

# CHURCH TODAY

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

August 29, 2022



The Senior Class of 2023 began their first day of the school year by watching the sunrise on the football field and enjoying breakfast together.

*Back to school*

See pages 12, 13, and 21 for more back to school pictures and information.

## INSIDE

### Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana gaining momentum

By the end of September, Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana will provide services in mental health counseling, divorce healing, private coaching, hurricane preparedness, and more. Read more about this new ministry on page 4.

### Support groups begin to meet

The post abortive healing support and divorce support groups will both begin to meet soon to support the people of our diocese. See pages 8 and 19 for more information on these separate ministries.

### Course aims to instruct new Catholics, reenergize lifelong Catholics

The online study course “What We Believe: The Beauty of the Catholic Faith” is among many tools created to instruct those new to the Catholic faith, as well as lifelong Catholics. See inside this issue for tools and resources to help you in your faith and prayer journey.



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# Our Lady of Prompt Succor and hurricane season

By Beth Williby  
Guest Contributor

What if I told you that I could weave a story connecting Napoleon, a 19th century pope, the city of New Orleans, and my home in present-day Florida? Would you believe me?

What if this story also included things like fire, hurricanes, religious persecution, and the War of 1812? Interested?

Then sit back, friend, while I tell you the story of Our Lady of Prompt Succor. Those of you from the greater Louisiana area will certainly have heard of her. For the rest of us, though—especially those who don't spend their summer months under threat of hurricane warnings—maybe you'll discover a new and interesting devotion to Our Lady.

## Ursuline Roots in New Orleans

In the early 1700s, French Ursuline sisters came to America and established a monastery and schools in New Orleans, Louisiana. Within 50 years, though, ownership of that territory transferred to Spain. When the French regained control of the area in 1800, many of the Spanish Ursuline sisters fled to Cuba to escape anti-Catholic persecution from the Napoleonic forces. Only seven French sisters remained.

In 1803, one of these sisters, Mother St. Andre' Medier, wrote to her cousin in France. She requested help in the form of additional sisters to save their once flourishing school and community. This cousin, Mother St. Michel Gensoul, was another Ursuline sister. She was recently exiled from her community, like many other religious during Napoleon's reign. In her exile, she was running a boarding school for girls in Montpellier.

Mother St. Michel's bishop, Bishop Fournier, declined to send Mother or any other sisters to the community in New Orleans. The French Revolution was not kind to Catholic communities and he was desperately shorthanded. Bishop Fournier told Mother St. Michel that the only way he would give her permission to leave was if she obtained approval from the Pope himself.



**LOUISIANA HURRICANE IDA.** Members of a rescue team in Laplace, La., help evacuate people Aug. 30, 2021, after Hurricane Ida made landfall. (CNS photo/Marco Bello, Reuters)

The problem with that plan was that Pope Pius VII was currently under house arrest as a prisoner of Napoleon.

Not to be deterred, Mother St. Michel wrote to the pope. And, in an inspired moment of prayer to Our Lady, said these words:

O most holy Virgin Mary, if you obtain a prompt and favorable answer to my letter, I promise to have you honored in New Orleans under the title of Our Lady of Prompt Succor.

### Prompt and Favorable

In an unbelievable turn of events, Pope Pius VII not only received but swiftly answered Mother's letter. Within three months, she received a letter in which he praised her for her generosity and approved her move to Louisiana. Through Our Lady's intercession, the sisters were granted a response that was both prompt and favorable!

By way of thanks, Mother St. Michel had a statue of the Blessed Mother and Infant Jesus commissioned to take with her to New Orleans. Bishop Fournier blessed the statue and it was brought to the monastery chapel in Louisiana by Mother St. Michel and several postulants by the end of 1810.

### Fire and War and Hurricanes

Our Lady of Prompt Succor has not abandoned the people of New Orleans as the years pass. In 1812, a massive fire in the city threatened the monastery.

One of the sisters held a statue of Our Lady in a window facing the direction of the fire. The sisters prayed, the wind changed direction and pushed the fire away. The monastery was saved.

Then in 1815, many of the faithful of New Orleans, including the families of American soldiers serving under General Andrew Jackson, gathered to pray for her intercession and protection. The city was going to be attacked by the British and was in danger of changing hands yet again. However, American forces prevailed and saw very few casualties even though they had been up against a much superior British contingent.

Every year on January 8, a special Mass is said at the Shrine in thanksgiving to Our Lady of Prompt Succor for her help during the Battle of New Orleans. This was promised by the Ursulines to Andrew Jackson when he came to the convent to thank them for their prayers. It's a tradition that continues to this day.

### Patronages and Present Day Devotions

Our Lady of Prompt Succor was recognized as an approved devotion in September of 1851. Since then, she has been revered as the patroness of the state of Louisiana, the Catholic Diocese of New Orleans, and as protector from hurricanes.

Two of my friends, Chris and Rebecca, have special devotions

to the Blessed Mother under this title. Chris is from New Orleans. His parents and a sister married at the shrine and he served for several years as a tour guide there. Rebecca, who studied at Tulane, had a peaceful time of prayer in front of the "sweetheart statue," the statue that the nuns held up during the fire that turned the flames. She says that, while an immediate answer to her prayer wasn't given, the peace that came from the experience made her know that her prayers were heard. Their three-year-old son sleeps with a prayer card with this image on it and their infant daughter was baptized at the shrine earlier this year.

### Meeting Our Lady of Prompt Succor

It wasn't until two years ago, however, when our part of Florida was about to be hit by Hurricane Matthew that I even wondered if there is a patron saint of hurricanes. As I was preparing a basket filled with our family Rosaries, holy cards, a cross, and holy water, I did what every modern day woman would do. I Googled it.

And what was the first thing that popped up? A beautiful image of the statue and this prayer copied from the back of a holy card:

*Our Father in Heaven through the intercession of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, spare us during this hurricane season from all harm. Protect us and our homes from all disasters of nature. Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Saying that prayer brought much comfort to my family and me during the last two hurricanes we faced.

### What are Your Storms?

So, sisters, whatever storms you are facing in your life—whether they are actual hurricanes this year or simply storms in your soul—have faith in the intercession of our Blessed Mother under her mantle as Our Lady of Prompt Succor.

Trust that her answer to you will be as prompt and favorable as it has been for the past 200 years.

Our Lady of Prompt Succor, hasten to help us.

# Kentucky man post-hurricane help spurs 'Cajun Chefs' to aid tornado victims

By Elizabeth Wong Barnstead  
Catholic News Service



**KENTUCKY TORNADO RECOVERY.** Sarah Hayden-Thomas is seen with two of her fellow Cajun Chefs from Louisiana during their trip to Dawson Springs, Ky., to feed people involved with disaster recovery. (CNS photo/Sarah Hayden-Thomas via Western Kentucky Catholic)

OWENSBORO, Ky. (CNS) -- Those who have experienced a natural disaster are all too familiar with the timeline of public response.

"The media, people come ... then everyone pulls out," said Sarah Hayden-Thomas, who brought a team -- dubbed the "Cajun Chefs" -- from Louisiana to assist western Kentucky tornado relief efforts.

"But nothing's changed" when everyone leaves, said Hayden-Thomas. "We're still broken."

Hayden-Thomas grew up in western Kentucky and today resides in St. Amant, Louisiana. Her region was devastated by Hurricane Ida in 2021, and as someone who has lived through multiple hurricanes and floods, she knows what it is like to receive a torrent of support from across the country in the early days -- only to be forgotten in a matter of months.

"We're very familiar with disasters," Hayden-Thomas said in a phone call with The Western Kentucky Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Owensboro.

Yet they're also familiar with incredible kindness.

After Hurricane Ida happened, her parish, Holy Rosary in St. Amant, was impacted by the generosity of a man from Kentucky who drove down with a packed trailer of supplies to help Holy Rosary with its recovery efforts.

The stranger arrived and departed without any fanfare, and did not even leave his contact information.

So when tornadoes devastated western Kentucky during the night of Dec. 10, 2021, Hayden-Thomas thought about how best to help her native state. She remembered the compassionate Kentucky visitor who had driven hundreds of miles to lend a hand.

"People asked me, 'What can

we do to help?'" she said.

Hayden-Thomas reached out to her cousin, Father Carl McCarthy, pastor of Christ the King Parish in Madisonville, Kentucky. Christ the King was one of the western Kentucky parishes that served as a tornado relief hub immediately after the storms.

"Because of that kindness (of the Kentucky visitor), crossing all boundaries and coming to us, we wanted to do something to give back," said Hayden-Thomas.

With permission from her pastor, Father Joseph Vu, she started putting out word to neighboring parishes about doing something to help western Kentucky.

Their "mission trip," as they called it, became a collaborative project by parishioners of St. Theresa of Avila Parish and St. Mark Parish in Gonzales, Louisiana, and St. John the Evangelist Parish in Prairieville, Louisiana. Local Knights of Columbus and other Catholic

organizations became involved as well.

Hayden-Thomas told Father McCarthy that she wanted to bring the team not in the immediate aftermath but in the months to follow.

The priest suggested that they come during western Kentucky's spring break week from April 4-8, since volunteers would be converging on the area to help with recovery.

"Maybe you can help feed those extra people," said Father McCarthy.

From that point on, the Louisiana parishioners plotted out the cooking and food prep details to feed hundreds of volunteers.

A team of 16 people traveled up to western Kentucky, where they served hearty Cajun fare out of a drive-through tent at the Dawson Springs Community Center in Dawson Springs, Kentucky.

The Cajun Chefs stayed at Christview Fellowship Church in Madisonville, which had

generously opened its doors for them to sleep.

A photo of their flyer went viral on social media, stating that they'd be at the community April 5-8 from 11 a.m. "until the food is gone" and that they would be serving Cajun takeout food "for all in the community at no charge."

On April 5 they provided 603 servings of jambalaya; on April 6 they provided 575 servings of chicken and sausage spaghetti; on April 7, they provided 700 containers of gumbo and 150 lb. of barbecue chicken; and on April 8, they provided 525 servings of shrimp chowder.

Hayden-Thomas said the Cajun Chefs also delivered 80 plates a day to people displaced by the tornadoes who have been staying at Pennyrile Forest State Resort Park.

Hayden-Thomas said the experience "just felt like you were helping your neighbor."

"We know what it's like to be shell-shocked, to rebuild time

and time again," she said.

Hayden-Thomas' journey came full circle when one of the Dawson Springs recovery volunteers, Kim Gilliam, happened across the very man from Kentucky who had helped Holy Rosary with its hurricane relief.

Gilliam connected Hayden-Thomas with the man, and the two later chatted on the phone. Hayden-Thomas asked the man how he came to help at their Louisiana church, and asked if he was Catholic.

He told her he wasn't Catholic but that he knew someone, who knew someone, who knew someone else -- who told him about Holy Rosary and how it was helping people after the hurricane.

That's how he decided to drive down to help her church.

And, "five months later a group of Catholics came (to Kentucky) in response to someone who wasn't even Catholic," said Hayden-Thomas, reflecting on the ecumenical nature of their trip, such as getting to stay at the nondenominational church in Madisonville.

She said evangelizing through witness is important to her: "Let there be something about us that someone says, 'They have something I don't, and I want to find it.'"

The Cajun Chefs "offered what they had and who they are, and it was appreciated," Father McCarthy told The Western Kentucky Catholic. "That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it."

"They were sharing something they knew, which was food," he said. "They gave what they had to give -- and isn't that what we are all called to do?"

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*Barnstead is editor of The Western Kentucky Catholic, newspaper of the Diocese of Owensboro.*



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## Chef John Folse is saving a seat for you

**Boyce, LA** -- Famed Louisiana Chef John Folse is coming back to Central Louisiana and he would like to invite you to his dinner table!

On Wednesday, October 12, 2022 Chef Folse will once again partner with St. Mary's Residential Training School to host Feast for Good at the newly renovated England Airpark Community Center. Guests will enjoy a gourmet meal prepared by Chef Folse and his team, a live cooking demonstration by Chef Folse, and access to exclusive live and silent auction items from vendors across Louisiana.

Chef Folse has been named "Louisiana's Culinary Ambassador to the World" by the state legislature. He has prepared meals for some of the world's most elite including

American presidents and Pope John Paul II. Chef Folse's relationship with St. Mary's has spanned more than 15 years, bringing this living Louisiana treasure to share his dinner table with Cenla guests.

"We couldn't ask for a better friendship than the one we have with Chef Folse," said Tamara McNulty, St. Mary's Director of Development. "The service we provide Louisiana families is invaluable, yet so many people right here are unaware of the difference we make in the lives of young people with developmental disabilities. Chef Folse has not only made it his mission to personally support St. Mary's work, but also provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for others to join him and make a difference as well."

Tickets to this year's Feast for Good fundraiser are \$100 per person and are limited to the first 250 guests. Proceeds will go towards the construction of a new shade structure on St. Mary's campus. The structure will make it safer for clients to enjoy an afternoon at the campus splash pads without the added dangers of direct sunlight.

For more information or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact St. Mary's development department at 318-445-6443 ext. 2144 or tamara.mcnulty@stmarys-rts.org. Tickets can also be purchased online at feast4good.org or by texting 'My Ticket' to 41444.

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## Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana gaining momentum

At the end of November in 2021, Bishop Robert Marshall announced the assignment of Director of Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana to Rev. John Brocato, MDiv, MA, LPC. As a licensed professional counselor (LPC), Fr. John was uniquely qualified and positioned to launch the charitable arm of the diocese focusing on three primary initiatives: mental health, disaster response and basic needs.

Over the last few months, attention has been given to the infrastructure of the organization through board development and by-laws formation. Our mission statement was formed which highlights the heart of our apostolate: "Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana strives to be good stewards of life by empowering individuals, families, and communities to become self-sustainable, recognizing the dignity of all people."

In late June, Jennifer Gilchrist, MSW, LCSW, was hired as Director of Operations to develop programs and services under the three Catholic Charities initiatives. She brings to the organization over 30 years of social work experience including case management, community mobilization and outreach, policy



Jennifer Gilchrist

change and implementation, and coalition leadership. She currently chairs the Central Louisiana Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) which assists people affected by Hurricane Laura return to safe and livable housing. Her licensure in Clinical Social Work allows her to supervise Master level Social Work students who can do their clinical internships at Catholic Charities. Most of all, she is a devout and life-long Catholic who believes in this work and is committed to serving her community and church.

Heidi Wampler joined the staff of Catholic Charities on Aug. 1 as Manager of Finance



Heidi Wampler

and Development. She worked for St. Frances Cabrini Church for sixteen years, and recently with a local attorney for the last seven years. Experienced in working with diverse communities before joining Catholic Charities, Heidi is eager to use her experience in both the local Catholic community and finance to advocate for those in need and assist the organization in fulfilling its mission.

By the end of September Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana will provide services in the following areas: mental health counseling, divorce healing through Our Lady of Peace Ministry group, private

coaching, hurricane preparedness collaboration with the Central LA Emergency Response Coalition (CLERC), food pantry program, basic needs assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment. These services will be provided at various locations throughout the diocese in partnership with designated Catholic parishes and other non-profits and churches.

You can learn more about our

mission, board of directors and program initiatives by visiting our website, [www.cccenla.org](http://www.cccenla.org) Links for volunteer sign up, request for assistance and opportunities for donations are located there as well. Thank you for prayerfully considering how you can support this new and needed ministry within our diocese. For more information, please contact us through [www.cccenla.org](http://www.cccenla.org) or by calling 318-445-2401.



**CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA.** The staff of Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana spent several days in strategic planning meetings with Manuel Pires (DuNaiss) of Catholic Charities USA (headquartered in Boston). Pires serves as the organization's business solutions and program development consultant.

## 3 attend University of Notre Dame school pastor program



Three pastors from the Diocese of Alexandria attended the University of Notre Dame's School Pastors' Institute this summer at the recommendation of Bishop Robert Marshall, who attended this conference in 2013 when he was a school pastor in Memphis.

The School Pastor's Institute (SPI) was created in the summer of 2011 by the Alliance for Catholic Education which is a leadership formation symposium for pastors of a Catholic school. Developed at the request of (arch) bishops from across the country, the SPI is designed to respond to the unique and increasingly complex challenges and opportunities related to serving as a pastor of a parish school. Since 2011, the SPI has formed and served 1,125 pastors from 145 different (arch)dioceses to look more closely at the crucial role that the pastor plays in the parish school, as well as to foster best practices and collaboration among those engaged in this vital ministry. Now, more than ever, we need pastors who understand,

support, and advocate for our Catholic schools.

This year's conference was held July 11-14. Those attending were Fr. Scott Chemino, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua School, Bunkie; Fr. John Wiltse, pastor of St. Mary's Assumption School, Cottonport and Fr. Brian Seiler, pastor of Sacred Heart School in Moreauville.

"Any continuing education program at Notre Dame brings a high level of professionalism," said Fr. Scott Chemino, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua School in Bunkie.

"The use of current statistics, surveys, and trends concerning Catholic education in the United States was both re-assuring and alarming. Catholic schools are as valued as ever, but the ability to operate them, and for families to be able to afford them, are the challenges of our time," said Fr. Chemino, "Regardless, nothing will take the place of a quality Catholic education. Our students are formed in the person of Jesus Christ: academically, socially, physically, and

spiritually. In these strengths, we show our students how to embrace knowledge, beauty, and goodness in ways that other schools simply can no longer provide due to our current culture."

"I was grateful to be among so many school pastors who brought questions and experiences similar to my own. It was good to hear that we share many of the same challenges, but that we also share experiences that speak of the same solutions and strengths in our schools and families.

"The lasting quotation that I took from the Institute was offered by Bishop Frank Caggianno who said: "No matter how much time or energy, no matter how much worry or stress, the operation and advancement of a Catholic school is immeasurably worth the effort!"

"I am most grateful for the opportunity of having experienced the Institute."

### Cell Phones VS The Bible

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phones?

What if we carried our Bible around in our purse or pocket, like we do our cell phones?

What if we flipped through our Bible all day or many times a day, like we do our cell phones?

What if we went back for it, if we happened to forget our Bible somewhere, like we do our cell phones?

What if we used our Bible to receive messages from the text, like we do our cell phones?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it? Like it was a matter of life and death, like we do our cell phones?

What if we gave the Bible to kids as gifts? What if we used the Bible as a guide when we traveled, like we do our cell phones?

What if our Bible was always available in case of an emergency, like we use our cell phones?

So where is my Bible?

Unlike our cell phones, we don't have to worry about being disconnected from God or dropped by God. Not only that, the monthly bill for following the bible was paid by Jesus Christ centuries ago.

Now, where is my Bible again?

What would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phones?

Paid for by Marcus Descant

### Fr. Angelo Messina dies

Rev. Angelo Samuel Messina, a priest of the Diocese of Alexandria, passed from this life on Sunday, Aug. 21, 2022 in Destin, Florida at the age of 88. Fr. Messina was born in Pittston, Pennsylvania, the son of Joseph and Epifonie Messina, on May 14, 1934. Fr. Messina studied philosophy at St. Mary's College, St. Mary's Kentucky and studied theology at St. Procopius' Seminary in Illinois and at St. Mary's Seminary in Indiana. He was ordained as a priest for the

Diocese of Alexandria on May 25, 1968.

Fr. Messina served as pastor of St. Catherine of Sienna Church, Shreveport; Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward; St. Mary's Church in Jena; St. Mary's Church in Winnsboro; St. Joseph's Church in Colfax and St. Michael's Church in Leesville. Fr. Messina also served on the Presbyteral Council of the diocese. He retired from active ministry in 2004. Funeral services and interment took place in Florida.

#### HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for September 2022

Abolition of the Death Penalty // We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.



# Preparing for battle: 7 tips from St. Paul on evangelization

By Joe Heschmeyer  
Word on Fire Ministries

In the face of seemingly endless scandals in the Catholic Church, a lot of non-Catholics are asking some variation of “Why are you still Catholic?” to their Catholic friends and loved ones. Behind this question is often pain, anger, or sheer incredulity, but the silver lining is that they are asking about why we’re still Catholic, which creates an opening for evangelization. But now what?

As Catholics, we know we’re called to evangelize the world, but anyone who has ever attempted evangelization (or apologetics) knows that it’s hard to do it well. As with any craft, one of the best ways to learn is to pay attention to the people who do it well, so it makes sense that we should look to the life and example of St. Paul. He is arguably the greatest Christian evangelist who ever lived, apart from Christ himself. After all, he was “entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for the mission to the circumcised worked through me also for the Gentiles)” (Gal. 2:7-8), meaning that if you’re a Gentile Christian, your spiritual lineage probably goes back to someone who was converted by St. Paul.

So how do we ensure that we’re properly “armed” for any sort of question, discussion, or argument about the faith? St. Paul gives these instructions (Ephesians 6:10-18a):

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God,



that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times in the Spirit, with

all prayer and supplication.

Let’s unpack this slowly.

First, St. Paul reminds us to rely upon God rather than ourselves: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.” This is maybe the hardest part of apologetics. We want to be the heroes, we want to be right, and we want to do it all on the strength of our own brilliance. But this is a huge mistake, and the surest route to failure. Why? Paul gets there in his second point.

Second, he reminds us who we’re really up against. Our enemy is Satan and his henchmen. And Paul also reminds us of Satan’s “wiles,” and the “spiritual hosts of wickedness.” The devil’s smarter than you are, and more powerful. If you are relying upon your own strength, you will lose.

This has several implications for how we approach apologetics. It means you can’t just approach it as an argument in which you have to “beat” the other person. Your goal needs to be to win the other person for Christ, not to win the argument. If you start getting into “winning the argument” mode, you will quickly find yourself struggling with pride, deception, and lack of charity. You might “win” the argument, but you’ve lost against your real enemy, the devil.

Third, St. Paul tells us to wear the whole “armor of God,” beginning with “girding our loins with truth.” Let’s say that the other person you’re speaking to raises a question, and you just don’t know the answer. What’s the temptation? To make something up or to guess. Why? Because it saves face, or because we buy into the lie that if we don’t make something up, we’ll lose. Paul is warning us: don’t do that. Don’t rely upon half-truths or lies just because they might help you “win the argument”; don’t make stuff up to avoid looking ignorant or wrong; don’t sacrifice truth for the sake of a “win.” Why? Because Satan “is a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44), while God is “the God of truth” (Isaiah 65:16).

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

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

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

**For updated information, news articles, and documents regarding ongoing activity and planning for securing and maintaining a Safe Environment for all**, visit [www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/healing](http://www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/healing) (visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org) and look for “A Safe Environment For All” under the “Our Faith” tab). Here, you can find 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.”

# NEBLETT, BEARD & ARSENAULT

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Richard J. Arsenault

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Lying is losing.

Fourth, St. Paul tells us to wear the “breastplate of righteousness.” In other words, the most effective armor that you have in this fight is holiness. You can know all the proofs for God’s existence, you can be able to explain the arguments about Jesus’ empty tomb or his establishment of the Church, but if you’re not living like a saint, it’s a waste of breath.

On the other hand, Paul also speaks of “the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left” (2 Cor. 6:7). In other words, we should be “armed” with holiness. Even if you’re not great at apologetics, even if you can never remember chapter and verse in the heat of the moment, even if you’re the worst debater in the world, you can still be an effective evangelist simply by being loving and openly sharing “the hope that is in you.”

When you talk to people who have converted to Catholicism, or who have gone from being a lax Catholic to on fire for their faith, there tend to be two common elements: (1) there is almost always a personal connection—if you don’t know a Catholic who loves being Catholic, chances are, you’re not going to become Catholic, or start loving your faith; and (2) most of the time, that person isn’t what you would imagine. They aren’t some world-class theologian with all of the answers. Sometimes, sure! But more often than not, they’re a person who was proud to be Catholic, and who took the life of holiness seriously. Pope Francis writes that “holiness is the most attractive face of the Church.” And Pope Benedict XVI said:

To me, art and the Saints are

the greatest apologetic for our faith. The arguments contributed by reason are unquestionably important and indispensable, but then there is always dissent somewhere. On the other hand, if we look at the Saints, this great luminous trail on which God passed through history, we see that there truly is a force of good which resists the millennia; there truly is the light of light.

In other words, no matter how tight your intellectual argument for Catholicism is, people can always find ways of not believing it. There are intelligent people on both sides of every one of these arguments, because God doesn’t force belief. Rather, he enables faith. So the only unanswerable argument for the truth of the faith is holiness.

Fifth, St. Paul tells us to shod our feet “with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.” We’ve just established that these encounters, as innocuous and meaningless as they may seem, are points of spiritual combat, and combat against a foe who’s stronger and smarter than you. In the face of this, especially if it doesn’t seem to be going well, it’s important to cling to the peace that only Christ can give. As he said at the Last Supper, knowing that the Apostles were about to undergo a serious spiritual trial, “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me” (John 14:1). And a short while later: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:29). The devil can offer you complacency, but

not true peace. And so what does he want to have happen in these encounters? For you to lose your peace, and to stop trusting that God is more powerful than Satan.

Sixth, St. Paul reminds us to be armed with the “the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” In other words, lean on God and learn Scripture. It’s a great tool. When the devil tried to tempt Jesus in the desert, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture (Mt. 4:1-11). The devil then tried to get Jesus to jump off the Temple by selectively quoting Psalm 91: “He will give his angels charge of you,” and “on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus corrected him, still using Scripture.

This is a lesson for us. One of the most common reasons I hear Catholics say that they can’t evangelize is that they don’t know Scripture well enough. Well, good, you recognize the problem! Your lack of knowledge of Scripture is impeding your ability to live the Christian life fully, and keeping you from bringing other people to Jesus. What are you going to do about it?

And it’s not just about knowing chapter and verse. It’s about knowing the Gospel, and coming to know Jesus intimately

through prayerfully devouring Scripture. St. Jerome puts it this way: “If, as Paul says, ‘Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God,’ and if the man who does not know Scripture does not know the power and wisdom of God, then ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.”

Finally, you’ll notice that I said prayerfully devouring Scripture. That’s because St. Paul calls upon us to “pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” In these moments of evangelization, when someone is asking or challenging, you need “air support.” This is for two reasons. First, because you’re not equipped to do it well enough on your own. The devil is a predator, and what do predators do? They try to get you away from the herd. They want you alone, so you’re defenseless. So when the devil tells you, “You’ve got this, don’t worry about praying!” he’s saying, “Come over here, without God.”

But even more than that, it’s because faith is a gift from God. A friend of mine was a fervent and brilliant anti-Catholic (he went on to clerk for a Supreme Court justice, and is now a lawyer working for the White House). As a young man at Hillsdale College, he would

argue his Catholic classmates out of the Church. Eventually, enough of the Catholics around him started praying for him that he underwent an incredible spiritual transformation and he became Catholic. There wasn’t some particular argument that he encountered that he’d never heard of before. Instead, as he put it, it was like the scales just dropped from his eyes one day, and all of his resistance to Catholicism was gone. Don’t underestimate the power of prayer.

No matter how good your arguments are, you cannot give someone faith. The most you can do is learn to remove some of the intellectual barriers (and, by holiness of life, remove some of the nonintellectual barriers). The only one who can give someone faith is God, and so we need to be praying for people by name. We might also need to join this with fasting for them, because that’s a powerful spiritual combination (Mark 9:20). I would encourage you right now to take a moment to let you pause and ask God if there’s anyone you need to be praying for in this way.

---

*This article was originally published at [wordonfire.org](http://wordonfire.org).*

## Awesome Catholic apps for your prayer life

### Hallow

Hallow is the #1 Catholic Prayer and Meditation app. With over 500 audio-guided prayers and meditations, Hallow provides a beautifully designed way to spend more time with God and meditating on His word. Set reminders, create or join prayer groups, share prayer intentions with loved ones, and meditate from one minute to a Holy Hour.

### Pray as you go

“Pray as you go” offers segments that are 15 minutes long (or less), as well as audio prayers, Imaginative Contemplation Exercises, an audio rosary, stations of the cross, and an audio Examen.

### Reimagining the Examen

“Reimagining the Examen” is an interactive app that leads you through a series of Examen, encouraging you to sit in prayer with God each day. You can select an examen and select your own background music.

### Formed.org

“Formed.org” offers studies, videos, audio recordings, ebooks, and a range of materials for kids. While “Formed.org” does require a monthly fee for access to all the materials, check with your parish, as many offer their parishioners’ free access to all of the wonderful content on this app.

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*// saint thomas aquinas*



## Service is a calling for all, not a select few, pope says



By Junno Arocho Esteves  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Following Christ's example of love and service to those in need is not a task reserved to a select few but a calling for all Christians, Pope Francis said.

Jesus' image of entering the kingdom of heaven through a "narrow gate" does not mean that "only a few are destined to go through it" but instead means living "one's life in love, in service, and in giving oneself as he did," the pope said Aug. 21 during his Sunday Angelus address.

"To enter the plan God proposes for our life requires that we restrict the space of selfishness, reduce the presumption of self-sufficiency, lower the heights of pride and arrogance, and that we overcome laziness, in order to traverse the risk of love, even when it involves the cross," he said.

After praying the Angelus prayer, Pope Francis said he was following news of the continued repression against the Catholic Church in Nicaragua "with concern and sorrow."

On Aug. 19, Nicaraguan police burst into Matagalpa diocesan headquarters and removed Bishop Rolando Álvarez and nearly a dozen others who had been under house arrest for more than two weeks.

Although the pope did not specifically mention Bishop Álvarez's arrest, he prayed for peace in the country through Mary's intercession.

"I would like to express my conviction and my hope that, through an open and sincere dialogue, the basis for a respectful and peaceful co-existence might still be found. Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the 'Purísima' ('Mary Most Pure'), to inspire everyone's heart with this concrete will," he said.

As he has nearly every week, he also prayed for the people of Ukraine.

Addressing an estimated 12,000 pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's Square, the pope reflected on St. Luke's Gospel, in which Jesus responds to a question about those who will be saved by calling on his followers to "strive to enter through the narrow gate."

The image of a narrow gate, the pope said, "could scare us, as if salvation is destined for only a few elect, or perfect people."

However, he added, the belief that only a chosen few people would "contradict" Jesus' teaching that all are welcome "at the table in the kingdom of God."

"This door is narrow, but is open to everyone," he said. "Do not forget this. The door is open to everyone."

Nevertheless, Jesus' use of the image of the narrow gate was his way of telling Christians

that "to enter into God's life, into salvation, we need to pass through him, not through another one, through him; to welcome him and his word."

He also called on Christians to reflect on "those daily acts of love that we struggle to carry on with" and to reflect on those who dedicate their lives and sacrifice themselves to help those in need, including parents, as well as those who serve the elderly and the poor."

"Let's think of those who keep on working committedly, putting up with discomfort and, perhaps, with misunderstanding; let's think of those who suffer because of their faith, but who continue to pray and love; let's think of those who, rather than following their own instincts, respond to evil with good, finding the strength to forgive and the courage to begin again," he said.

Pope Francis encouraged Christians to follow the example of those who choose "the narrow door of Jesus" and not "the wide door of their own convenience."

"Brothers and sisters, which side do we want to be on?" the pope asked. "Do we prefer the easy way of thinking only about ourselves, or do we choose the narrow door of the Gospel that puts our selfishness into crisis, but which makes us able to welcome the true life that comes from God and makes us happy? Which side are we on?"

## Post-abortive healing support group

The Cenla Pregnancy Center is proud to announce the formation of the new Post-Abortive Healing Support Group. Any woman who is feeling loss or needs help taking the first steps in the healing process after abortion is invited to join us for this series of support group meetings.

We have three facilitators who will be working at different times on this project, including a licensed practicing counselor, a life coach, and a certified spiritual director.

This support group will

meet Saturday mornings for six consecutive weeks beginning September 10, and end on October 15.

This healing ministry will include comprehensive resource materials developed by Word Among Us Press, and is offered at no cost to women who seek to take this step in their lives.

Group size is limited to 8 - 10 persons. The location of sessions will be announced upon registration.

For more information or to register as a participant, call Maria Burke at 318-314-3061.

## Post-Abortive Healing Support Group

6 WEEK PROGRAM:

SEPTEMBER 10  
SEPTEMBER 17  
SEPTEMBER 24  
OCTOBER 1  
OCTOBER 8  
OCTOBER 15

10:00AM-11:30AM  
LOCATION OF SESSIONS  
ANNOUNCED UPON  
REGISTRATION

Facilitator: Maria Burke  
Call 318.314.3061 to register

Visit the sign-up form  
at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org),  
or email [starver@diocesealex.org](mailto:starver@diocesealex.org)  
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**THE AVOYELLES DEANERY** clergy get together at Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen on Aug. 4 on the Feast Day of St. Jean Marie Vianney the Patron Saint of All Pastors. Pictured left to right are Fr. Martin Laird, pastor of Mater Dolorosa, Plaquemine; Fr. Blake Deshautelle, pastor of St. Paul, Mansura ; Fr. John Wiltse, pastor of St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport; retired priest Fr. Charles Morgan; Dcn. Doug Moreau; Dcn. Reggie Ducote; Fr. Abraham Varghese, pastor of Holy Ghost, Marksville; Fr. Ramji Shoury, pastor of Church of the Little Flower; standing in back, Dcn. Josh Burch and in front Fr. Abraham Palikkattuchira, pastor of St. Genevieve, Brouillette.



**(left) DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA SEMINARIANS.** Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass to conclude the annual Seminarian Convocation held at Maryhill Aug. 1-3. This annual gathering serves as an orientation session where they attend presentations, learn about the diocese, take a tour of the Chancery , and meet the diocesan employees. Also attending Mass were members of the Serra Club. Pictured, left to right: Jacob Cass, Troy Cannon, Josh Burch, Donnie Kuzma, Bishop Marshall, Matthew Bonner, director of vocations, Fr. Luke LaFleur, Gabe Dowden and Blaine Phillips.

## Golf Tournament Oct. 10

Plans for the 26th Annual Bishop's Invitational Golf Tournament are underway! The tournament will be held on Monday, Oct. 10 at Oak Wing Golf Club. The tournament is a 4-person scramble and entry fee includes green fees, cart, mulligans, range balls, lunch, dinner after the tournament and refreshments throughout the day.

To sign up to play or to sponsor please contact Sandi Tarver at 318-445-6424 ext. 209 or starver@diocesealex.org for more information.

## Seminarian Burses July 2022 Donations

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|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Knights of Columbus Council #9217</b> ..... | <b>\$25.00</b>  |
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| Father Gus Voltz Burse                         |                 |
| <b>Mrs. Barbara Rigby</b> .....                | <b>\$100.00</b> |
| Leo P. Dobard Burse                            |                 |
| <b>Total</b> .....                             | <b>\$250.00</b> |

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

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

-- Very Reverend Stephen Scott Chemino, Chairman

## 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.

*In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge.*

Psalm 90: 1 | Responsorial Psalm for September 4 | Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

## 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.



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**Sunday:**  
11 a.m. - 9 p.m.



## Parish Spotlight: St. Joseph Church, Cheneyville established 1966



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, CHENEYVILLE.

Located about 8.5 miles northwest of Bunkie, in Avoyelles Parish, the small town of Cheneyville was founded in 1811 as a primarily Anglo-Saxon Protestant community.

The Catholic community in Cheneyville was formally

organized almost one hundred years later, in 1914, when a small chapel was erected on Ford Street. The wood-frame chapel was assigned as a mission of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria.

Later, responsibility for the mission was reassigned to St.

Martin Church in Lecompte, which is located about ten miles north of Cheneyville.

In 1957, Fr. Martin Tyrrell directed the building of a new brick church on Klock St.

On June 22, 1966, Bishop Charles P. Greco established St. Joseph Church as an independent parish. Fr. Rudolph Engelen was appointed the first pastor.

Fr. Engelen was responsible for building the present rectory and parish hall. A new tabernacle and decorations were placed in the sanctuary in 2006 to mark the parish's 40th anniversary.

In 2009, under the direction of Fr. Stephen Scott Chemino, new light fixtures were installed together with additional ornaments in the sanctuary.

Today, St. Joseph Church in Cheneyville is serviced by pastors of St. Francis de Sales Church in Echo.



**QUEENSHIP OF MARY.** Mater Dolorosa Church Parish and St. Joseph School families of Plaquemine celebrated the Queenship of Mary on Monday, August 22 with a rosary procession around the school and church. Pray for us, Queen Mother.



**MINOR BASILICA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, NATCHITOCHES.** Ladies from the Living Faith Prayer Group recently attended Mass for the Feast Day of St. Mary Magdalene. The ladies have been participating in a book study on Saint Mary Magdalene, Prophetess of Eucharistic Love by Fr. Sean Davidson. Pictured, front row left to right: Cheryl Ramin, Kathy Friday, Ellen Mathis, Katie Spence, Brenda Stamey, Anne Taylor, Doris Smith, Cathy Ingram, Mary Ann Nowlin and Paula Burrell. Back row: Ashwini Weber, Joanne Yankowski, Connie Scruggs, Fr. Irion St. Romain, Lisa Guillet, Marteel Henry, Diane Vienne, Megan Lirette and Elizabeth Lirette.

*I will rise and go to my father.*

Luke 15:18 | Responsorial Psalm for September 11 |  
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### 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.

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**ST. MARTIN OF TOURS CHURCH, BELLEDEAU.** Bishop Robert Marshall was pleased to begin his third year as a bishop by celebrating Mass at St. Martin of Tours Church in Belledeau. This was his first time to visit St. Martin of Tours due to cancellations and postponements due to COVID. Thank you to Father Kurian Zachariah, Deacon Darrell Dubroc, and the parishioners of St. Martin of Tours for their very kind welcome.



**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS.** John Morovich, K.C. Diocesan Coordinator and a Fourth Degree Knight of the Knights of Columbus' Fourth Degree Assemblies in Central Louisiana presented a check in honor of Excellence in Religious Education. The money will be used for religious education in the Diocese. Newly appointed diocesan Director of Religious Education and Faith Formation, Deacon Jason Lavergne, joined Bishop Robert Marshall for the presentation.



**CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS.** Recently, Mrs. Ona Wilson, Regent of Catholic Daughters of the Americas' Court Bishop Desmond #1459, and Mrs. Barbara Cancienne, Vice Regent, presented a check to Bishop Robert Marshall and Fr. Luke LaFleur, Director of Vocations, to benefit the diocesan Seminarians Education fund.



**ST. ANNE MISSION CHURCH, SPANISH LAKE.** Sunday, Aug. 14, Bishop Robert Marshall traveled to historic St. Anne Church in the Spanish Lake community outside of Robeline. Bishop Marshall celebrated Mass with Father Thomas Paul, pastor, and the warm and welcoming parishioners of St. Anne.



**Upcoming Retreats**

• September 29 - October 2  
St. Mary's, Cottonport  
Women's ACTS

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

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

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## Vacation Bible School wraps up for the summer!



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, ST. JOSEPH, LA.** St. Joseph Church in St. Joseph, LA will be hosted VBS July 18-22. The kids played games, learned songs and learned about scriptures with Fr. Taylor Reynolds.



**VBS OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR, ALEXANDRIA.** OLPS held its Vacation Bible School from June 13-17, the theme was Spark Studios! Pictured with the VBS kids is Father Rusty Rabalais, pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, DEVILLE.** VBS in Deville was held July 18-22. The theme was "He Has The Whole World in His Hands." Kids Pre-k to 6th attended and enjoyed many activities that showed them to work as a team and always be kind.



**VBS SACRED HEART CHURCH, MOREAUVILLE.** Monumental-Celebrating God's Greatness! was held July 17 - 21. Pictured: the younger children's group joining in prayer and thanksgiving for a successful first night and more to come. Special "thank you" to First Guaranty Bank for their help. Music, crafts, snacks and fun filled the week.



**VBS AT ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH, ISLE BREVELLE.** The theme was *Monumental: Celebrating God's Greatness* at St. Augustine from July 11-15. 42 excited campers, PreK-6th graders with a spirited group of teen leaders were on board for an awesome week of learning and celebrating God's greatness! Each day began with Holy Mass and Father Charlie Ray. The entire group began a different inspiration lesson and message each day. Mixed age pre-assigned groups rotated in and out of sessions that included Bible Adventures, Imagination Station, Oasis Tastes, Cinema, Red Rock Recreation. 26 spirited adult crew leaders provided guidance and assistance throughout the program. Adding to the fun was music with Dr. Wilfred Delphin and T-Val which put a bit of pep in our steps throughout the journey. On Friday at Closing Canyon campers enthusiastically shared with parents, family and visitors the week long journey. It was an AWESOME JOURNEY for all involved.



**STS. FRANCIS AND ANNE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.** It was held July 18-22 and 44 children ranging from ages 1-12 attended with numerous teen and adult volunteers. For the first time, a toddler room was available for the littlest kids. The theme was *Monumental: Celebrating God's Greatness*. The kids did crafts, games, ate some great snacks, and sang and danced to Jesus! It was a lot of fun. Sts. Francis and Anne would like to thank the VBS crews from St. Rita's and Sacred Heart in Pineville that helped make the week possible!



# BACK-TO-SCHOOL!



**HOLY SAVIOR MENARD HIGH SCHOOL.** Edgar the Eagle greeted new students at HSM's New Student Orientation on August 5, and students gathered in small groups of prayer at New Student Orientation in anticipation of the opening of school. Pictured above: Edgar and HSM's cheer squad get ready to hype up the crowd at New Student Orientation. Pictured below: A group of 7th graders gather for fellowship and prayer.



(above and right) **ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA SCHOOL, BUNKIE.** Father Scott Chemino with the PreK and kindergarten classes of SAS for the annual school blessing on the Feast of the Queenship of Mary, Aug. 22.



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE.** Sacred Heart School welcomed students back to school on Aug. 8. Fr. Brian Seiler began this school year by blessing SHS with Sr. Sandra Norsworthy, OLS principal and Deacon Josh Burch. Teachers welcomed students back as they found their way to their new classrooms, lockers and textbooks.



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL, FLAG CEREMONY.** Sacred Heart School held its annual Flag Ceremony and Flag Bearer Commissioning Service on Aug. 17. This year's Flag Bearers are Samuel [redacted], Victoria [redacted], John Alex [redacted]. Pictured with them are Deacon Josh Burch, Fr. Brian Seiler, pastor and Mr. Marvin Guillot, assistant principal.





## New course aims to instruct new Catholics, reenergize lifelong Catholics

By Julie Asher  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- A new online study course titled "What We Believe: The Beauty of the Catholic Faith" was "created by a few very imperfect disciples who happen to be crazy about Christ and his church," said one of the authors and presenters of the course.

"The goal of the study is not only to instruct but to inspire and reenergize. Catholics who are joyful, excited and informed have very little trouble attracting others, even the young, to the church," Marcellino D'Ambrosio told Catholic News Service.

"What is the Catholic Church all about? What does it mean to be Catholic? What do Catholics actually believe?" are some of the questions the 10-session course aims to answer for new Catholics, lifelong Catholics and those considering becoming Catholic.

D'Ambrosio and co-creators and co-presenters Andrew and Sarah Swafford recently filmed the course in Rome for Ascension. The three also wrote an accompanying book with the same title published by Ascension.

The course "was developed to cast a broad net" to meet the needs of Catholics "already hungry to know more about their faith" and non-Catholic Christians "curious about what Catholics believe," said D'Ambrosio.

"The videos and/or the paperback book can be shared with those who are 'nones,'" those who claim no affiliation with any religion, he said. The course also has something for those who are non-Christian or come from an atheist background, he added. "In fact the book is a great evangelist giveaway tool."

He told CNS he has been "sounding the alarm for years about the fact that young people, millennials and Generation Z, are

increasingly losing interest in the Catholic Church and organized religion."

"If you probe a bit, the main reason young people themselves give for this is that they perceive Catholicism and organized religion in general as irrelevant to their real concerns like love, community and adventure" he said.

"This study presents following Jesus in the fullness of Catholic faith as the greatest of all adventures, a journey made together with others, a journey home, into the heart of One who loves each person intimately and perfectly," he said.

D'Ambrosio is currently a professor of theology at Catholic Distance University, a private online Catholic university based in Charles Town, West Virginia. A regular guest on both secular and Catholic TV and radio programs, he also is the co-founder and director of

the Crossroads Initiative and the author of five books and hundreds of articles.

Andrew Swafford is an associate professor of theology at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. He is host and author of Ascension's DVD series "Hebrews: The New and Eternal Covenant and Romans: The Gospel of Salvation." He also is editor and contributor to Ascension's "Great Adventure Catholic Bible."

Sarah Swafford is a national speaker and author of "Emotional Virtue: A Guide to Drama Free Relationships."

"I think most of us have experienced one time or another being caught by surprise by a question or challenge about Catholic teaching and have found ourselves coming up short," D'Ambrosio said.

"This study will prepare those who participate to have a better answer in these situations

and 'be ready to give a reason for their hope,'" he added, quoting from Chapter 3 of the First Letter of Peter.

He said the course also will correct the misconception he believes most people have, "even Catholics," that Catholicism is an "'ism,' a belief system and a code of ethics taught by an impersonal institution."

In "What We Believe," Catholic beliefs and the Commandments "are put in their proper context -- a living relationship with Jesus Christ who shares with us everything -- his Father, his mother, his Holy Spirit, his inheritance, his righteousness, his entire family that stretches back thousands of years and upward to heaven," he explained.

The course "lays out the Catholic faith as a rich treasury that is beautiful, liberating and empowering," he added.

"Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire." // *Saint Catherine of Siena*

### Adoration Chapel // Daily

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville, Perpetual Adoration Chapel will be open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the Community Center. You will need to call the office during office hours to obtain the code to the chapel: 318-445-2497.

### Grief Support Group // 1st Wednesday of the month

Sacred Heart of Jesus in Pineville's Grief Support Group meeting dates for June, July, and August will only meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month, in the Community Center at 6:00 p.m. We will have a potluck dinner and fellowship. The next meeting will be July 6. For more information, call Tammy Magnano at 318-229-7455.

### Insights Prayer Group // every Tuesday

The Insights Prayer Group (formerly Tuesday Afternoon Prayer Group) has resumed its weekly meetings every Tuesday at 12:45 p.m. in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church Community Center, Pineville. Anyone interested in gaining insight into the role of Sacred Scripture and power of prayer as tools to navigate Catholic life in the present is invited to attend. For more information, contact Melba LaCaze at 318-445-6851 or Rhonda England at 318-452-9739.

### St. Timothy Food Pantry // last Saturday every month

Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Alexandria conducts its St. Timothy Food Pantry distributions on the last Saturday of every month from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. at the St. Timothy Center, 409 21st Street. Anyone in need of food is welcome to come. For more information, contact Chris Bayonne at 318-955-1222.

### The Real Presence Prayer Group // every Wednesday

The Real Presence Prayer Group will meet every Wednesday evening at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville. Rosary begins at 7:00 p.m. with Charismatic Praise & High Worship at 7:20 p.m., and Healing Prayer at 8:00 p.m. (Closing by 11:00 p.m.) Wheelchair accessible. For more information, call Joey LaFossee at 318-332-2234 or Bob Weeks at 318-442-1794.

### Outdoor lighted rosary, Marksville // every Thursday

St. Joseph Church in Marksville has begun its weekly outdoor lighted rosary every Thursday now through October. The rosary begins at 8:00 p.m. in the parking lot next to the church hall. In inclement weather, the rosary is prayed in St. Joseph church. Participants may bring chairs to sit outside or remain in their vehicles. The lighted rosary is facilitated by St. Joseph Knights of Columbus Council #1217.

### Divine Mercy Hour // every Friday

Sacred Heart Church of Moreauville has a weekly Divine Mercy Hour at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays. There will be adoration with benediction, recitation of the divine mercy chaplet, and confessions available. Everyone is invited.



# Bring what is broken

By Jill Rauh  
eucharisticrevival.org

As people of faith, we at times experience an encounter with Christ so powerful that it becomes a story shared over and over again for many years to come.

For me, one such encounter occurred as an undergraduate student at an urban Catholic campus.

Almost since arriving at Marquette University, I volunteered in the jail ministry, visiting a young woman named Tawnya every other week. During our visits, she cried often, especially when I prayed with her. The encounters were difficult, but I knew I needed to be there—probably for my own benefit as much as hers. Sitting across the glass from this stranger who had become a sister in Christ, I often thought about how different Tawnya's background was from my own, about my own privileged upbringing, and about how my life might have been different under other circumstances.

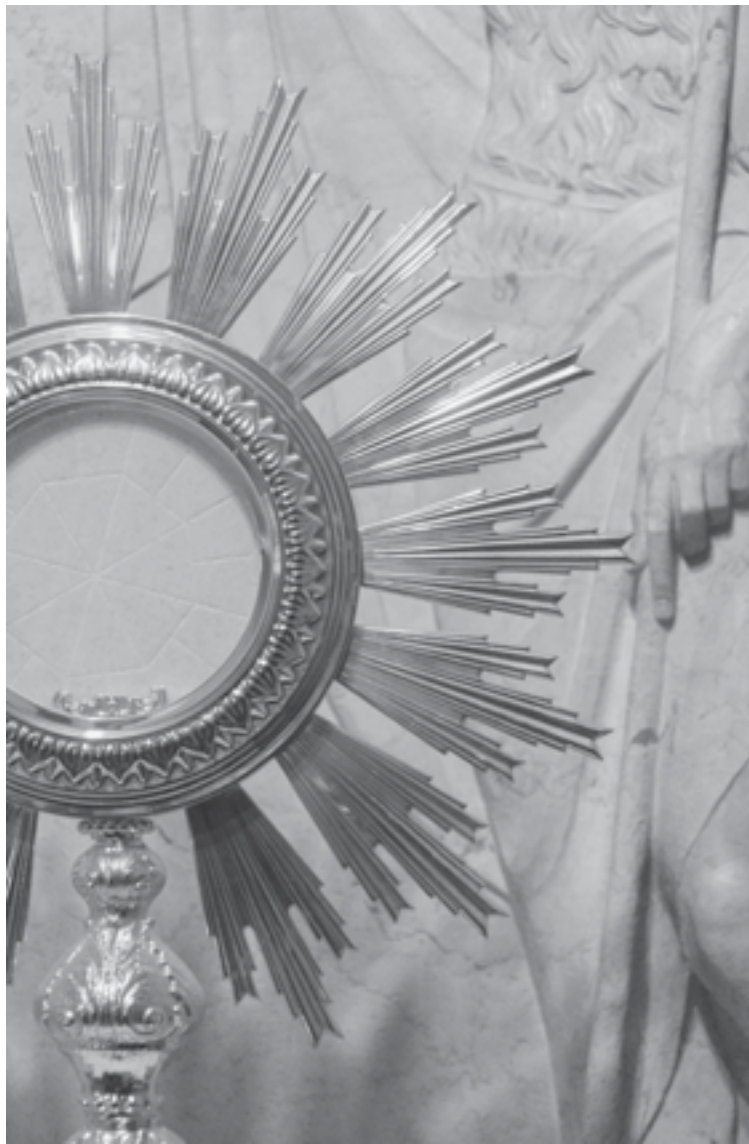
One week, I not only visited with Tawnya but also met a young girl named Ebony at a university-sponsored literacy program.

Ebony was severely behind in reading, to the extent that even homework instructions were totally beyond comprehension. Afterward, I found myself wondering: Where did Ebony live? Did she have any siblings? What school did she attend? Did she have a learning disability (and if so, had anyone diagnosed it?), or was her school just so under-resourced that no one had noticed she was far behind?

## Bringing It to Jesus

Tawnya and Ebony were on my mind as I walked across campus one evening. My heart felt heavy with the burdens they each carried. It occurred to me to stop in the university ministry chapel.

I remember feeling deep sadness as I walked through the student union to the hallway where the chapel was located. I remember entering and closing the door behind me. I remember the noisy bustle of the student union fading. An almost-tangible stillness seemed to surround me as I knelt in front of the Blessed



Sacrament.

Silently but fervently, I began to share about Tawnya and Ebony. "I don't know how to respond to this brokenness, Lord," I prayed. "I don't know what to do with the complicated systems that have led to the challenges of poverty in their daily lives—and those of so many others."

As I gazed at the tabernacle, I recalled the broken body of Christ Jesus present in the Sacrament within. I realized that Jesus knew the brokenness and pain of all who suffer. After all, his own body experienced the literal brokenness of crucifixion.

As I prayed, I became aware of the presence of Christ's love, immense and surrounding me. I imagined that love radiating from the tabernacle, filling the room, extending past the doors of the chapel, beyond the student union, through the streets, neighborhoods, and the entire city. From fancy office buildings to homeless shelters, jail cells, and under-resourced schools, I imagined Christ's love touching

everything and everyone. The power of Christ's love extended from his body in the Eucharist to every corner of pain and suffering.

## Jesus Speaks

I felt these words in my heart:  
*Come to me.*

*Bring what is broken.*

*I pour out my love.*

These phrases echoed in my mind: Come to me. Bring what is broken. I pour out my love. I gazed at the tabernacle for some time in prayer, allowing the words to echo in my heart and asking that it would be so.

But the conversation continued.

"When, Lord?" I asked. "How long must we wait? I know that you can transform all of this brokenness, but the challenges are so big, the structures that hold back Tawnya and Ebony are so immovable."

## A Divine Invitation

I sensed a swift and piercing response in my heart:

*Be my hands and feet.*

*Live my love.*

*Transform injustice.*

I felt humbled and overwhelmed. Could it be that Christ would call me to be part of his mission—his holy mission of working to transform what impedes the flourishing of his beloved children?

Be my hands and feet. Live my love. Transform injustice.

Looking back at this moment now, those words seem to anticipate others that I would later study and seek to embody in ministry:

*The Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become "bread that is broken" for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. (Pope Benedict XVI, The Sacrament of Charity, no. 88.)*

*The presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his people becomes an undertaking of solidarity, a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled. (St. John Paul II, On Keeping the Lord's Day Holy, no. 73)*

## How do I live the Eucharist?

Nourished by the Eucharist, we can respond to this call to be bread that is broken.

We can work to transform structures that prevent God's children from thriving: Poverty. Racism. Consumerism. Exploitation. Violence.

For me, the work of solidarity has been possible through service, advocacy, parish social ministry, and accompaniment of low-income families through the work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. There are many avenues to encounter, learn and act.

Currently, parishes discuss the urgent challenge of getting Catholics back to church. It is essential that we return in order to receive Christ's body in the Eucharist. It is also essential that, nourished by this gift, we then become bread broken for others, working across our divisions to heal the inequalities which have only become more apparent during the pandemic.

Pope Francis asks, "How do I live the Eucharist?" As the

Church kicks off a multi-year Eucharistic revival, let us go forth, inspired by the Eucharist. Let us be his hands and feet, live his love, and transform injustice. It's how we live the Eucharist.

*Note: For purposes of privacy, the names of the individuals mentioned in this reflection were changed.*

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*Jill Rauh serves as Director of the Office of Education & Outreach for the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD) at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This office helps Catholics pray, encounter, and act, inspired by the social teachings of the Church. Read JPHD's reflections on Eucharist and Social Mission: Body of Christ, Broken for the World and on The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church.*

The National Eucharistic Revival is a three-year initiative sponsored by the Bishops of the United States to inspire and prepare the People of God to be formed, healed, converted, united, and sent out to a hurting and hungry world through a renewed encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist - the source and summit of our Catholic faith.

To receive weekly updates + inspiration, visit [eucharisticrevival.org](http://eucharisticrevival.org).

# Blessed Carlo Acutis: Patron saint of online learning

By *Katie Eilerman*  
*Blessed is She*

Anyone who has been involved with online schooling in any capacity can attest to its challenges. Being a first-year teacher, I knew last school year would be difficult, but nothing I read about or discussed in my college classes could prepare me for entering the classroom in the midst of a global pandemic. I survived the year with copious amounts of coffee, frequent Taylor Swift car jams, the incredible support of my community, and, of course, daily prayer.

In particular, I found myself turning to the Saints for inspiration and intercession as I navigated the school year. That's why, in October of 2020, I was overjoyed to learn about Blessed Carlo Acutis and add him to my Heavenly support team.

## *Carlo Acutis: Online Evangelist*

Blessed Carlo Acutis was from Italy and lived from 1991-2006. He was a typical kid: he went to school, he wore blue jeans, and he loved playing video games. However, he was atypical in his immense love for the Eucharist.

At a young age, he used to walk the streets of his hometown with his mother and ask to stop in every church to say hi to Jesus. He saw what a powerful force the Eucharist was in his own life, and he wanted to share this message with others.

He decided to teach himself computer programming and build a website documenting all of the known Eucharistic miracles around the world so that everyone could learn about this incredible gift from God to humanity. Although his life was short (he died of leukemia at the age of 15), he made a monumental impact on the lives of those around him and in the universal Church, which resulted in his cause for canonization being brought to and approved by the Vatican. Still today, he inspires those in the Church through his immense

love of God and his desire to bring others to Jesus in the Eucharist. This modern-day hero is now just one step away from being pronounced the first Saint to live in this millennium!

## *"To Always Be Close to Jesus"*

While so many aspects of Blessed Carlo Acutis's story have resonated with my heart, a few in particular have granted him A-list status on my litany of Saints. The more I learned about this holy young man, the more I felt called to pray through his intercession for my students. He and they share so many similarities: playing video games, spending time online, and especially navigating the challenges of pursuing holiness amidst a world that is full of distractions and temptations.

When asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, Blessed Carlo Acutis replied, "To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan." He clearly understood that his first priority had to be his relationship with God, and I pray my students will learn that same lesson and I can be a part of that journey with them.

## *Encouragement to Be More Conformed to Christ*

To share Jesus with my students, I know that I need to conform my heart to His. Blessed Carlo Acutis reminds me how to accomplish this through his simple yet profound observation:

the more Eucharist we receive, the more we will become like Jesus.

Amidst the chaos of the past year, I found myself clinging to the Eucharist more than ever. I knew that to successfully navigate my first year of teaching and minister to my students well, I needed to remain close to Jesus, particularly through the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

On many Sunday mornings, I exhaustedly fell to my knees at Mass, desperately praying that Jesus fill me with His strength, perseverance, and love as I prepared to begin the new week.

And each week, Jesus met me in the Eucharist and bestowed His refreshment and nourishment upon me, just as He promised.

Blessed Carlo's words and example remind me to draw my strength from Jesus in the Eucharist in order to share His love with those entrusted to me.

## *Serve Him in All Circumstances*

I am confident that Blessed Carlo Acutis will always be a powerful intercessor for me and my students. His example shows me how to faithfully serve God in all circumstances and how to help those around me encounter Jesus through the witness of my own life.

Throughout the past school year in particular, I was grateful for his prayers and inspiration. As we worked to keep our school community healthy and engaged in learning in the midst of the pandemic, we relied on technology like never before. Blessed Carlo spent years of his life finding ways to use the Internet to bring people closer to Christ, and because of the witness of his life and the way he inspired me this past year, I have come to view him as the patron Saint of online learning.

As I connected with my students both in-person and virtually, I looked to Blessed Carlo for guidance in how to help my students encounter Christ. Driving to school each day, I called upon his intercession to help me live my life in the service of God as he did and to help me lead my students closer to God, however I could encounter them that day.

## *God Knows What We Need*

I don't think it's a coincidence that Blessed Carlo Acutis was beatified in the midst of this school year that was unlike any other. God knew that all of us needed a patron to intercede for us and an example to look to during this time, so he generously gave the Church the gift of Blessed Carlo. For all of us, he exemplifies how to keep our eyes on Heaven in all that we do, how to find

## Spiritual Communion Prayer

by Marcus Descant, Leesville, Louisiana

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

[lizdescant@gmail.com](mailto:lizdescant@gmail.com)

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unexpected ways to lead others to God, and how to humbly serve God wherever we are.

Even as many of us return back to a more normal routine at school, my admiration and appreciation for the example of Blessed Carlo Acutis has not diminished. As I get to know my new group of students, I am continuing to entrust them to Jesus through the intercession of Blessed Carlo. As the Church prepares to celebrate his first feast day this October, I am reflecting on the ways that his example helped guide me during this past school year and the ways that he continues to inspire my life and my work.

I am grateful for his intercession as I navigated the challenges of teaching through a pandemic and of helping my students and me grow in faith and knowledge during this unpredictable year. He truly is my patron Saint of online learning, and I thank God for the gift that his witness is to the Church and in my life. He continues to teach me that no matter the circumstances of my life, my priority should always be to stay close to Jesus—especially in the Eucharist—and to help those around me do the same.

Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us!

To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan. // *blessed carlo acutis*



## National Tekakwitha Conference draws Catholic Native Americans from across the country.

The 83rd National Tekakwitha Conference was held July 20-23 at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria.

The "conference" began in 1939 as a group of priests who formed an advisory committee to then Bishop Aloysius Muench of Fargo, ND. In 1980, the national movement formed to begin the process of beatification of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha and she was eventually canonized in Rome in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Regions, Representatives, and groups can be found in at tekconf.org, the most recent Cross and Feathers

Keynote speakers this year were Sr. Kateri Mitchell, former Executive Director of the Tekakwitha Conference and Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, TX.

Also attending were Jacob and Elsa Finkbonner – Jacob's healing was the final miracle in attributed to the Canonization of St Kateri.

This year's four-day agenda opened with a sunrise service and a Grand Entry where each group entered with their banners.

Keynote speaker, Sr. Kateri Mitchell welcomed everyone to the first conference held in person since the pandemic began.

Workshops and presentations delved into Native American Spirituality and the Catholic Faith, celebrating diversity, and discussion of upcoming conferences.

There were many social gatherings and daily Mass.

Next year's conference is planned to be in Minneapolis, MN.



### NATIONAL CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES.

Representatives from many States including Alaska and Hawaii and all 6 Tekakwitha Conference Regions were in attendance and included (left) Charlene Patton, Blackfeet and Gros Ventre from Las Vegas, NV, National Tekakwitha Conference, Acting Executive Director, President Board of Directors (BoD), Region 5 Representative, Kateri Circle member. Center: Gail Rando, Cherokee from Delaware, 2022 Conference Planning Committee, Kateri Circle Member, Tekakwitha Conference BoD, Region 1 Representative. Right: Rosa Hernandez, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo from El Paso, TX, 2022 Tekakwitha Conference Planning Committee Chairperson and Kateri Circle Member, Region 4.

### REPRESENTING CENTRAL LOUISIANA.

Pictured are: Michael Javier (front left carrying banner), son of Suzanne Durio, and William Hammond's grandson, Kaiden, holding right side of banner. Back row, John Mark Davis (Chief Rufus Davis' son), from Groves, LA and is with the Adai Caddo Nation northwest of Natchitoches, William Hammond, and Suzanne Durio, Planning Committee Security Chairperson.

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### Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

September 8, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Paul the Apostle Church  
Mansura

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

September 28, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Joseph School  
Plaucheville

NOTE: Minors are not allowed to attend because of the adult content of the videos and discussions. To register, go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). For more information, call 318-445-6424, ext. 213.



# Meet the Pro-Life Woman of the Year

## Sidewalk advocacy more important than ever, says Lauren Muzyka

Lauren Muzyka found herself yet again on the sidewalk outside an abortion facility, watching for the opportunity to offer loving support and desperately needed resources to women poised to go inside. She called out to one woman and was able to speak to her.

“Hi, there – I’d love to help! Can I ask what brought you here today?”

Muzyka went on to offer the woman local resources that could help her with the challenges that might have convinced her to come to the abortion facility – whether she needed healthcare, a place to live, or refuge from an abusive relationship.

The woman listened, but – despite all the help that Muzyka offered – she went in to the abortion facility. Alongside her national teammates, Muzyka prayed that her words would continue to echo inside the woman’s mind.

And that prayer was answered. The woman left the abortion facility, moved by that resounding offer of help and hope – and a few months later, Muzyka was at that woman’s side, holding her beautiful baby.

That was the first baby Muzyka met whose mother she personally helped in her capacity as a Sidewalk Advocate.

“Our ministry is one miracle after another,” says Muzyka, who founded Sidewalk Advocates for Life in 2014. “And we never get tired of it!”

On June 24, Muzyka was emceeding the Pro-Life Women’s



Conference in Indianapolis – where she was able to announce, from the stage, that the Supreme Court had just overturned *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* in its *Dobbs* ruling.

It was at that same conference that Muzyka was stunned to learn that she had been named the Pro-Life Woman of the Year.

“It’s an incredible honor – but it doesn’t belong to just me,” says Muzyka.

“I accepted it on behalf of all the devoted Sidewalk Advocates who, across the country – and beyond – work to reach out to moms in crisis, and to save the lives of their preborn babies.”

Muzyka first experienced

the power of sidewalk outreach as a college student – and she was hooked. “I continue to be amazed that the simplest things – a friendly smile, a small gift bag, a warm conversation – can make such a strong connection with a mom in crisis,” she says.

“And our trained Sidewalk Advocates shower us with stories of the powerful results of our training. They tell us about moms who have chosen life, abortion workers who have left the industry – and we all celebrate the closure of an abortion facility.”

With the *Dobbs* decision, some Sidewalk Advocates have had to pivot their ministry. In states where abortion is legal,

sidewalk advocacy continues in the traditional way. In states where abortion is limited or illegal, Sidewalk Advocates may take up stations outside facilities that are referring out of state for abortion – or they develop new ways of sharing in their community the good news about the local pregnancy resource center, and programs and resources for pregnant moms.

“We have been amazed to see that in states like Louisiana, where abortion is illegal, traffic into the local abortion facility continues,” Muzyka says. “So many women aren’t aware that abortion is no longer a service the facility can provide – or they simply don’t know where else to turn for information and support.”

Facilities in the Houston, Tex., area are a case in point. Earlier this summer, a local Sidewalk Advocate reported that she had trouble leaving the abortion facility where she had been serving – because women kept arriving. That day alone, she was able to guide more than a dozen women from Planned Parenthood onto the mobile ultrasound unit – and many of those women left the unit carrying a baby blanket, a sign that they had chosen life for their preborn babies.

“There’s this perception that abortion is over in some states,

like Texas or Louisiana,” says Muzyka, “but that’s simply not the case.”

“The drive to refer women out of state for abortion demands our persistent presence on the sidewalk. And we are ready to meet that demand.”

The National Sidewalk Advocacy Conference, held every October in Dallas, Tex., has been designed especially this year to help pro-life advocates develop new ways to maximize their effectiveness in this post-*Roe* America – and to help those new to the movement understand the power of simple, loving outreach on the sidewalk.

“Now, more than ever, it’s so important for everyone who is pro-life to take a stand,” says Muzyka.

“Whether you are inclined to be a prayer partner, or you want to be trained to do outreach on the sidewalk – we need to join together to reach out to moms in crisis, to provide them with the resources and the support they need, so that they can choose life for their preborn babies.”

The National Sidewalk Advocacy Conference will take place October 28-30 in Dallas, Texas. Early Bird ticket prices are good through August 31. Check out the speaker list and get your tickets at [prolifeconference.com](http://prolifeconference.com).

*Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor.*

Psalm 113: 1  
Responsorial Psalm  
for September 18  
Twenty-fifth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

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## Divorce Support Group meeting to begin Sept. 29

Are you suffering loss through divorce? Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is sponsoring a group for those experiencing divorce as part of "Our Lady Queen of Peace Ministry of Healing Life Wounds." Processing loss is an important component to living a more integrated and peaceful life. We do not have to walk the journey alone. Join us as we unite together in God's grace and support one another. Each session will be led by trained facilitators and professionals. Sessions will begin Thursday, Sept. 29 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum

Bldv, Alexandria. Groups will be capped at 15 participants. Registration opens Sept. 1st. Visit [www.cccenla.org](http://www.cccenla.org) to register. The cost of the group will be \$50 for nine sessions. Sessions are scheduled for: 29 Sept, 6 Oct, 13 Oct, 20 Oct, 27 Oct, 3 Nov, 10 Nov, 17 Nov, and 1 Dec. We look forward to seeing you there.

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*Praise the Lord, my soul.*

Psalm 146: 1  
Responsorial Psalm for September 25  
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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## Saints who went to college

By Grace Bellon  
Blessed is She Ministry

The Catholic Church highly values education. In fact, it was the efforts of Christians and professed religious throughout history who made major advances in the fields of mathematics, science, and many others. Additionally, it was the actions of Catholics that brought about the education of the masses. Prior to their collective efforts spanning centuries, only the rich could afford to educate their children.

It should come as no surprise then that many of the canonized Saints within the Church possess college degrees.

### Saints Who Went to College

If you or someone you know and love is off to college, check out these Saints who could serve as heavenly intercessors throughout your post-secondary studies! The Saints below were heavily influenced by their educators and those they met during their studies.

#### Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, and Saint Peter Faber

Francis Xavier was a rich young man in his twenties who was highly interested in athletics (specifically the high jump). He attended the Collège Sainte-Barbe of the University of Paris. His worldly goals were of great contrast to that of Ignatius of Loyola who enrolled at the school at the age of thirty-eight in order to gain the skills necessary to found the Order of Jesus. The pair became roommates, but Francis regarded Ignatius as a fool and ridiculed his attempts to help students spiritually. Peter Faber was a third roommate of the pair. Contrastingly, Peter was intrigued by Ignatius' message and converted. Francis Xavier later followed suit after some soul-searching. All three men are credited with founding the Jesuit order.

This trio would be great to turn to when seeking holy, supportive friendships.

#### Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross

Also known as Saint Edith Stein, she became a leading philosopher of the 20th century.



She studied to obtain her degree from the University of Breslau (now Wroclaw University) and the University of Göttingen. Though her dissertation on empathy awarded her a doctorate with summa cum laude (the highest honor a school could bestow), the university rejected her qualification for a teaching office at the institution based on the fact that she was a woman. She worked as an assistant to her mentor professor until the summer holiday during which she came across the writings of Saint Teresa of Avila. Those pieces eventually led to her conversion to Catholicism. Not long after, she entered the Carmelite order.

This philosophic Saint would be a great intercessor for women pursuing degrees in male-dominated fields. She would also be great for all those seeking the fullness of Truth.

#### Blessed Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Santiago

At age thirteen, faith-filled Carlos was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis, a crippling digestive issue. His ailment was so depleting that it took him until the age of twenty-one to earn his high school diploma. Seven years later, he enrolled in the University of Puerto Rico to continue his education. Once again, his health failed him and he was forced to withdraw near the beginning of his sophomore year. Carlos did

not accept defeat. His grades had been excellent, so he continued to study and learn on his own. For the next fifteen years, Carlos sought knowledge as he could, but always with the goal of using it to serve the Church. His passion was evangelizing and catechizing, and he was one of the first people to translate the Latin prayers into Spanish so that his local community would understand them better.

This determined Blessed is a great example to those who start school on a non-traditional timeline, or those who have health issues that foil original plans.

#### Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

Gianna was the tenth of thirteen children within the Beretta family. Generous service and virtue were values that were instilled by the Beretta

children from a young age. In fact, Gianna's parents strongly encouraged their children to obtain professional degrees at a high level, not to gain a level of prestige, but so that they could be of service to their communities. Gianna chose to study medicine at the University of Pavia, but she was not a natural student. She greatly struggled through her classes, but she persevered to become a pediatrician serving the small town of Mesero.

Gianna can be called upon as an intercessor for many reasons, including by those who truly struggle to obtain their degrees.

#### Blessed Zepherin Namuncurá

Zepherin was the son of a Mapuche Chief who was sent to a military school in order to better advocate for his

native people. Unsurprisingly, he was not well received and transferred to a mission school run by the Salesians. While he did experience more acceptance in the faith-filled environment, some of the students were not without their prejudice. However, others loved him and compared him to Saint Dominic Savio. Through it all, Zepherin grew to love Catholicism, one of his favorite devotions being the Rosary. He enrolled in the minor seminary in Viedma, Argentina (the equivalent of going to college). He desired to bring the Faith back to his people and was such a good student that he ranked second out of his whole class. Sadly, he died of tuberculosis before finishing his degree.

This courageous Saint can be called upon by all those attending schools where they feel like "outsiders."

#### Transforming the World

Saint Catherine of Siena famously said, "If you are who you should be, you will set the world on fire." In a similar fashion, political activist Nelson Mandela claimed, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." As followers of Jesus, we would add certain elements to that sentiment: Christ and His grace.

While God can use anyone to change the world (and often uses the weak to lead the strong), there is no doubt that educated Christians have contributed considerably to bringing the Gospel message to our cultures around the world.

Do you have a favorite Saint who attended college?

### Sister Maurice Elvekrog, SSND, passes away

Sr. Maurice Elvekrog, SSND (School Sister of Notre Dame) passed away Friday, Aug. 19 in Minnesota. Sr. Maurice returned to her home state in 2006 after serving in the Diocese of Alexandria for many years. Her last position here was Superintendent of Catholic Schools. Sr. Maurice was fondly known for answering "Practically perfect!" when asked how she was. Now we can say she is finally perfect in Heaven with our Lord.



#### Catholic Campus Ministry

##### LSU of Alexandria:

Catholic Student Organization,  
318-447-2956

##### Northwestern State University

Catholic Student Organization  
FOCUS Ministries:  
<https://nsucatholic.org/focus>

##### Louisiana College:

Catholic Student Organization,  
318-447-2956





Catholic Schools Office held an orientation meeting for new employees for the 2022-2023 school year on Tuesday, Aug. 2 at the St. Joseph Catholic Center. Also attending was Mr. Cade Brumley, the Louisiana Dept. of Education State Superintendent. Educators and support staff new to the Diocese of Alexandria Catholic schools were the attendees.



**BACK-TO-SCHOOL.** Saint Frances Cabrini School's one-day teacher retreat took place in the beautiful church of St. Edward the Confessor in Fishville, Louisiana. The theme this year is "Building the Kingdom of God".



**BACK-TO-SCHOOL.** Holy Savior Menard has welcomed back their students to this year's Campus Ministry theme, "All In"; For whatsoever that you do, whether in word or in deed, be done all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him" Colossians 3:17. Pictured are the Menard administrative staff and teachers at their staff retreat at Maryhill recently.

**Saint Thomas Aquinas**

St. Thomas Aquinas was born in 1225 at Rocca Sicca, the castle of his father Landulf, count of Aquino, in the territories of Naples in Italy. His family was a noble one.

During his education, Thomas entered a religious order against his family's wishes with his family going so far as to imprison him in order to dissuade him. With the intervention of Pope Innocent IV, Thomas was set free and he entered the order of St. Dominic.

Thomas had a great aptitude for theological study and he became a lecturer at the Dominican School in Cologne. It was during this time that he received a doctorate of theology and produced an enormous amount of literary work while still actively serving his order. His life was spent in prayer, study, and writing his greatest work, the Summa Theologica. In his writings, he combined the principles of faith with the principles of reason. He spoke of the importance of such virtues as: Truth, Unity, Knowledge, and Fortitude. His famous quote was: "love follows knowledge."

After his death in 1274, Pope John XXIII canonized him in 1323, and he was deemed Patron Saint of Catholic schools and students.

*grant me, O Lord my God,  
a mind to know you,  
a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you,  
conduct pleasing to you,  
faithful perseverance in waiting for you,  
and a hope of finally embracing you.  
Amen.*

// saint thomas aquinas



## Domestic Church Families Evangelization Retreat - Sept. 2-5

The Domestic Church Evangelization Retreat is for Catholic married couples who want to grow in holiness together as a couple. It provides a renewed experience of marital spirituality and an introduction to Domestic Church formation, and couples new to Domestic Church may choose to take advantage of continued formation after the retreat. For more information or to register, visit [www.domesticchurchfamilies.com](http://www.domesticchurchfamilies.com).

## Faith Formation series - begins Sept. 6

Live Streamed and In Person, an adult faith formation series titled "Early Christian Heresies and Non-Canonical Scripture" 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27. Presenter: Mrs. Mary DeVille, PhD. Please register online for this presentation. The \$15 supply fee for "The Gnostic Gospels Collection" may be paid online at [mmjchurch.org](http://mmjchurch.org)

## Guide to Catholic Devotions series - begins September 7

Fr. Thomas Kennedy invites you to join him for this weekly series of presentations titled "Lord, Teach Us to Pray: A Guide to Catholic Devotions." Meetings will take place every Wednesday beginning Sept. 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Madonna Room at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria. Reinvigorate your prayer life through this reintroduction to devotional practices.

## Beginning Experience - September 9

WIDOWED, SEPARATED, DIVORCED? Don't know where to turn? Struggling with grief or loss? Beginning Experience of Alexandria is registering now for a weekend that provides an opportunity to encounter self and to grow with a purpose to achieve inner peace. The experience is to help close the door gently on the past and move on with renewed hope. The weekend will be held at Maryhill Renewal Center - Pineville, LA on September 9 - 11, 2022. For more information the website is [www.beginningexperience.org](http://www.beginningexperience.org) or to register contact Anna at (318) 448-1990, (318) 452-2678 or [asweat7@aol.com](mailto:asweat7@aol.com).

## Discalced Carmelite Meeting - Sept. 10

The Order of the Discalced Carmelites holds its monthly meeting at 9:00 a.m. every second Saturday, at Maryhill Renewal Center. Anyone is invited to attend morning prayer followed by Mass and then the meeting. If you are interested in Carmelite spiritual studies, please contact Mary Jo McCoy at 318-346-6860 or 318-481-9638.

# DIOCESAN BRIEFS

## Post-abortive healing support group - September 10

The Cenla Pregnancy Center is proud to announce the formation of the new Post-Abortive Healing Support group, open to any woman feeling loss or in need of help in the healing process after abortion. The support group will meet Saturday mornings for 6 consecutive weeks, beginning September 10, and end on October 15. Group size is limited to 8-10 persons. The location of sessions will be announced upon registration. For more information or to register, call Maria Burke at 318-314-3061.

## Jazz Concert - September 17

You are invited to join us for a FREE Jazz Concert at St. Augustine Church in Isle Brevelle (Natchez, LA) on Saturday, Sept. 17 starting at 7:30 p.m. Entertainment provided by The Bridge Trio: Max Moran, Joe Dyson and Conun Pappas. Enjoy an evening of jazz with Cane River roots! Please park on the South Lawn, there will be no parking on the river bank. For more information call (318) 279-2521.

## Divorce Support Group - begins Sept. 29

Are you suffering loss through divorce? Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is sponsoring a group for those experiencing divorce as a part of "Our Lady Queen of Peace Ministry of Healing Life Wounds." Processing loss is an important component to living a more integrated and peaceful life. We do not have to walk the journey alone. Join us as we unite together in God's grace and support one another. Each session will be led by trained facilitators and professionals. Sessions will begin Thursday, Sept. 29 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria. Groups will be capped at 15 participants. Registration opens Sept. 1. Go to [www.cccenla.org](http://www.cccenla.org) to register. The cost of the group will be \$50 for nine sessions. Sessions are scheduled for: Sept. 29, Oct. 6, Oct. 13, Oct. 20, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10, Nov. 17, and Dec. 1. We look forward to seeing you there.

## Feast for Good with Chef John Folse - October 12

Save the date for an exquisite culinary experience in support of your neighbors with developmental disabilities. Chef John Folse will be at the England Airpark Community Center to help raise money for St. Mary's Residential Training Facility. To save your seat, visit the reservation website: <https://app.mobilecause.com/e/hSw04g?vid=sxqo7>

## Silent Directed Retreat - November 3-6

The Diocese of Alexandria will offer a Silent Directed Retreat: *Building Relationship with God*, Nov. 3-6 at Maryhill Renewal Center. A silent directed retreat differs from a "preached" retreat and offers an environment of both inner and outer silence to foster a closer relationship with Christ through prayer, meditation, journaling, adoration, and the sacraments. Discussions with retreatants are confidential. The assigned director will assist you in discerning the movement of God during your prayer and reflections. All spiritual directors are trained and certified. Space is limited. Cost is \$275, including room and meals. To register please contact Ingrid Cannella 318-792-3331 or [icnewell@yahoo.com](mailto:icnewell@yahoo.com) or Renee Aldridge 318-542-1966 or [renee.aldrige1@gmail.com](mailto:renee.aldrige1@gmail.com).

## Day of Recollection - November 12

The Carmelite Community of Alexandria will host a DAY of RECOLLECTION on November 12, 2022 at Maryhill Renewal Center. Father Ryan Humphries will present talks on "Stress, Anxiety, and the Practical Spiritual Life in our Times". More information will be sent to those who would like to attend. Contact Mary Jo McCoy at (318) 346-6860 or (318) 481-9638.

## Part-time job opportunity at Radio Maria

Radio Maria has an immediate opening for a Sound Board Operator to work Monday-Friday afternoons/evenings (can fluctuate as needed) and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., as needed. A sound board operator is responsible for connecting/announcing presenters on live programs, recording live programs, and exporting/editing live programs for re-broadcasting. He/she may also record promotional announcements, pre-record programs as needed for broadcasting, and pray on-air as needed. Skills include dependability, organization, ability to work independently as well as take direction from others, and ability to properly use sound board equipment and other equipment/software as trained. Approximately 15-20 hours per week at \$10 per hour. Send resume with cover letter to [kfontenot@radiomaria.us](mailto:kfontenot@radiomaria.us).

## Church Today News Deadlines

**September 26**  
Deadline for news:  
**Thursday, Sept. 15**

**October 24**  
Deadline for news:  
**Thursday, Oct. 13**



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# September 2022

| Monday                                                                                                           | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                     | Wednesday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Thursday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Friday                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Sunday                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>AUGUST 29</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. R. MITCHELL</p>                                                         | <p><b>30</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR REV. C. MORGAN</p>                                                                                                             | <p><b>31</b></p> <p><b>Real Presence Prayer Group</b><br/>7:00 p.m., Maryhill</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. D. MOREAU</p>                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>SEPTEMBER 1</b></p> <p><b>Outdoor Lighted Rosary</b><br/>8:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Church, Marksville</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Divine Mercy Hour</b><br/>3:00 p.m.,<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Moreauville</p> <p><b>Domestic Church Families Retreat</b></p> <p><b>FIRST FRIDAY</b><br/>PRAY FOR DCN. L. MOREAU</p> | <p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>FIRST SATURDAY</b><br/>PRAY FOR DCN. T. MOULARD</p>                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p><b>4</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. MULLOTH</p>  |
| <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Domestic Church Families Retreat</b></p> <p><b>LABOR DAY</b><br/>PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK</p> | <p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Faith Formation Series</b><br/>10:00-11:30 a.m.<br/>Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. S. NEWBURY</p>       | <p><b>7</b></p> <p><b>Real Presence Prayer Group</b><br/>7:00 p.m., Maryhill</p> <p><b>Food Pantry</b>, 8:00 a.m.<br/>Sacred Heart Church, Pineville</p> <p><b>Guide to Devotions series</b><br/>6:30 p.m.<br/>OLPS Madonna Room</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL</p>                    | <p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>VIRTUS Training</b><br/>6:00 p.m.<br/>St. Paul the Apostle, Mansura</p> <p><b>Outdoor Lighted Rosary</b><br/>8:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Church, Marksville</p> <p><b>FEAST of the NATIVITY of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</b><br/>PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIEKWE</p>                                | <p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Divine Mercy Hour</b><br/>3:00 p.m.,<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN</p>                                                                        | <p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>Discalced Carmelite Meeting</b><br/>9:00 a.m. Maryhill</p> <p><b>Post-abortive Healing Support Group</b><br/>10:00 a.m.<br/>Location TBA</p> <p><b>Beginning Experience -- Maryhill Renewal Center</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR</p> | <p><b>11</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA</p> |
| <p><b>12</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA</p>                                                          | <p><b>13</b></p> <p><b>Faith Formation Series</b><br/>10:00-11:30 a.m.<br/>Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL</p> | <p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>Real Presence Prayer Group</b><br/>7:00 p.m.,<br/>Maryhill</p> <p><b>Guide to Devotions series</b><br/>6:30 p.m.<br/>OLPS Madonna Room</p> <p><b>FEAST of the EXALTATION of the HOLY CROSS</b><br/>PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH</p>                           | <p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>Outdoor Lighted Rosary</b><br/>8:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Church,<br/>Marksville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE</p>                                                                                                                                                                      | <p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>Divine Mercy Hour</b><br/>3:00 p.m.,<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FR. C. PARTAIN</p>                                                                           | <p><b>17</b></p> <p><b>FREE Jazz Concert</b><br/>7:30 p.m.<br/>St. Augustine Church,<br/>Isle Brevelle</p> <p><b>Post-abortive Healing Support Group</b><br/>10:00 a.m.<br/>Location TBA</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL</p>                                          | <p><b>18</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. C. PELTO</p>  |
| <p><b>19</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. PRIMEAUX</p>                                                                | <p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Faith Formation Series</b><br/>10:00-11:30 a.m.<br/>Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS</p>      | <p><b>21</b></p> <p><b>Real Presence Prayer Group</b><br/>7:00 p.m.<br/>Maryhill</p> <p><b>Food Pantry</b>, 8:00 a.m.<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Pineville</p> <p><b>Guide to Devotions series</b><br/>6:30 p.m.<br/>OLPS Madonna Room</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY</p>             | <p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>VIRTUS Training</b><br/>6:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p><b>Outdoor Lighted Rosary</b><br/>8:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Church Marksville,</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS</p>                                                                                 | <p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>Divine Mercy Hour</b><br/>3:00 p.m.,<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX</p>                                                                    | <p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>St. Timothy Food Pantry</b><br/>10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon<br/>OLPS St. Timothy Center,<br/>Alexandria</p> <p><b>Post-abortive Healing Support Group</b><br/>10:00 a.m.<br/>Location TBA</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</p>         | <p><b>25</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES</p>  |
| <p><b>26</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH</p>                                                               | <p><b>27</b></p> <p><b>Faith Formation Series</b><br/>10:00-11:30 a.m.<br/>Mary, Mother of Jesus Church, Woodworth</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</p>         | <p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>Real Presence Prayer Group</b><br/>7:00 p.m.,<br/>Maryhill</p> <p><b>VIRTUS Training</b><br/>6:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph School,<br/>Plaucheville</p> <p><b>Guide to Devotions series</b><br/>6:30 p.m.<br/>OLPS Madonna Room</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</p> | <p><b>29</b></p> <p><b>Divorce Support Group</b><br/>5:30-6:30 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p><b>Outdoor Lighted Rosary</b><br/>8:00 p.m.<br/>St. Joseph Church,<br/>Marksville</p> <p><b>FEAST of SAINTS MICHAEL, GABRIEL and RAFAEL, ARCHANGELS</b><br/>PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY</p> | <p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>Divine Mercy Hour</b><br/>3:00 p.m.,<br/>Sacred Heart Church,<br/>Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA</p>                                                                 | <p><b>OCTOBER 1</b></p> <p><b>Post-abortive Healing Support Group</b><br/>10:00 a.m.<br/>Location TBA</p> <p><b>St. Mary's Assumption Women's ACTS Retreat -- Maryhill Renewal Center // September 29 - October 2</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>      | <p><b>2</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</p>    |





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