list of things to cover when we go. The monthly marriage dialogue has given us a space to come together consistently and prayerfully to work out our problems, to plan out how to overcome obstacles, and to really listen to how the other person is doing emotionally and spiritually.

Another place we meet in the middle now comes with the monthly circle meeting. We meet with a group of six other couples—and a priest—to share the ups and downs of life, to pray with and for one another, to share how we have been doing with prayer, and to discuss a new piece of spiritual formation. There are six other couples—and a dear priest friend—who really know us. Who in our struggles and failures and successes, know our hearts. That is a gift.

The third and most important way that Domestic Church helps Michael and me to meet in the middle is through our commitment to daily couple prayer. Yes, we pray every single day together. It is not always profound, or easy, or even comfortable. Praying out loud was difficult for us at first—particularly for Michael. Honestly, we still have trouble sometimes in couple prayer! I have so respected Michael's daily effort to overcome his shyness in prayer. And in the process, I have learned to pray with more simplicity so that I don't “take over” our prayer together as much. I think he appreciates that in turn. We usually include in our prayer praying aloud spontaneously about what is on each of our hearts. Praying like that brings out the fact that you don't really know everything going on in your spouse's heart without prayer. I'll admit that sometimes praying with Michael is the last thing I feel like doing. Prayer is intimate. In my anger or my hurt, sometimes I don't want

to let my husband in like that, and vice versa. And sometimes it's difficult to pray when you don't know if you have the words to explain what's going on in your heart. But at the end of day, Michael and I choose to zoom out, to be faithful to couple prayer, and to keep trying. God multiplies that kind of faithfulness.

Grace acts as soon as the soul cooperates.

For Michael and me, the prayer commitments we've made with Domestic Church have helped our souls to cooperate with the grace of this very difficult, very beautiful vocation to marriage. We don't have a

perfect marriage. We don't do all of our prayer commitments well. But we're getting better, little by little. Having to admit to a group of wonderful couples (now dear, dear friends) that you didn't pray much together last month because we've just been lazy is a helpful kick in the pants when you start to slip.

Domestic Church helps married couples utilize the grace of their sacrament. It's that grace that we read about in marriage prep, the grace that we desperately hope is there when disillusionment and struggle try to settle into daily life, and the confidence and hope of our wedding day seem far away. The

Domestic Church movement believes that a grace-filled marriage overflows—into grace-filled families and grace-filled communities. That's the long and short of it—and the beauty of it.

God bless your sacrament!

Erin is a Catholic wife, mother of five, and business owner. She has been speaking and writing on marriage, faith, and motherhood since 2009. Erin and her husband, Michael, currently serve at the national level for the Domestic Church Movement. Read more at humblehandmaid.com.

11 domestic church retreat 11

Come, receive the Good News, and stir up the grace of your Sacrament! Sacramentally married couples interested in joining the Domestic Church typically do so by attending an Evangelization Retreat as an introduction to formation.

Interested couples are invited to attend an upcoming retreat, Jan. 14 - 17, 2022 at the Wesley Retreat Center in Woodworth. Email domesticchurchcenla@gmail.com for more information, or visit www.domesticchurchfamilies.com/events to register.

“In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia Domestica*.”
11 catechism of the catholic church 1656

It's been said that being a member of Domestic Church is “just being Catholic!” What makes the formation of Domestic Church so attractive is that it is not a novel approach to the faith or a vision of Catholicism limited to a founder's particular spirituality, but simply a way to access the treasures of the Church's teachings on marriage, family life, prayer, Scripture, the Sacraments, and more, specifically as a spouse and a parent, utilizing the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony to do so.

Evangelization Retreat

Each couple in Domestic Church typically starts off by attending an Evangelization Retreat, which allows them to experience the Good News in a new and deeper way and provides a real experience of the saving power of Christ as a couple. After the retreat, the couple has an opportunity to join a circle of 4 - 7 other couples, and a priest.

Join a circle

Each circle meets once a month in the homes of its members to share the joys and sorrows of the journey, to pray together, to go over their progress in spiritual growth according to the 7 promises, and to go over the new formation materials for the month. The “7 promises” include: daily individual prayer, daily study of Scripture, daily couple prayer, daily family prayer, monthly couple dialogue, rule of life, and yearly retreat.

Domestic Church Members

After joining a circle, a couple has nine months to decide if they will commit to continued formation, and another two years or so before they enter into mainstream Domestic Church formation, all of which builds toward giving back to the parish what the Holy Spirit has grown in each couple during those first few years. This process follows the Church's vision of Catechesis for adults.

For more information on the Domestic Church, please visit www.domesticchurchfamilies.com.

The Cross Word

answers on pg 15

December 19 and 26, 2021



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Readings: Mi 5:1-4a; Heb 10:5-10; Lk 1:39-45 and 1 Sam 1:20-22,24-28; 1Jn 3:1-2,21-24; Lk 2:41-52

ACROSS

- 1 Scratchy
- 6 Enact
- 9 British "Mom"
- 12 Infer
- 13 Pod vegetable
- 14 Priest at Shiloh
- 15 Engine
- 16 Bawl
- 17 Physician
- 18 Earring need
- 20 Nebraska's big city
- 22 Golf assistant
- 25 Slang for money
- 26 North northeast
- 27 "When ___ came into the world"

29 In ___ (together)

31 "___ Father"

32 Mary went to the ___ country

36 Oil tankers

39 Popular papal name

40 Nigh (2 wds.)

43 Breakfast egg

45 Book holder

46 Cover present

47 Mr.

48 "Champion" in Arabic

50 Pork ___

54 Royal globe

55 Not (prefix)

56 Afghanistan capital

57 Discs

58 Digit

59 "___ and bright"

DOWN

- 1 Skirt edge
- 2 Hoopla
- 3 Wheel track
- 4 Rebuke
- 5 Epic
- 6 Church interior dome
- 7 Executive director
- 8 Forbidden acts
- 9 Athlete wins
- 10 Hawaiian 'hello'
- 11 A Minor Prophets
- 19 "___ I come to do your will"
- 21 Winged night insect
- 22 Central nervous system
- 23 Some
- 24 Cozy room
- 25 Bathroom wall fixture
- 28 Regret
- 30 Santa gives
- 33 Peter's mother-in-law
- 34 Downwind
- 35 Abraham's nephew
- 37 ___ leaped in the womb
- 38 Kisses loudly
- 40 Association (abbr.)
- 41 The Spirit is the ___ Person in Trinity
- 42 ___ and spices
- 44 Measure of flour
- 46 A Nazarite would never drink this
- 49 Card game like Euchre
- 51 Kimono sash
- 52 Play on words
- 53 Like a fox



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL. St. Joseph School procured Promethean Boards and Hovercams for the enhancement of the instructional value in the classroom. Their goal is to continue to provide quality education through use of new and innovative technology. AXI Education Solutions came to install Nov. 3 - 5, 2021. Mr. Ben Dufour and Assistant Principal Rhiannon Moreau instructed Mrs. Christy Lemoine (grade 2) and Mrs. Melissa Duplechin (Kindergarten) on how the equipment works. Mrs. Kathryn Vidrine's class was extremely excited to see the technology installed. St. Joseph School continues to grow not only with increased student enrollment, but also with more effective instructional strategies that provide quality education.

Diocese of Alexandria Catholic Schools choose to "opt out" of mask mandate

On Oct. 26, 2021, Governor John Bel Edwards lifted the mask mandate for most indoor gatherings. The mandate remains in effect for some public buildings, including K-12 schools. The revised guidelines, however, permit public school districts and other private and parochial schools to opt out of the mandate if - and only if - the schools follow the requirements of the CDC regarding quarantining and isolation of those students, faculty, and staff who test positive for COVID-19 or who have been exposed to someone infected.

Bishop Robert Marshall and Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mr. Tommy Roque, met along with the principals of the eight Catholic schools in the Diocese of Alexandria, to

discuss the mandate, the possible "opt out," and adherence to CDC guidelines.

As a result of this discussion, the Diocese of Alexandria chose to "opt out" of the mask mandates for schools as of Oct. 28, 2021. Masks are not required, but are permitted and encouraged. At the same time, we reaffirmed our commitment to follow CDC guidelines. Following those guidelines, acknowledging positive test results, and exposure requires the cooperation of parents. We hope and expect to have that cooperation.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully, and changes may be made accordingly.

The current CDC and LDH recommendations can be found at www.cdc.gov.

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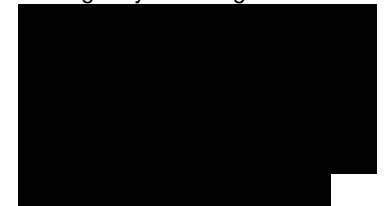
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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION VISITS SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE. Louisiana State Superintendent of Education, Cade Brumley, was in Rapides Parish on Monday, Nov. 15, 2021. While in town, Dr. Brumley had the pleasure of visiting St. Frances Cabrini (top photo) and Holy Savior Menard (bottom photo). Dr. Brumley was pleased with what he saw. "Catholic School education has been foundational throughout Louisiana's rich history. I enjoyed visiting both Cabrini and Menard to see how the Catholic Church - through its educators - continues to fulfill its mission by developing students from all walks of life," he said. Mr. Thomas Roque, Sr., Superintendent of Catholic Schools, accompanied Dr. Brumley to the schools.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES, WINNFIELD. In preparation for the Blessing of the Graves, the Youth Group from Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Winnfield, placed over 30 mums on the graves of Catholics at the Garden of Memories Cemetery. The youth placed the flowers and said the prayer for the Poor Souls of Purgatory at each grave.



ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Father Scott Chemino handed out candy to costumed students of St. Anthony of Padua School, Bunkie, on Halloween Day.

Catholic Campus Ministry is provided at LSU of Alexandria, Louisiana College, and Northwestern State University.

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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.

Christmas Extravaganza - Dec. 4

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville will hold a Christmas Extravaganza on Dec. 4 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. The following activities will be happening: Gumbo cook-off; Bingo; Kids crafts and cookie decorating; Pictures with Santa; Sacred Heart Beauty Pageant; Vendors; Country Store. Tickets for gumbo will be available at all Masses (\$10 for bowl of gumbo, potato salad, crackers and dessert). Snacks and drinks will also be available for purchase. Come out and support Sacred Heart in Pineville!

Heart of St. Kateri Circle meeting - Dec. 9

The next Heart of St. Kateri Circle meeting will be on Thursday, Dec. 9 at 5:30 p.m. at the Tekakwitha Conference Center, 2225 North Bolton Avenue, Alexandria, LA. We will have our Christmas Party/Present exchange/PotLuck meal, and a meeting together. All are welcome, gift card price limit under \$20 which we'll do after the meeting. For more information contact Scotty Durio at (318) 483-3908 or finance@tekconf.org.

Discalced Carmelite Christmas Social - Dec. 11

The Order of Discalced Carmelites holds its monthly meeting at 9:00 a.m. every second Saturday, at Maryhill Renewal Center. For December, a Christmas Social will be held on Dec. 11. Everyone is invited to attend Mass and then the social. If you are interested in Carmelite studies, please contact Mary Jo McCoy (318) 346-6860 or (318) 481-9638

Advent Discernment Retreat (online) - Dec. 12

An Advent Discernment Retreat for women ages 18-40 will be held on Sunday, Dec. 12 via Zoom from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. with the Sisters of Divine Providence in San Antonio, TX. Join us to have individual "walks" with the Sisters, individual reflection time, and an opportunity to deepen your spirituality. Give yourself this Advent gift of community and prayer to see where God is calling you. You may register for this free retreat at <https://bit.ly/CDP-Advent-Retreat-2021>.

For more information, contact vocationministry@cdptexas.org.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS**Come Home for Christmas - Dec. 18**

Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church presents "Come Home for Christmas" with The Josh Blakesley Band, Dec. 18 starting at 6:30 p.m. The event will be held in the DPC Yard. Bring a lawn chair or blanket, food trucks will be on-site. Tickets are \$10 each and go on sale Dec. 1. For more information call (318) 445-3693.

Healing Service during Advent Season Dec. 22

Trusting in the Healing power of God and the Mission of the Church: Fr. Ramji Shoury, pastor, offers a day of prayer in front of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen, LA, on Dec. 22. The day will conclude with a Healing Service from 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Domestic Church Retreat - Jan. 14-17

Come, receive the Good News, and stir up the grace of your Sacrament! Sacramentally married couples interested in joining Domestic Church typically do so by attending an Evangelization Retreat as an introduction to formation. The weekend retreat will be held Jan. 14-17 at the Wesley Center in Woodworth. Please contact Chris and Jenay Franco at domesticchurchcenla@gmail.com, or visit domesticchurchfamilies.com/events to register.

Priestly Vocations Retreat - Feb. 5, 2022

There will be a day of reflection at Maryhill for any man who is discerning priesthood or wants to know more about seminary. Any high school, college, or adult male is invited to attend. More information will be provided soon.

Beyond the Limits - March 5 - 6, 2022

To really love Christ, we must love "Beyond the Limits." Please join us March 5-6, 2022 for the Beyond the Limits Junior High Conference. All students in grades 6 - 8 are encouraged to attend. Speakers include Kris Frank and Ragan Savedra. Email info@steubenvillesouth.com for more information, or visit www.steubenvillesouth.com to register. We can't wait to see you there!

Steubenville South - June 24 - 26, 2022

Calling all high schoolers! Throughout the Bible, the Lord tells us over and over again, "Be not afraid," and he continues to speak these words to us today. Join hundreds of Catholic teens at Steubenville South in Alexandria, LA on June 24 - 26, 2022 to experience the peace of Jesus Christ, who is always faithful.

All rising freshmen in high school through rising freshmen in college are invited to attend this retreat. Learn more at www.steubenvillesouth.com, email info@steubenvillesouth.com, or contact your church parish for more information. We can't wait to see you there!

Enduring Faith documentary

Enduring Faith - A documentary film on the faith, perseverance, and inspiring example of Indigenous Peoples across North America - available for all to watch at kofc.org/enduringfaith.

Indigenous communities across North America have a rich and vibrant testimony to share - both past and present - including the witness of their faith. Enduring Faith: The Story of Native American Catholics dives deep into the rich contribution of Native Americans in the tapestry of the Catholic faith. Produced by the Knights of Columbus as part of its Faith Formation and Native Solidarity initiatives, the 60-minute documentary offers a missing piece to the greater story of Catholicism on the continent and a beautiful example of how Christ reveals himself through the uniqueness of every culture. A must watch with the family, classroom, or faith group. Available to all at kofc.org/enduringfaith. Please spread the word. Know someone who could benefit from joining the Knights? Visit or share kofc.org/joinus for details.

OLPS Church and School seeks bookkeeper

This is a full-time position handling financial transactions for Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church and School. Candidate must have a background in payroll/bookkeeping/tax reporting, and have excellent computer skills, including Word and Excel. A degree in Accounting is preferred. Must be a practicing Catholic with excellent organizational skills. Send resumes to Julie Bayone at 401 21st St., Alexandria, La. 71301, or to julie.bayone@olpschurch.org. Questions - (318) 445-3693.

Church Today News Deadlines

December 27
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Dec. 16

January 31
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Jan. 20



Emile P. Oestrieche, III, CPA

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December 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>NOVEMBER 29</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL</p>	<p>30</p> <p>#iGiveCatholic Giving Tuesday Please consider giving!</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. C. PELTO</p>	<p>DECEMBER 1</p> <p>Grief Support Group 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville</p> <p>Devotion to Saints Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Second Coming Series 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Blue Mass 12:05 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria</p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Christmas Extravaganza 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville</p> <p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Second Sunday of Advent</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX</p>
<p>6</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Adoration 6:30-7:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Grief Support Group 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville</p> <p>Devotion to Saints Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>SOLEMNITY of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (a Holy Day of Obligation)</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Heart of Kateri Circle meeting/Christmas social 5:30 p.m. Tekakwitha Conference Center, Alexandria</p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m., St. Paul the Apostle, Mansura</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</p>	<p>10</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Discalced Carmelite Christmas Social 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Third Sunday of Advent</p> <p>Advent Discernment Retreat (Online) 1:00-7:00 pm https://bit.ly/CDP-Advent-Retreat-2021</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</p>
<p>13</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Adoration 6:30-7:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville</p> <p>PRAY FOR MSGR. S. TESTA</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Grief Support Group 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church Community Center, Pineville</p> <p>Devotion to Saints Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. P. SUNDERHAUS</p>	<p>16</p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS</p>	<p>17</p> <p>PRAY MSGR. J. TIMMERMANS</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Come Home for Christmas 6:30 p.m. OLPS Church, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Fourth Sunday of Advent</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS</p>
<p>20</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Adoration 6:30-7:00 p.m. St. Joseph Church, Marksville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Healing Service 6:00-7:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen</p> <p>Grief Support Group 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville</p> <p>Devotion to Saints Series 6:30-7:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ</p>	<p>23</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. L. WHITE</p>	<p>24</p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE PRAY FOR DCN. J. WHITEHEAD</p>	<p>25</p> <p>SOLEMNITY of the NATIVITY of the LORD (a Holy Day of Obligation) CHRISTMAS DAY PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE</p>	<p>26</p> <p>FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER</p>
<p>27</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. M. YOUNG</p>	<p>28</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH</p>	<p>29</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. AELAVANTHARA</p>	<p>30</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. W. AJAERO</p>	<p>31</p> <p>NEW YEAR'S EVE PRAY FOR DCN. W. ALDRIDGE</p>	<p>JANUARY 1</p> <p>SOLEMNITY of MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD NEW YEAR'S DAY PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p>2</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. ANTONY</p>

Emergency Department

CHRISTUS

HEALS

"I know God put the best all in one place... I'm living proof."

KELAE GATLIN
HEART PATIENT

Kelae loves spending time with her boyfriend, volunteering as a youth mentor, baking cookies for her family, and feeling blessed. Every day is special.

But that day was different. She hadn't planned on dying when she woke up, or having to make her peace with God, or crying about being taken from her family.

But there she was, all due to a misdiagnosed heart attack.

She knew Cabrini's Emergency Room was her only hope. The ER doctor and staff immediately diagnosed a heart attack and began treatment. It was at that moment she knew she was going to live.

Today, she is loving her family, loving life, and enjoying the small moments again.

CHRISTUS Heals,
just ask Kelae.

 **CHRISTUS.**
ST. FRANCES CABRINI
Hospital