

# CHURCH TODAY

Volume LIV, No. 7

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

Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

July 24, 2023



## Steubenville South 2023

The Steubenville South Youth Conference was held June 23 - 25 at the Randolph Riverfront Center, hosting over 1,700 youth and adults. The theme of the weekend was "Refuge," taken from Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

A big thank you to our local Knights of Columbus councils for donating towards, cooking, and serving Friday and Saturday dinners. See pages 12 and 13 for more pictures from the weekend.

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#### New Monsignori

Bishop Marshall recently announced that the Holy Father has honored two priests from our diocese by naming them Chaplain to His Holiness and members of the Papal Household. Join us in congratulating Monsignor Stephen Scott Chemino and Monsignor James Ferguson! See page 2 for more.

#### The story behind the Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit

Peg and Bill White of Pensacola, FL have dedicated their lives to bringing the faith-stirring Vatican International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles of the World to parishes and schools around the country. See page 4 for more on this amazing exhibit.

#### ARK assessment provides insight into the state of our religious education

ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) is a new program designed to assess the knowledge of all students in our Diocese being educated in both our Catholic schools as well as CCD. Page 16 for more information on this exciting new endeavor.

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# New Monsignori



**Msgr. James Ferguson and Bishop Robert Marshall.**



**Msgr. Scott Chemino and Bishop Robert Marshall.**

**NEW MONSIGNORI.** Earlier this month, Bishop Robert Marshall announced that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has honored two priests of the Diocese of Alexandria by naming them Chaplains to His Holiness and members of the Papal Household. Please join us in congratulating Monsignor Stephen Scott Chemino and Monsignor James Anthony Ferguson. Announcements were made Sunday, July 9 at the 8:00 a.m. Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bunkie, and at the 11:00 a.m. Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Both priests have served the diocese faithfully and are richly deserving of this honor.

Bishop Robert Marshall of the Diocese of Alexandria announced at Masses on Sunday, July 9 that two longtime priests of the diocese have received the honorary title of “monsignor” from Pope Francis. Msgr. James Ferguson and Msgr. Scott Chemino were recently nominated by Bishop Marshall for their many years of exceptional service to the diocese. Upon reviewing the application, officials at the Vatican bestowed upon them the papal honor of “Chaplain of His Holiness” and given the title of monsignor by the Holy Father.

Monsignor Stephen Scott Chemino, JD, JCL, was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Alexandria on June 19, 1993, and has served the diocese in various capacities over the past 30 years. After his first assignment

as Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Church, Marksville, he served as Pastor of Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine; Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria; Immaculate Conception Church, Natchitoches; St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo; and St. Joseph Church, Cheneyville. A native of Bunkie, Louisiana, and a graduate of St. Anthony School, Monsignor Chemino presently serves as Pastor of his home parish, St. Anthony of Padua Church, Bunkie.

Before entering seminary, Monsignor Chemino obtained a civil law degree and was engaged in the private practice of law. He later obtained a degree in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America and served as a Promoter of Justice for the diocese from 2003 - 2022. For many years he served

on the College of Consultors and the Presbyteral Council. For thirteen years, he served in the administration of the diocese as Vicar General of the diocese and as Delegate to the Apostolic Administrator when the diocese was without a bishop. Monsignor Chemino remains a caring and supportive minister to the people of the Diocese of Alexandria.

Monsignor James Anthony Ferguson, JCL, was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of Alexandria on May 25, 1985, and has faithfully served the people of the diocese in a variety of ministries for the past 38 years. His first assignment was as Parochial Vicar of Immaculate Conception Church, Natchitoches, and then as Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Church, Marksville. He later served as

Pastor of St. Augustine Church, Isle Brevelle; St. Joseph Church, Marksville, and Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine. For the past 19 years, Monsignor Ferguson has served as Rector of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria.

In addition to his parish work, Monsignor Ferguson has served the diocese over the years as Vicar Forane (Dean) of the Avoyelles Deanery, as a member of the College of Consultors, and the Presbyteral Council. He has also been active in promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and in the ongoing formation of the clergy. Monsignor Ferguson obtained a degree in Canon Law from the Catholic University of America, and served as Defender of the Bond and Promoter of Justice for the past 31 years.

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If you have reason to believe that a child is being abused or neglected, and that the abuse is by a parent or caretaker, please first call the Louisiana Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437) and/or your local law enforcement agency. If suspected abuse is related to a diocesan/church/school program, or if abuse occurred by anyone acting in Church services, a report should then also be made to the diocesan Victims Assistance Coordinator,  
 Dr. Lee Kneipp, Clinical Psychologist at 318-542-9805.

*The Lord is king, the Most High over all the earth.*

Psalm 97: 1 and 9 | Responsorial Psalm for August 6 | Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

# Ukraine ‘inspires us all to stand in solidarity’ for freedom, says Cardinal Cupich

By *Gretchen R. Crowe*  
Our Sunday Visitor

LVIV and IRPIN, Ukraine (OSV News) — As they defend “their very existence as a people,” Ukrainians “(inspire) us all to stand in solidarity ... not only for their future, but our own,” said Chicago Cardinal Blase J. Cupich.

The cardinal shared his thoughts in a July 5 commentary published at ChicagoCatholic.com, website of the Archdiocese of Chicago’s newspaper, following a late June visit of solidarity to Ukraine.

Cardinal Cupich met June 25 with Ukrainian refugees receiving assistance at St. Urszula Ledóchowska Parish in Łódź, Poland. In a video message recorded two days later at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland, Cardinal Cupich said he was “inspired by the countless ways” various individuals and organizations provided places of welcome that were secure, as well as “nourishing” for those displaced by the war, which continues attacks Russia launched in 2014.

Crossing into Ukraine, the cardinal toured the campus of Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv on June 28 and spoke with residents of the school’s Emmaus Center, an on-campus community for persons with disabilities. Later that day, a delegation from the university escorted him to the city’s Garrison Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul in Lviv, the main church of Ukraine’s military chaplaincy and part of the

Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Lviv. He then visited Lviv’s Lychakiv Cemetery, where the military “Field of Honorary Burials” regularly sees three to four interments of fallen soldiers per day.

“The price Ukrainians pay for their freedom is too high. I always reiterate in America that Ukrainians are fighting for the same freedom we have, for the opportunity to determine their own future,” said Cardinal Cupich while in Lviv. “That is why the democratic world must unite and bear the burden of war with Ukrainians. After all, in many ways, we are all Ukrainians today because we strive for self-determination and freedom so that no one from outside dictates to us who we are and how we should act.”

With Ukraine marking its Constitution Day June 28, the cardinal said the nation asserted “to the entire free world” the “rights and freedoms” guaranteed by its defining document, with soldiers paying “the ultimate price so that the constitution and the people who are served by it can continue.”

In Kyiv, Cardinal Cupich met with Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, head of the worldwide Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, with whom he discussed ways to aid Ukraine in healing the wounds of war. The conversation also focused on the war’s impact on children and on the disruption of education, as well as the assistance American psychologists can provide to Ukrainians traumatized by the war, which has counted more than 88,000 atrocities by Russian troops since February 2022 alone, according to Ukraine’s prosecutor general.

Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia and Caritas Ukraine president Tetiana Stawnychy accompanied the cardinal to the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Nativity of the Holy Mother of God in Irpin, where pastor Father Vitaliy Voetsa showed the bullet holes and shrapnel sustained by the church amid Russian occupation.



“This damage is (now) one-tenth of what it was,” Father Voetsa, speaking in Ukrainian with Archbishop Gudziak translating into English, told the cardinal.

Following a briefing on the parish’s wartime humanitarian aid to civilians, Cardinal Cupich told OSV News he was impressed by “the creative ways they’re trying to normalize life for kids.”

“I think that’s the most important thing,” he said. “They’re taking a very holistic approach to this, realizing that it is not just enough to give kids food, shelter, clothing (and) medical care, but also to attend to how their morale is, and the psychological impact this is having on them.”

Preserving a record of Russian atrocities also was essential, said Cardinal Cupich, who stopped at a memorial of destroyed civilian cars that had been fired on by invading troops

as residents fled the area.

Stawnychy said the cars sometimes displayed white flags or signs indicating children were inside, while Father Voetsa and Archbishop Gudziak noted that the attacks incinerated vehicle occupants, making rescue and identification of victims almost impossible in some cases.

“This had no military advantage at all, other than to terrorize,” said Cardinal Cupich, adding that the collection of cars in one place showed the cumulative impact of the atrocities.

Along with Irpin, the cardinal also traveled to Bucha, where the bodies of close to 460 Ukrainian civilians were found, with 116 buried in a mass grave near the Orthodox Church of St. Andrew the First Called Apostle following targeted Russian attacks on noncombatants.

Returning to Lviv, Cardinal Cupich attended a July 1

graduation liturgy at the Ukrainian Catholic University, telling those present that during his time in Ukraine he had “seen many tears of the sufferings of the past,” but that “(looking) out at the graduates, I also see the future.”

Visiting immediately afterward with Basilian Sisters in Lviv, he met with a refugee family and learned of the order’s efforts to provide humanitarian support, nonlethal military aid and pastoral care to both internally displaced Ukrainians and to those unable to leave front-line areas.

Basilian Sister Lucia Murashko — who lives in the Ukrainian-controlled city of Zaporizhzhia, amid the Russian-occupied region of the same name — shared photographs and stories of the sisters’ ministry to the most vulnerable populations, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The work is partly supported by the Chicago-based nonprofit Catholic Extension, of which Cardinal Cupich is chancellor.

Along with making camouflage netting for soldiers and bringing desperately needed supplies to civilians, Sister Lucia said she and her fellow Basilians ensure those they serve receive catechesis and access to the sacraments.

At the same time, “I cannot explain how (much) they want to stay in their homes,” she told Cardinal Cupich.

Just days after the visit, a July 6 Russian missile strike destroyed an apartment building within 600 feet of UCU, killing 10 and wounding some 40, while shattering several windows and doors on the UCU campus. In a July 7 tweet, the cardinal called for prayers for the victims of both the attack and the war as a whole.

“Amid this tragedy, I witnessed extraordinary heroism and generosity,” the cardinal wrote in his post-visit commentary. “There is something undeniably heroic in the ways Ukrainians continue to live each day with hope and generosity. ... No doubt the Ukrainian people deserve our support. We should be willing to stand with them.”

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## HOLY FATHER’S PRAYER INTENTIONS for August 2023

For World Youth Day //

We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.

Amen.

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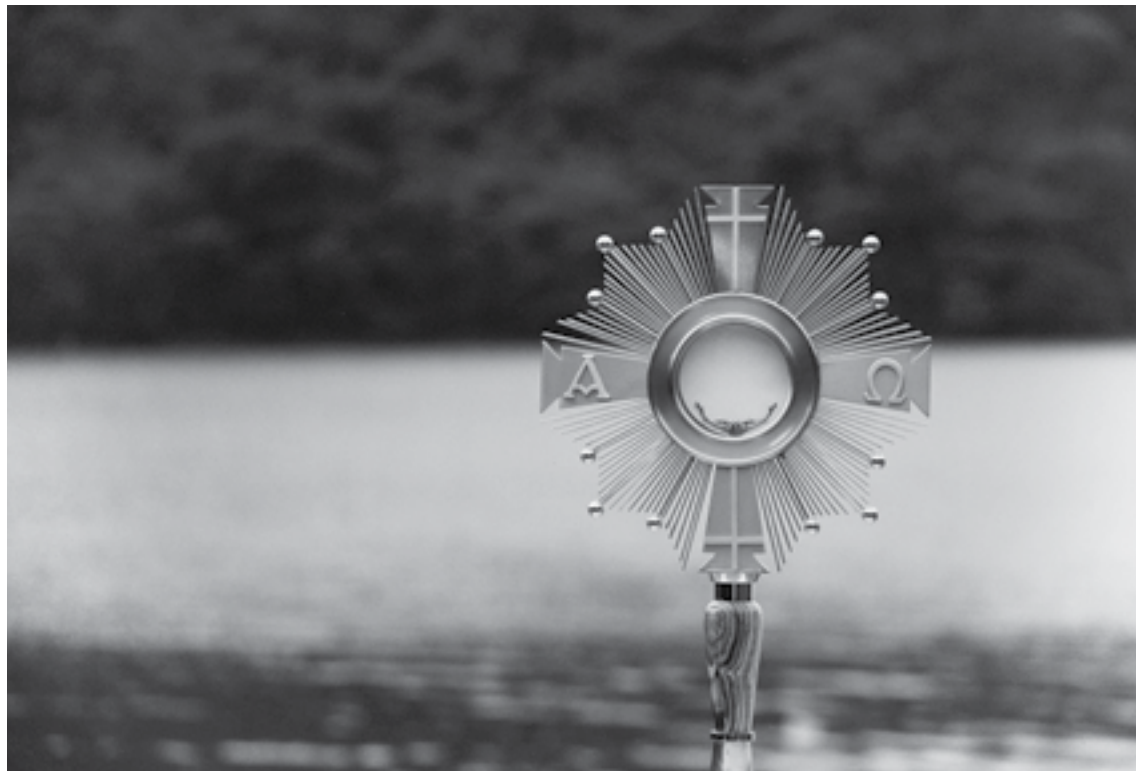
# How an Italian teenager's love for the Eucharist transformed a 50th wedding anniversary road trip

By Ron Polanieckie  
National Eucharistic Revival

34 parishes, 23 schools and seminaries, 18 dioceses, 19,000 people, 25,000 miles. This is the journey of Peg and Bill White of Pensacola, Florida, who since December 2019 have dedicated their lives to bringing the faith-stirring Vatican International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles of the World to parishes and schools around the country.

The Exhibition presents some of the principal Eucharistic Miracles that have taken place throughout the ages in various countries of the world and which have been recognized by the Church. The oldest Eucharistic Miracle depicted in the Exhibition is from Lanciano, Italy, in the 700s. A certain monk who was plagued by doubts about transubstantiation was celebrating Mass. At the words of consecration, the host was miraculously changed into flesh and the wine into blood. This is the first documented Eucharistic Miracle. The most recent Eucharistic Miracles in the Exhibit occurred in 2008 and 2013 in Poland.

I sat down with Peg and Bill to learn more about their



incredible story and their even more incredible faith in the Eucharist.

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### A Miraculous Eucharistic Encounter

"It's been quite a journey," Peg started, "and one that's taken us quite by surprise."

It all began several years ago

when they learned about some of the Eucharistic Miracles that are part of the Vatican Exhibition.

"Not long after, while we vacationed in Europe, we took the opportunity to actually visit the sites where three of these Eucharistic miracles had occurred. We were blessed with the chance to venerate the relics of these miracles in Lanciano and Cascia, Italy, and Bruges,

Belgium," Bill said.

"I was blown away," Peg added, "particularly by the profound experience of the relic of the Eucharistic miracle that occurred at Lanciano in 750 A.D. Seeing this miracle up close made me understand just how fascinating and loving our God is who wants us to know him. It suddenly became clear to me to what lengths God has gone

to confirm for us just how true are his words at the Last Supper: 'This is my Body!' 'This is my Blood!'"

Bill reflected, "I find it astounding that the same God who created the stars in the universe and the sands on the shore wants to have a relationship with me. And even more than that, the Lord provides in the Eucharist an incomparable way for that relationship to unfold! By eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, we become united to the person of Christ through his humanity.

When the Whites returned home from Europe, their plan had been to take a road trip to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. At that point, instead, they knew they absolutely had to do something with the gift they had been given at Lanciano. After a little bit of research, they discovered that the posters for the Vatican's Eucharistic Exhibition were locally available. So they went to personally view the Exhibition, and the rest, as they say, is history.

### Called to Share the Eucharistic Miracles

"We felt this strong call to

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

Psalm 85: 8  
Responsorial Psalm  
for August 13  
Nineteenth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

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transform our celebratory road trip into an evangelizing journey and to bring the posters of the Vatican International Exhibition to parishes and schools and organizations around the country. We wanted others to be able to receive the gift that we had been given. It was like God said to us, 'Sure, go ahead and take your trip. But take the Exhibition along with you!'

"Since then, we haven't stopped, and it's become a full-time project. Our aim is to help deepen the faith of all the visitors in Jesus' astounding gift of his Real Presence—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity—in the Eucharist, just as he promised," Peg and Bill reflected.

The Whites are personally invested in every aspect of the Eucharistic Miracles Exhibition when they bring it to a group. They work with the local point persons for planning, setup, and onsite hosting. "But while the exhibit is about miracles that happened in history in countries far away and to unknown people," explain the Whites, "we share with those who come to view the exhibit our own faith in the great and primary Eucharistic miracle that happens at every Mass and the tremendous gift we have been given in the Eucharist."

They add, "We have been so richly rewarded for our efforts. Our favorite group to take on a

tour through the Exhibition is a group of school children. It is amazing to see their absolute joy when they learn about the Eucharistic miracles. They can hardly believe it, yet sometimes they have such profound insight. One second grade boy said, 'I know how it happens. All things are possible with God.'"

**The Story Behind the Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit**

While the powerful stories about the miracles are foundational to the Exhibit, the story about how the Exhibit itself came to be is also noteworthy.

The Exhibit is the legacy of Blessed Carlo Acutis, an English-born Italian Catholic boy who documented Eucharistic miracles around the world, cataloging them onto a website. Carlo Acutis is remembered by his parents and friends for his cheerfulness, his deep devotion to the Eucharist, and his computer skills. His love for the Eucharist became a core theme of his life. Carlo died of leukemia when he was only fifteen years old. He was beatified on October 10,

2020, two days after the 14th anniversary of his death.

The Servants of the Pierced Hearts of Jesus and Mary located in Miami, Florida, have been instrumental in building awareness and devotion to Blessed Carlo Acutis. They are a congregation of sisters, brothers, and priests dedicated to evangelization and formation of the human heart to build a new civilization of love, life, truth, and solidarity.

I spoke with Sr. Alexia, SCTJM, who explained to me how the Servants developed their close relationship with Blessed Carlo. "Shortly after Carlo Acutis' death, our Mother Foundress, Mother Adela Galindo from the Archdiocese of Miami, came to know of him and his profound devotion to the Eucharist and the Rosary. As she learned more about his life of virtue, devotion to the Eucharist, and the work he had done in cataloging Eucharistic miracles and making them available online, Mother Adela began seeking ways to spread his inspiring story to as many people

as possible, but especially to the sick and young people. She began by translating the official holy card of then Venerable Carlo from Italian to English and Spanish so that devotion could spread to more countries worldwide."

**Spreading the Devotion of Blessed Carlo Acutis**

Mother Adela, she went on to say, was inspired in prayer by Blessed Carlo to have a life-size statue made in Italy which is an exact replica of his person. This statue was brought to the US in April 2022 and is now in their Motherhouse "Two Hearts" chapel in Miami, where countless numbers of sick children, young people, and adults come to pray before the Blessed Sacrament and venerate Carlo's first-class relic, asking for his intercession.

"Our community is very active in spreading his devotion, particularly in our work with young people. In January 2023,

See **MIRACLES**, page 9

**PRAYER FOR PROTECTION THIS HURRICANE SEASON**

O God, Master of this passing world,  
hear the humble voices of your children.

The Sea of Galilee obeyed Your order and returned to its former quietude.

You are still the Master of land and sea.

We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control;  
the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant,  
can awake from its seeming lethargy,  
overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land,  
and spread chaos and disaster.

During this hurricane season, we turn to You, O loving Father.

Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid,  
and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with the passing of time.

O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our beloved Mother,  
we ask you to plead with your Son of our behalf  
so that spared from the calamities common to this area  
and animated with a true spirit of gratitude,  
we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son  
to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where a stormless eternity awaits us.  
Amen.

*Composed by Most Rev. Maurice Schexnayder (1985 - 1981)  
Second Bishop of Lafayette (1956 - 1973),  
following Hurricane Audrey in 1957*

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**Upcoming Retreats**

**August 10-13**  
**Cenla ACTS**  
**Men's Retreat**

A list of ACTS Retreat dates can be found at [www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/](http://www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/acts/). All retreats are held at Maryhill Renewal Center.

Visit the sign-up form at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org), or email [starver@diocesealex.org](mailto:starver@diocesealex.org) with your name and mailing address to receive the Church Today FREE of charge!

## Annual Mass for 'Little Cajun Saint' will mark death anniversary, milestone on path to canonization



**By Ken Stickney**  
*The Advocate*

St. Edward Catholic Church in the Richard community will host its annual Mass for Charlene Richard at 5:30 p.m. Friday, August 11. Father Taylor Reynolds, priest of the Diocese of Alexandria, will be the main celebrant.

The Mass marks the 64th anniversary of Charlene Richard's death and is the second public Mass for her since she was named a Servant of God, an important initial step in the cause for sainthood. The pandemic has restricted attendance at Masses in her honor since.

"Stricken with leukemia she died at the young age of 12, though witnesses reported that she remained cheerful through her painful sickness and offered her suffering for the spiritual well-being of others and prayed for the conversion of sinners and

physical healing of the sick" says Bishop Douglas Deshotel, bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, in a 2022 statement.

Her cause for sainthood remains under examination by the Congregation for Saints Causes, Deshotel said. "We pray for inspiration from her and a speedy declaration of Sainthood."

The U.S. Conference of Bishops at the November 2021 Plenary Assembly in Baltimore affirmed its support for advancing Charlene's cause of beatification and canonization on the diocesan level. Deshotel made the presentation at that meeting.

Charlene Marie Richard was a schoolgirl in Acadia Parish when she died of leukemia at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Lafayette on Aug. 11, 1959. Her death came 16 days after her fatal diagnosis.

She was born Jan. 13, 1947, and was the second of 10 children of Joseph Elvin and Mary Alice

Richard. Three months before her death, Charlene read a book about St. Thérèse of Lisieux and asked her grandmother whether she could become a saint by praying like Thérèse.

Remarkable, witnesses said, was her cheerfulness in death and her selflessness in offering her suffering to God while praying for the healing and conversion of others. Her death was followed by testimony and writings from others and a continuous outpouring of faith and loyalty among those who knew her and among others who have been inspired by her. Some 30 years ago, the church began gathering testimonies of people who had asked for Charlene's help.

Bishop Deshotel officially opened the cause for sainthood for Richard in January 2020 during a Mass at Immaculata Center in Lafayette. On the same day, he opened the cause for sainthood for teacher and evangelist Auguste "Nonco" Pelafique of Arnaudville. Both Charlene and Pelafique were declared Servants of God after the Mass. Those two causes for sainthood have been advanced with the cause of the Rev. Verbis Lafleur, a diocesan priest and military chaplain from Opelousas who died a heroic death as a prisoner of war in 1944 during World War II.

A Rosary will be said at 5:30 p.m. and Laura Huval will provide music for the Mass, LaVergne said. Additional seating will be available in the hall with live audio and video of the Mass. A reception will follow in the parish hall.

### Pilgrimage to Richard, LA - August 11

Father Taylor Reynolds will offer a mini pilgrimage to the tomb of servant of God Charlene Richard down in Richard, LA. We will pray at her tomb, meet her family, hear her story and attend the anniversary Mass in memory of Charlene. Please let Fr. Taylor know if you are interested in attending and how to meet up to get there: [stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com).



## HEAL ME LORD

by Liz Descant, Leesville, LA

When I'm worried and I want to give up  
I need your help; lift me up.

Heal me Lord!

When I have sinned beyond belief  
I need your help to get relief.

Heal me Lord!

When I have lost the one that I love  
I need your help from above.

Heal me Lord!

When my health is bad and I'm worried sick  
I need Your help...I need it quick!

Heal me Lord!

When family ties are coming apart  
I need your help to get a new start.

Heal me Lord!

When I am so stressed I can't even think  
I need your help, quick as a wink!

Heal me Lord!

When dealing with children that have gone astray  
I need your help; Lord I pray.

Heal me Lord!

When I finally reach the end of my day  
I need your help in a comforting way.

Heal me Lord!

*O God, let all the nations praise you!*

Psalm 67: 4 | Responsorial Psalm for August 20  
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

[lizdescant@gmail.com](mailto:lizdescant@gmail.com)  
Advertisement paid for by Marcus Descant



**OUR LADY OF LOURDES ALTAR SOCIETY (FIFTH WARD)** hosted a Women of Faith Luncheon on May 31. Guest speaker was Deacon Darrell Dubroc, spoke to the 97 attendees on our Blessed Mother, Mary. It was a gathering of interfaith women from St. Francis de Sales Church (Echo), St. Martin of Tours Church (Belledeau), Refuge Baptist Church (Echo), Fifth Ward Baptist Church (Fifth Ward), St. Richard Chapel (Hickory Hill), St. John the Baptist Mission (Moncla) and Our Lady of Lourdes Church (Fifth Ward). The purpose of the luncheon was fellowship, spiritual and community unity involvement. DD Lamartiniere, OLL Altar Society President, said that the planning committee prepared for up to 35 attendees but response was overwhelming. It just goes to show how thirsty we are for spiritual growth.



**FATHER JOHN BROCATO RETURNS FROM DEPLOYMENT.** Appropriately on Fathers' Day, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at one of our four churches named in honor of the foster father of Jesus: St. Joseph Church in Colfax. Bishop remarked on Facebook: "today was a special day of celebration as the parish officially welcomed back their pastor, Father (Major) John Brocato, from his six month deployment to the Middle East (as chaplain for the Louisiana Air National Guard). Thank you to Fr. Brocato, Deacon E.J. Barre, and the wonderful people of St. Joseph, Colfax and St. Patrick, Montgomery for their very kind welcome and the delicious meal that followed. Welcome back, Fr. John, and thank you for your service!"

**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."



The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord will be celebrated Sunday, August 6. For a calendar of feast days and daily Mass readings, visit [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

**SACRED HEART CHURCH AND OUR LADY OF SORROWS CHURCH** both in Moreauville, attended Fr. Joshua Burch's priestly ordination at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral on Saturday, June 10. The two parishes consider Fr. Josh "their son" since he spent months with them during his seminarian formation. Pictured left to right, first row: Marguerite Constantine, Stephanie Daigle, Carolyn Johnson, Sister Kalen Sarimentionio, Mary Coco Nuss, Fr. Joshua Burch, Patricia Mayeux, Cynthia Gremillion, Carmen Necaie, Andre' Spruill, and Johnny Necaie. Second row: Warren Lacombe, Kenny Arnaudville, Farrell Johnson, West Constantine, Carolyn Hill, Tim Hill, Sally Dupar, Tammy Lacombe, Glenn Gremillion, Sister Sandra Norsworthy, and Aloysia Ducote. Photo taken during the reception that followed the ordination.

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**Tuesdays: 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

Location varies - see website

**By phone:** flexible days

**To schedule visit:** <https://cccenla.org/basic-needs>

## Emergency Basic Needs Assistance

- Utilities, rent, fire, information and referral.

**By appointment only:**

**To schedule visit:** <https://cccenla.org/basic-needs>

## Budget Class

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**2nd Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m., Westside Library**

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**To schedule visit:** <https://cccenla.org/basic-needs>

## Clothes Closet and Food Pantry

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## Coming Soon! Counseling

- For professional therapy

**By appointment only**

**To learn more, visit:**

<https://cccenla.org/mental-health-services#COUNSELING>

## Volunteers

Help is needed in all service areas.

If interested, please contact Jennifer Gilchrist,

at [jgilchrist@cccenla.org](mailto:jgilchrist@cccenla.org) or call 318.445.2401,

EXT 533

## Christian Life Coaching

(for personal life changes)

**By appointment only**

**To schedule visit:**

<https://cccenla.org/mental-health-services#COACHING>

## Peace in the Midst of Crisis

Divorce Support

**By appointment only**

**To schedule visit:** <https://cccenla.org/mental-health-services#SUPPORTGROUPS>

## Veteran's Support Group

- A new session will begin in mid-summer

**By appointment only**

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# MIRACLES —

(continued from pg. 5)

the brothers and priests launched 'Camp Carlo' for boys: a one-day adventure for teens to discover their highway to heaven.

"In these past few years, we have seen many who have turned to the intercession of Blessed Carlo," Sr. Alexia adds, "and there have been instances of unexplained healings and cures."

In addition, Mother Adela launched "Acutis Fashion," featuring a Bl. Carlo Acutis Polo Shirt. The colors of the polo shirt made by the sisters match the

shirt Carlo is wearing in his most popular photo, and it carries his message: "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven."

"Hundreds of young people have obtained this shirt," Sr. Alexia commented. "We feel it is a way of building through fashion a Eucharistic culture among young people."

Father Michael Grisolano, pastor of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish, Chicago, hosted the Vatican Eucharistic Miracles Exhibition in October 2022 and affirms the clear connection between the Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit that Blessed Carlo initiated and the National

Eucharistic Revival.

"The Eucharistic Miracles Exhibition makes clear that God has blessed us repeatedly in history and throughout the world with miraculous signs that remind us that Jesus Christ is really present under the appearance of bread and wine through the Eucharist," he says. "The Eucharist truly fulfills the promise Jesus made: 'I will be with you always, until the end of the world.'"

Adds Grisolano, "This Exhibit can strengthen our faith and help us learn to be more present to the Real Presence."

## What is a 'Monsignor' in the Catholic Church?

By Philip Kosloski  
Aleteia

*This honorary title has become more rare than in the past and denotes a special honorary clerical status.*

Most Catholics in English-speaking countries are familiar with their parish priest, who simply goes by the name "Father." However, on some occasions that parish priest has been given a different name, that of "Monsignor."

### What does it mean?

Historically speaking the title "Monsignor," "Monsignore" or "Monseigneur" ("My lord") was used to call most members

of high ecclesial rank. For example, cardinals and bishops were often addressed by the name "Monseigneur" and this continues to be true in some languages.

Over time the usage became restricted to, as the Catholic Encyclopedia points out, "those who, by virtue of some distinction bestowed upon them, belong as it were to the family and the retinue of the Holy Father."

These priests are now known as the "Papal Household," and the honorary title of Monsignor essentially refers to priests who have certain privileges and maintain a special closeness to the pope. They are higher in symbolic rank than ordinary priests, but lower in Holy Orders

than bishops.

For many years the local bishop would suggest names to the Holy Father for this title, usually priests older than 35 who had been priests for more than 10 years.

However, early on in Pope Francis' pontificate he changed the qualifications for the honorary title of Monsignor and raised the age limit to 65.

In most cases Monsignor is simply a title that expresses many years of dedication in priestly ministry, and recognizes a priest's many accomplishments in the service of the Lord.

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<b>Total</b> .....	<b>\$2,100.00</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. A Seminary Burse may be names of anyone - bishop, priests, religious, or lay person - chosen by the original donor, and may be added to and allowed to grow. A burse is completed when it reaches \$15,000.00 but another burse of the same name can be started. Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to the

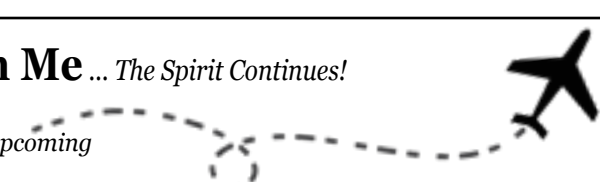
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*11 prayer for priests*







# Refuge

MY TRIBE

(Pictured here left and preceding page)  
**Over 1,700 youth and adults** attended this year's Steubenville South Youth Conference. Participating groups, volunteers, and priests drove in from all over Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Kansas for a weekend centered on Christ, community, and the sacraments.

A big thank you to all who generously donated time, money, and talent to bring the teens and families of our region closer to Christ.



**(PICTURED BELOW) ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH IN HESSMER** hosted a Super Bingo the weekend of July 8 and 9. Pictured below are the members of the Altar Society, the silent auction, and volunteers helping to prepare and serve food for the event.



# How your family can have an exciting summer of saints

By **Gretchen R. Crowe**  
Our Sunday Visitor

By sheer coincidence, thanks to professional and social schedules, during the month of June alone, we got to visit the shrines of five American saints: in Philadelphia, St. Katherine Drexel and St. John Neumann; in Emmitsburg, Maryland, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; in Terre Haute, Indiana, St. Theodore Guerin; and in St. Louis, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne.

The kids love seeing the shrines, and, being kids, they especially love the gift shops, where they score prayer cards and medals to press up against the tombs, resulting in third-class relics. At home, they have little containers where they store all of their various holy paraphernalia.

They also like knowing the stories — learning what each saint did and how the decisions they made helped them grow in holiness. We got a “Glory Stories” CD (yes, an actual CD) from Holy Heroes on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, and must have listened to it 15 times. What a blessing it is for the lives of these holy men and women to become real to our little ones.

And on top of all of this, discovering the saints of the Americas can’t help but provide historical insights into what life

was like in the first centuries of our country’s history. These men and women became part of the fabric of the burgeoning United States in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries: opening schools; ministering to the indigenous population, immigrants and other minorities; starting new convents and religious orders; and caring for the sick. Their ministry had a profound effect on the development of the country as a whole.

## How the saints shaped history

The same is true for the saints throughout the course of history. As Dorothy Day said, “It is the saints that keep appearing all thru history who keep things going.” To that end, the new book “How the Saints Shaped History” (OSV, \$27.95) is especially enlightening. At right around 350 pages, it’s a hefty book — but be not intimidated; it’s really more of a reference book than a cover-to-cover read. You can dip in and out of sections depending on what you’re interested in — for example, Part V on the Enlightenment and modernism, which includes a chapter on saints in America, Asia and Africa. The chapter covered St. Junipero Serra, Mother Seton, St. John Neumann, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini and more, pointing out how they overlapped or how they built off of the work and ministry



of the others, which provided very helpful context for the spreading of the Faith in 19th-century America, but also elsewhere in the world at the same time.

The book by Randall Petrides highlights more than 180 saints who shaped the history of the Catholic Church. “As they confronted the issues of their day, they influenced history by their gifts and talents — but most importantly, by their resolute commitment to Jesus Christ,” Petrides wrote in the book’s introduction. “This commitment opened them to the grace of the Holy Spirit, acting in definite times and places. In a sense, this book is an effort not only to shine

light on saints making history, but also to bring to light the role of the Holy Spirit as well.”

Of course this isn’t just limited to modern American saints. The book begins with St. Mary Magdalene, witnessing Jesus’ resurrection, and tracks the history of the Church for the next 2,000 years. An index at the back of the book helps with quick references. So whether or not you have a summer of saints planned, or if you’re just interested in a particular time period or a particular saint, this book can serve as a helpful resource.

Looking at the history of the

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## School Start Dates: Monday, July 24

St. Mary’s Assumption,  
Cottonport

## Thursday, August 10

St. Joseph School,  
Plaucheville

## Friday, August 11

Holy Savior Menard  
Our Lady of Prompt Succor  
St. Frances Cabrini  
St. Anthony of Padua  
St. Mary’s Catholic School  
Sacred Heart School

## Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

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August 8, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Anthony of Padua School,  
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August 8, 6:00 p.m.  
Minor Basilica of the  
Immaculate Conception,  
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August 15, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Joseph Catholic Center,  
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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.

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# Martyrs next door: Modern day Christians who died for the faith will be honored

By **Gretchen R. Crowe**  
*Our Sunday Visitor*

By sheer coincidence, thanks to professional and social schedules, during the month of June alone, we got to visit the shrines of five American saints: in Philadelphia, St. Katherine Drexel and St. John Neumann; in Emmitsburg, Maryland, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; in Terre Haute, Indiana, St. Theodore Guerin; and in St. Louis, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne.

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**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.** St. Rita Church, Alexandria hosted their Vacation Bible School June 19 - 23. Over 140 kids and over 40 teen and adult volunteers attended. It was a STELLAR week!



(above) **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL.** St. Joseph Church, Marksville held their Vacation Bible School June 12 - 16, 9:00 a.m. - noon. This year's theme was "Shine Jesus' Light."

(left) **ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH, ISLE BREVELLE,** wrapped up a STELLAR VBS week!

## Pilgrimages

### Egypt/Nile River

Join St. Michael the Archangel Church in Leesville on a pilgrimage to Egypt plus Constantinople! This pilgrimage includes a 4-night Nile River Cruise. Father Kenneth Michiels will be the spiritual director. Travel dates are November 7 - 19, 2023. For more information, visit [www.selectinternationaltours.com](http://www.selectinternationaltours.com) or call 1800-842-4842.

### Mexico/OLG Shrine

Join St. Mary's Assumption in Cottonport on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico! This pilgrimage is in honor of the life and ministry of Fr. Jose Robles-Sanchez. Fr. Charles Ray will be the spiritual director. Travel dates are November 13-18, 2023. For more information, visit [www.holytravels.org/frwiltsemexico](http://www.holytravels.org/frwiltsemexico) or call Magnificat Travel at 337-291-1933.

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# How to prioritize intergenerational living

## Our Sunday Visitor

The digital age, while offering unprecedented tools for communication, has paradoxically limited the depth of our conversations, propagating trivialities while neglecting the essence of what it means to be human. Among the casualties of this age are the stories and experiences of our elderly relatives and friends, whose wisdom and memories make our lives richer and, thus, deserve to be honored and cherished. As the Church prepares to celebrate World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, it's an ideal time to pay tribute to our parents, grandparents and other loved ones, and preserve the stories and faith they hold dear.

Our grandparents possess a wealth of experiences and knowledge. Years of life have shaped their hearts, making them stewards of the past and cultivating virtues worth emulating. Their stories, often untold and even more often ignored or overlooked, typically carry a profound sense of empathy and understanding. When our grandparents share their tales, they transport us to other times and provide us with a glimpse into their joys, sorrows, triumphs and challenges. Their narratives resonate deeply with children especially, since these memories help children to know who they are and, more importantly, to

whom they belong.

In the age of smartphones and digital distractions, we should encourage our children to use these devices not merely as tools for entertainment but as instruments for recording precious memories. We ought to remind them to capture moments spent with their grandparents. By doing so, we can create a repository of memories that will endure long after our loved ones have passed, ensuring that their voices and legacies live on.

### The bonds of our faith

Think about the hilarious and embarrassing stories about parents, gleefully recounted at family gatherings by grandparents. They often become the stuff of family legend. These anecdotes not only bring joy; they serve as a reminder that a family's history is a tapestry woven together by love, laughter and the occasional misstep. Such narratives remind children that their parents and grandparents were once young, knowing their share of mischief and mistakes, making them more relatable figures. Family stories remind us that we are part of something greater and that our actions have the power to echo far beyond our years.

The importance of honoring our grandparents goes beyond personal connections and family bonds; it extends to the very fabric of our faith. In his message for the first World Day for Grandparents



and the Elderly, Pope Francis encouraged grandparents, saying: "It makes no difference how old you are, whether you still work or not, whether you are alone or have a family, whether you became a grandmother or grandfather at a young age or later, whether you are still independent or need assistance. Because there is no retirement age from the work of proclaiming the Gospel and handing down traditions to your grandchildren."

The Holy Father understands the significance of intergenerational relationships and encourages us to value the elderly members of our communities. Moreover, he knows that their presence serves as a link between past, present and future, and their stories become a conduit for passing down the rich

heritage of our Catholic faith — the true meaning of tradition. But they have to believe it themselves!

### Seek out their stories

A living conversation between young and old: This is what intergenerational living chiefly consists of. We do not have to share the same roof to cherish and prioritize the presence of the elderly in our lives. Whether they are part of our immediate family or members of our parish or nextdoor neighbors, they have a witness to offer, and we would be wise to receive it.

Visiting the graves of our departed grandparents connects us to previous generations and provides an opportunity for remembrance. By paying our respects at their final resting places, we demonstrate our gratitude for the lives they lived

and the faith they handed on to us. It is a chance to acknowledge our roots and pay homage to those who have gone before, paving the way for the blessings and opportunities we enjoy today.

In our efforts to honor our grandparents, we may well uncover hidden treasures — stories that surface and captivate us, stories we have never heard before. These revelations have the potential to become cherished legacies that enrich our lives and connect us; each story a new thread, woven through through the years in the tapestry of family life. By actively seeking out these stories, by sitting at the feet of our grandparents and listening with open hearts, we ensure that their wisdom and memories endure for generations to come.

Amid the constant noise of the digital age, both the young and the old suffer from a kind of silence, trapped as it were, by social networks that aren't real. Ensnared by memory, the elderly suffer from regret even as young people overlook the present and never engage with the past because they are trapped in a merely virtual world. Stories can be part of the answer. Their telling will call hearts and minds to the things that matter. As Ray Bradbury, in a touching tribute to his own grandfather, concluded in his introduction to his novel "Dandelion Wine," when we call the past to mind and pass it on to others in stories, our loved ones continue to be present to us beyond the end of their earthly lives. "The wine still waits in the cellars below. My beloved family still sits on the porch in the dark. The fire balloon still drifts and burns in the night sky of an as yet unburied summer. Why and how? Because I say it is so."

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*Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board: Father Patrick Briscoe, Gretchen R. Crowe, Scott P. Richert, Scott Warden, York Young*

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## ARK assessment provides insight into the state of our religious education

It is understood that educators assess the knowledge of children through various means of testing, via writing and oration to make sure that students are learning the subject matter being taught. At various stages in a student's academic career, standardized tests are given for overall knowledge assessment and promotion to the next academic grade. Those in high school take nationally administered college readiness exams to assess their knowledge of subjects such as Math, English and the Sciences.

But in our Catholic schools and CCD parish programs, we have never tested a student's knowledge of their Catholic faith. We have never truly validated that the material, the teaching methods and approaches we use to teach our Catholic faith are effective with the youth of our Diocese... until now!

ARK (Assessment of Religious Knowledge) is a new program designed to assess the knowledge of all students in our Diocese being educated in both our Catholic schools as well as

CCD. In the fall of 2022, Bishop Robert Marshall asked that we begin an annual assessment of our youth to gauge where we are as a Diocese and what modifications, if any, are needed to better equip our youth with true faith and belief in Christ so they can continue to pass on this rich faith of ours to their friends, families, and future families.

ARK assesses and tracks students' knowledge and growth in six domains of the Catholic Faith: Sacraments and Liturgy, The Creed and Salvation History, Morality, Prayer, Virtue, and Living Discipleship.

The ARK team has spent months reviewing all major Catholic religion textbooks to assess students in a non-biased fashion. With their review, students from 2nd through 12th grade completed tests that were pertinent to the grade level material they should know. Questions presented to students went through a vigorous nationwide review with multiple educational professionals assuring grade level appropriateness and

that each question was carefully reviewed to ensure all questions were written in a straightforward and clear manner.

Along with over 1600 Catholic school students assessed, we also tested over 220 school faculty members and school administration office personnel.

Raw scores are currently being reviewed by the Diocese and schools and hopefully, the final scores will be available early fall.

We hope to gain insight into the strengths and weaknesses

in our diocese and what support our religious educators need in the future. We also hope to include all parish religious education students in subsequent assessments. With this, we will have a broader view of how effective our religious education is in our diocese.

This is just another way we are striving to provide the best education for our young people and forming them to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

A huge THANK YOU to the Louisiana Knights of Columbus

State Officers for their generous financial support to allow us to undertake this endeavor in our first year. We are also thankful that many of our local Diocesan Knights of Columbus and Knights of Peter Claver Councils have already helped fund future testing cycles.

If you would like more information on ARK or would like to financially support future testing, please contact Deacon Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext. 207 or at [dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org](mailto:dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org).

## Three new principals begin the 2023-2024 school year



**Sadie LaPoint**  
St. Anthony of Padua School  
Bunkie

St. Anthony of Padua School, Bunkie, welcomes Mrs. Sadie LaPoint as principal for the upcoming 2023-24 academic year.

Mrs. LaPoint has been teaching at St. Anthony School for two years and also serves as Director of Curriculum.

She previously taught at Acadiana Renaissance Charter Academy, Saint Cecilia School, and Green T. Lindon Elementary in Lafayette Parish.

When asked what she enjoys most about being an educator, she said, "Watching students develop in all aspects of their life: academic, spiritual, and character." She credits the ability to influence the direction of a child's life in a positive way as being the reason she is passionate about being an educator.

Mrs. LaPoint replaces Mr. Alan Wanersdorfer who retired at the end of the 2023 school year.



**Stephen Wren**  
St. Mary's Catholic School  
Natchitoches

Mr. Stephen Wren has been at St. Mary's Catholic School for 6 years as a history and religion teacher and in administration for the past 4 years.

With 23 years of experience in Catholic school systems, he previously taught at St. Louis Catholic School in Lake Charles for 8 years and at Opelousas Catholic for 9 years.

"I am honored to be in this position. St. Mary's has a long tradition of academic excellence, faith formation, and athletic success, and I am excited to help continue that tradition. In all aspects of St. Mary's, the faculty and staff will help students grow in their personal relationship with Jesus and understand God's message of loving one's neighbor and serving others," he says.

Mr. Stephen Wren was named principal toward the end of the 2022-23 school year.



**Rhiannon Moreau**  
St. Joseph School  
Plaucheville

Mrs. Rhiannon Moreau has been appointed principal for the coming 2023-2024 school year.

Mrs. Moreau has been at St. Joseph for a total of fifteen years. She taught for twelve years and has been the Assistant Principal for the last three years.

Mrs. Moreau earned her Master's of Educational Leadership through Louisiana College and is state certified in educational leadership.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to be appointed the principal for the coming school year. I look forward to working with students, faculty, staff, and community members. I will continue to strive for educational excellence and to grow our relationship with God," stated Moreau.

Mrs. Moreau replaces Mr. William Albritton who retired in May.

### BRUMFIELD vs DODD POLICY.

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the following statement is published:

#### DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA NON-DISCRIMINATORY SCHOOL POLICY | July 2023

The Diocese of Alexandria School System re-affirms its non-discriminatory policy on the basis of race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin in its educational programs, activities and employment policies in accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments and Sections 4.03(a) and 4.03 (c) Revenue Procedure 75-50.

All students, faculty members and staff, without exception, are admitted to all rights, privileges and activities generally accorded or made available at the schools which do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its employment policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other school-administered programs.

- Sacred Heart School, Moreauville
- St. Anthony of Padua School, Bunkie
- St. Joseph Elementary and High School, Plaucheville
- St. Mary Assumption School, Cottonport
- St. Mary's Elementary and High School, Natchitoches
- Holy Savior Menard Central High School, Alexandria
- Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria
- St. Frances Cabrini School, Alexandria

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



# Catholic schools prepare for the new school year



## DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

At our schools, we educate the whole child: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically. We emphasize moral development and self-discipline to prepare our students to be productive citizens and future leaders.

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Alexandria ministers to the religious and academic needs of the community by administering and supervising the Catholic School System as it fulfills its primary goal of teaching and modeling the Catholic Faith. The Catholic School System provides a sound academic education that addresses the individual needs of the students as completely as possible. All the teachers and principals in the Catholic School System meet the teaching/administrative requirements of the State of Louisiana.

The Catholic School System is comprised of eight elementary and three high schools in the Diocese of Alexandria. All elementary schools have both

a Pre-K and a Kindergarten program. The schools are located on nine sites, two of the schools actually being a Pre-K through twelve program. Four of these school sites are in Avoyelles Parish, three in Rapides Parish and one in Natchitoches Parish. A civil parish in Louisiana is known as a county in other parts of the United States.

Catholic schools continue to innovate to meet the needs of families by expanding offerings, including preschools, virtual classes, and more. The iconic parochia school is evolving to meet the needs of its local communities. Academic excellence, a solid partnership with parents, teachers with a demonstrated commitment to being there for their students, a sense of community, and a Christ-centered and service-oriented education is the legacy that has characterized Catholic school education for generations.

Catholic schools are a bright spot in education today, and worthy of ongoing support.

By Danielle Bean  
Blessed is She

“How was James’ first day?” I asked a friend recently.

“Oh, you know, he had some trouble getting on the right bus ...” she started to tell me, and then she stopped talking, and her eyes filled with tears.

My friend’s sudden emotion did not surprise me. This is a hard time of year. Whether we’re sending little kids to kindergarten or big kids to college or figuring out homeschooling or trying a new charter school or enrolling in online education, we’re all adjusting to big changes. It can be hard to find peace in the midst of all that.

### *What Keeps You Up at Night?*

Years ago, at the start of a new school year, I read an article by a Christian homeschooling dad who had decided, for a variety of reasons, that homeschooling was actually harmful to his family. He was choosing to send his kids to school instead, and encouraged others to take a hard look at what he called “blind spots” in our family lives—the negative consequences of our decisions, the gaps in our plans, and important things that might be falling through the cracks.

I didn’t actually need encouragement to look at those things. I was lying awake most nights worrying about them.

It’s important to weigh consequences, seek outside opinions, and examine our motives as parents, but in my experience, most of us are doing a lot of that already. And we’re tired. Tired of being second-guessed and being encouraged to second-guess ourselves. Tired of feeling defensive about

# Finding peace in back-to-school imperfection

parenting decisions. Tired of being warned about all the ways that, despite good intentions and exhaustive efforts, we are probably failing at this Catholic family thing.

### *An Invitation Into Greater Trust*

Well, I’m here to tell you that you are not failing, and to remind you to trust in the goodness of God. One of the most powerful prayers I have learned to pray as a parent is: “Lord, glorify Yourself in my need.”

God can use imperfect parents who make imperfect decisions to accomplish mighty things. He fills in where we are lacking.

Years ago, when I read that writer’s description of how he and his wife regretted putting outward appearances before love in their own family, I knew that failures like these had little to do with schooling decisions. They weren’t homeschooling blind spots; they were human ones.

We’re all blind. We all judge when we shouldn’t, make selfish and prideful decisions, fall down in our faith, and fail at love. We all get tired.

### *We Don’t Do This Alone*

But, whatever changes or decisions might be stressing you at the start of this school year, let’s remember that God doesn’t throw our children into our arms and tell us, “Hey, good luck with these! You’re all they’ve got!”

God is with us. We are not all they’ve got. Thank You, God, for that.

Are you tired this back-to-school season? Tired from late nights and early mornings? Tired from the draining demands of work, home, and family?

God sees you. And he can be glorified in your need.

### *Grace Enough for Right Now*

One recent evening, I entered the kitchen and found a greasy mess left from dinner. I grabbed a sponge and began scrubbing the stovetop. While I scrubbed, one of my daughters

returned home from an evening out with friends and filled my ears with cheerful stories of her day.

Tired or not, in that moment there, I had strength enough to clean a stovetop, one greasy spot at a time, and give attention to my happy daughter.

I don’t have enough love for a lifetime. Not even close. God doesn’t give me all the grace I need for a great big lifetime in a great big family all at once. He gives me love enough, and grace enough, for right here, right now, one greasy little spot at a time.

Mother Teresa once said, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.”

Just one. The one standing before you right now.

Whatever it is that makes us tired these days, I’ve come to realize that it’s not about the specifics. It’s not homeschooling or sending to school or working from home or getting all the kids to soccer practice that is especially hard. It’s just plain loving that is especially hard. But it’s a joyful privilege too. I pray for perspective, so that I might not fail to see that.

### *A Greater Love*

Especially during the back-to-school season of challenge and change, all parents should lean hard on God’s grace. Because though our details might differ, God calls every one of us to sacrificial love through our family lives. And that’s not likely to come easy to any of us.

God doesn’t give us grace sufficient for a lifetime. He gives us grace sufficient for a day, and we can respond to that grace, one little yes at a time.

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## Catholic Campus Ministry at our local universities:

LSU of Alexandria: Catholic Student Organization, 318-447-2956

Northwestern State University Catholic Student Organization FOCUS Ministries:  
<https://nscatholic.org/focus> | [evan.morley@focus.org](mailto:evan.morley@focus.org)

Louisiana College: Catholic Student Organization, 318-447-2956

Danielle Bean is a speaker, podcast host, and author of several books, including her newest release, *Whisper*. You can find out more about her at [daniellbean.com](http://daniellbean.com).

### Pilgrimage to Richard, LA - August 11

Father Taylor Reynolds will offer a mini pilgrimage to the tomb of servant of God Charlene Richard down in Richard, LA. We will pray at her tomb, meet her family, and hear her story and attend the anniversary Mass in memory of Charlene. Please let Fr. Taylor know if you are interested in attending and how to meet up to get there: stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com.

### Married Couples Retreat - August 18 - 20

Retreat Director, Dr. Mario Sacasa, a licensed marriage and family therapist in practice for over 15 years, will lead couples in presentations and time for reflection during the weekend at Maryhill Renewal Center. Dr. Sacasa brings years of combined ministry to married couples and offers insightful, practical, and humorous ways that will encourage and bless your marriage. Visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org) to register. For more information, contact Deacon Jason Lavergne at [dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org](mailto:dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org). Sponsored by the Diocese of Alexandria.

### Special Collection - August 6

In a few weeks, church parishes will take up a collection for our beloved Maryhill Renewal Center. Established in the 1940's by Bishop Charles P. Greco, Maryhill is used extensively by many seeking a spiritual and restful place to hold retreats and functions throughout the year. It continues to serve as the spiritual heart of the Diocese of Alexandria. Funds from this collection will be used for the ongoing maintenance of the structures and grounds in order to keep this sacred gift available to us. Please be prepared to give generously.

### Pilgrimage to Egypt - November 7-19

Join St. Michael the Archangel Church in Leesville on a pilgrimage to Egypt plus Constantinople! This pilgrimage includes a 4-night Nile River Cruise. Fr. Kenneth Michiels will be the spiritual director. Travel dates are November 7-19, 2023. For more information, visit [www.selectinternationaltours.com](http://www.selectinternationaltours.com), or call 1800-842-4842.

## DIOCESAN BRIEFS

### Pilgrimage to Mexico - November 13-18

Join St. Mary's Assumption Church in Cottonport on a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico! This pilgrimage is in honor of the life and ministry of Fr. Jose Robles-Sanchez. Fr. John Wiltse will be the spiritual director. Travel dates are November 13-18, 2023. For more information, visit [www.holytravels.org/frwiltsemexico](http://www.holytravels.org/frwiltsemexico) or call Magnificat Travel at 337-291-1933.

### Calling all graduates of the Christos Encounter Course!

If you are a graduate of the Christos Encounter Course, facilitated by Jim and Christy Gootee, please email Jim Gootee at [jimgootee3@gmail.com](mailto:jimgootee3@gmail.com) with your name, mailing address, and phone number. Thank you in advance!

### Host families needed for exchange students

The ABC Education Group is looking for warm and welcoming host families for our international students wishing to attend our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Alexandria. Join us to provide an enriching and bonding experience for our students! The ideal family speaks English at home, lives within 30 minutes driving distance of the school, takes part in a student's cultural exchange experience. Host families will provide: 3 meals a day, private bedroom, reliable internet, transportation to/from school, airport pickup/drop off. Please contact Chelsea Sherman for more information at 337-400-6684 or [support@abceducationgroup.com](mailto:support@abceducationgroup.com).

### Notre Dame Seminary Documentary Premier sponsorship opportunity - deadline August 31

On September 15, WLAE TV in New Orleans will be premiering a self-produced documentary about Notre Dame Seminary titled: *FORMED: Notre Dame Seminary and the Path to Priesthood*.

*FORMED* will focus on Notre Dame Seminary as it celebrates its 100th anniversary by recognizing its importance in the strong spiritual formation of Catholic priests throughout the history of New Orleans and Louisiana including our priests and our current bishop, Most Rev. Robert W. Marshall, Jr. here in the Diocese of Alexandria. The documentary film will bring to life rare archival photographs and footage. Alumni including Archbishop Gregory Aymond as well as other bishops, archbishops, priests, deacons and lay people will explain the most important functions and benefits of the seminary as well as reflect on how Notre Dame has changed their lives and formed them in faith.

There will be a red carpet premier event at Schulte Hall in New Orleans on September 15.

Be a part of history by sponsoring the event. Doing so will add your personal, parish/ministry or business name to the credits in WLAE's upcoming film: *Formed: Notre Dame Seminary and the Path to Priesthood*. Visit [wlae.com/seminary](http://wlae.com/seminary) to see the brochure and to donate online. For more info, email [helen@wlae.com](mailto:helen@wlae.com).

WLAE is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization. Donations must be received by August 31 for inclusion at the red carpet premiere at Schulte Hall on September 15. After the local and statewide public television premieres, the film will be available on YouTube @WLAETV.

*Lord, your love is eternal,  
do not forsake the work  
of your hands.*

Psalm 138: 8 | Responsorial Psalm for August 27  
Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Please visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org), the Diocese of Alexandria on Facebook, or your church parish's website for the most up to date information on ministries, parish activities, and service opportunities.

### Church Today News Deadlines

**August 28**  
Deadline for news:  
Thursday, Aug. 17

**September 25**  
Deadline for news:  
Thursday, Sept. 25



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# August 2023

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p><b>JULY 24</b></p> <p>First Day of Classes St. Mary's Assumption School, Cottonport</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. S. NEWBURY</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIEKWE</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>Supper with the Seminarians 5:00 p.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRAO</p>
<p><b>31</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL</p>	<p><b>AUGUST 1</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>VIRTUS Training 1:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>FEAST of the TRANSFIGURATION of the LORD PRAY FOR DCN C. PELTO</p>
<p><b>7</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. PRIMEAUX</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Anthony of Padua School, BUNKIE</p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. Immaculate Conception, NATCHITOCHEs</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>First Day of Classes St. Joseph School Plaucheville</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>First Day of Classes OLPS, HSM, Cabrini Sacred Heart Moreauville, St. Anthony Bunkie, St. Mary's Natchitoches</p> <p>Cenla ACTS MEN'S Retreat -- Maryhill</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES</p>
<p><b>14</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>SOLEMNITY of the ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (holy day of obligation) PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Married Couples Retreat -- Maryhill</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN</p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR MSGR. S. TESTA</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. P. SUNDERHAUS</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. C. THIBODEAUX</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE</p>

# *genesis of eve*

## BE NOT AFRAID WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

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