

# CHURCH TODAY

Volume LIV, No. 12

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

Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

December 25, 2023



*Congratulations,  
Monsignors!*

At Vespers on the evening of November 28 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, we celebrated the investiture of Monsignor Scott Chemino and Monsignor James Ferguson as Chaplains to His Holiness. It was a beautiful celebration followed by a reception in the Alexandria Convention Hall. Congratulations, Monsignors and thank you to all who made the joyous occasion possible.

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### Priest Jubilee Mass

On Monday, Dec. 4, the Diocese celebrated the 2023 Priests' Jubilee Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. See page 2 for a list of those celebrating milestone priesthood anniversaries. Congratulations, everyone!

### Diocese to host Fullness of Truth conference February 23-25, 2024

Fullness of Truth, in collaboration with the Diocese of Alexandria, will host a weekend event for the whole family this Lent, Feb. 23-25, 2024 at the Randolph Riverfront Center. See page 4 for more information as well as a list of speakers.

### Louisiana Life Marches

In 2024, Louisiana will march because **We Are "Here for Her!"** See page 15 for more information and a list of life march locations around the state.

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CHURCH TODAY



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December 25, 2023

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**PRIEST JUBILEE MASS.** On Monday, Dec. 4, we celebrated the 2023 Priests' Jubilee Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Those celebrating milestone priesthood anniversaries are: Fr. Robert Courville, 60 years; Fr. Antony Aelavanthara and Fr. Chris Nayak, both 55 years; Fr. Joseph Haseiber, 50 years; Fr. Ramji Shoury, 45 years; Fr. Abraham Palakkattuchira and Fr. John Pardue, both 35 years; Msgr. Scott Chemino, 30 years; Fr. Joy Antony, Fr. Albi Mulloth, Fr. Marc Noel and Fr. Rickey Gremillion, all celebrating 25 years; Fr. Chad Partain, Fr. John Brocato, Fr. Wade DeCoste and Fr. Abraham Varghese, all 20 years; Fr. Martin Laird, 15 years and Fr. Luke LaFleur, 5 years. Other priests con-celebrating were Fr. Josh Burch, Fr. MacGrace Onwumere, Fr. Bino Palliparambil, Fr. Jose Pallipurath, Fr. Dan O'Connor, Fr. Peter Faulk, Fr. Bill Gearheard, Fr. Paul LaPalme, Fr. Jacob Thomas, Msgr. Steve Testa, Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, Msgr. James Ferguson, Fr. Dwight DeJesus, Fr. Craig Scott, Fr. Dale Meade and Fr. Robert Johnson.

Special collection for The Church Today

The week of January 14, we will be taking up a special collection for our diocesan newspaper -- the Church Today. Every month, this 20-page newspaper is mailed FREE to every Catholic household in the diocese. All donations to this special collection go directly to the Church Today to help defray the cost of printing and mailing. If you, or someone you know, would like to receive the Church Today FREE each month, call 318- 445- 6424, ext 209 to request it.

Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Tuesday, Jan. 9, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Joseph Catholic Center,  
ALEXANDRIA

Thursday, Jan. 18, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Alphonsus Church,  
HESSMER

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

Lector Formation Workshops

Tuesday, Jan. 23, 6:00 p.m.  
St. Joseph Catholic Center  
Alexandria

More information, dates and sign up are available at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org).



**MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY - JAN. 15, 2024.** King's birthday is on January 15. The holiday serves as a time for reflection, community service, and the celebration of Dr. King's contributions to the civil rights movement.

*Lord, every nation on earth  
will adore you.*

Psalm 72: 11 | Responsorial Psalm for January 7  
The Epiphany of the Lord

# Doctrinal dicastery explains gay couples can be blessed outside of formal liturgical blessing

By Cindy Wooden  
Our Sunday Visitor

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A Catholic priest can bless a gay or other unmarried couple as long as it is not a formal liturgical blessing and does not give the impression that the Catholic Church is blessing the union as if it were a marriage, the Vatican doctrinal office said.

The request for a blessing can express and nurture “openness to the transcendence, mercy and closeness to God in a thousand concrete circumstances of life, which is no small thing in the world in which we live. It is a seed of the Holy Spirit that must be nurtured, not hindered,” the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith said in a formal declaration published Dec. 18.

The document, “Fiducia Supplicans” (“Supplicating Trust”) was subtitled, “On the pastoral meaning of blessings,” and was approved by Pope Francis during an audience with Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, dicastery prefect, Dec. 18.

In his introductory note, Cardinal Fernández said questions about a priest blessing a LGBTQ+ or other unmarried couple had been sent to the doctrinal office repeatedly over the past few years.

The need for a fuller explanation of blessings became clear, he wrote, after Pope Francis responded to the “dubia” or questions of several cardinals in a letter released in early October.

In his letter, the pope insisted marriage is an “exclusive, stable and indissoluble union between a man and a woman, naturally open to conceiving children,” which is why the church “avoids all kinds of rites or sacramentals that could contradict this conviction and



**DICASTERY FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH.** Pope Francis shares a laugh with Cardinal Víctor Fernández, right, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Msgr. Armando Matten, secretary of the dicastery's doctrinal section, during a meeting in the library of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican Dec. 18, 2023. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

imply that it is recognizing as a marriage something that is not.”

At the same time, the pope said, “pastoral prudence must adequately discern if there are forms of blessing, solicited by one or various persons, that don't transmit a mistaken concept of marriage.”

Cardinal Fernández said the declaration “remains firm on the traditional doctrine of the Church about marriage, not allowing any type of liturgical rite or blessing similar to a liturgical rite that can create confusion,” but it also explores the “pastoral meaning of blessings” in a way that opens “the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church's perennial

teaching on marriage.”

The church “remains firm” in teaching that marriage can be contracted only between one woman and one man, he said, and continues to insist that “rites and prayers that could create confusion” about a marriage and another form of relationship “are inadmissible.”

But in Catholic tradition blessings go well beyond the formal ritual used in marriage and other sacraments.

“Blessings are among the most widespread and evolving sacramentals. Indeed, they lead us to grasp God's presence in all the events of life and remind us that, even in the use of created things, human beings are invited to seek God, to love him, and to serve him faithfully,” the declaration said. That is why people, meals, rosaries, homes, pets and myriad other things can be and are blessed on various occasions.

“From a strictly liturgical point of view,” the declaration said, “a blessing requires that what is blessed be conformed to God's will, as expressed in the teachings of the Church,” which is why the then-doctrinal congregation in 2021 excluded the possibility of blessing gay couples.

But, the new document said, Catholics should “avoid the risk of reducing the meaning of blessings” to their formal, liturgical use because that “would lead us to expect the same moral conditions for a simple blessing that are called for in the reception of the sacraments.”

“Indeed, there is the danger that a pastoral gesture that is so beloved and widespread will be subjected to too many moral prerequisites, which, under the claim of control, could overshadow the unconditional power of God's love that forms the basis for the gesture of blessing.”

it said.

A person who asks for God's blessing, the declaration said, “shows himself to be in need of God's saving presence in his life and one who asks for a blessing from the Church recognizes the latter as a sacrament of the salvation that God offers.”

The church, it said, should be grateful when people ask for a blessing and should see it as a sign that they know they need God's help.

“When people ask for a blessing, an exhaustive moral analysis should not be placed as a precondition for conferring it. For, those seeking a blessing should not be required to have prior moral perfection,” it said.

At the same time, the declaration insisted that the Mass is not the proper setting for the less formal forms of blessing that could include the blessing of a gay couple, and it repeated that “it is not appropriate for a diocese, a bishops' conference” or other church structure to issue a formal blessing prayer or ritual for unwed couples. The blessing also should not be given “in concurrence” with a civil marriage ceremony to avoid appearing as a sort of church blessing of the civil union.

However, it said, a priest or deacon could “join in the prayer of those persons who, although in a union that cannot be compared in any way to a marriage, desire to entrust themselves to the Lord and his mercy, to invoke his help and to be guided to a greater understanding of his plan of love and of truth.”

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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.

*Here am I,  
Lord;  
I come to do  
your will.*

Psalm 40: 8 and 9  
Responsorial Psalm  
for January 14  
Second Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

# Diocese to host Fullness of Truth Conference Feb. 23-25

Regardless of an individual's culture or background, the human heart seeks to know its creator. In fact, the most-quoted phrase from St. Augustine captures this sentiment when he wrote, "Our heart is restless until it rests in You."

This longing of the human heart is the reason Fullness of Truth Catholic Evangelization Ministries was established. This lay apostolate seeks to fulfill the desire of the human heart by dynamically sharing the inestimable gift and irrefutable truth of the Catholic faith.

Fullness of Truth, in collaboration with the Diocese of Alexandria, will be hosting such an event for the whole family this Lent, Feb. 23-25, 2024 at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria. The conference theme serves the Eucharistic Revival focus and is entitled, "Real Presence, Real Power!: Eucharistic Life and the Science of Sainthood."

Bringing in several talented, well-known Catholic presenters, the conference will immerse the hearts of attendees into an even deeper love of Our Lord and Blessed Sacrament through exceptional speaker presentations, Eucharistic Adoration, and prayerful devotions, while offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Interspersing speaker



presentations with these reverent celebrations is designed to further amplify attendees' knowledge and appreciation of the incredible treasure Christ left us in the Holy Eucharist.

Featured speakers presenting at the conference include Louisiana-native and renown scripture scholar Dr. Brant Pitre, "Science of Sainthood" Founder Matthew Leonard, the Augustine Institute's author & theologian Dr. Michael Barber, local Catholic "Mom" blogger Erin Franco, and "The Spirit World" radio show co-host, Debbie Georgianni. Topics will cover a wide range from Eucharistic foreshadowing in the Old Testament, to Jesus' teaching and institution of the Holy Mass, and Christ's abiding Real Presence in the Eucharist as we celebrate today, plus a faith-building look at Eucharistic Miracles throughout the centuries.

Youth programming will be offered as well for children and teens expressly designed to provide age-appropriate content meaningful to the topic of the Eucharist. Children ages 6-12 are invited to participate in "Kids Camp"; and teens ages 13-18 can attend the "Youth Track". The purchase of a Family Pass admission allows parents to participate in the conference, while their children to participate in youth programming. Children and teens are also encouraged to participate in any "Main Stage" conference talks they find interesting and accessible.

Attendees will surely enjoy the impressive Fullness of Truth traveling Catholic Book & Gift Store at the event. This bookstore features an astounding volume of books on nearly every topic of the faith, organized in an easy-to-browse layout. Attendees

will thereby be able to locate the resources they need to continue learning beyond the weekend, while enjoying the plentiful options available. Along with this library of resources, the gift store is packed with authentically Catholic religious items that have been carefully selected – featuring religious medals, Marian devotionals, statues, rosaries, prayer aids, home décor, and beautiful gifts that celebrate the faith.

Fullness of Truth is a nonprofit organization that offers Catholic conferences across Texas and Louisiana, and will begin its 2024 conference lineup with the Alexandria, LA conference. Additionally, the organization plans on holding an additional five conferences in 2024 celebrating other topics of the faith. See their website for upcoming details.

Founded 23 years ago,

Fullness of Truth was launched by Ken Zammit, a cradle Catholic who was devout in his faith until he reached college age. As a young man, he searched in vain for life's meaning through science, philosophy, and the World's offerings, but was unable to find deep meaning and peace until the Holy Spirit called him back to the Faith, as St. Augustine so prophetically taught. The answers came to him "louder and louder" that there is a reality of objective Truth, and Almighty God writes His natural laws and commandments on our hearts, and there the answers to life's meaning can be found.

Upon finding this Truth, Zammit states, "I was determined to do what I can, as a lay person, to provide a forum for great

Continued on next page...

*Teach me your ways, O Lord.*

Psalm 25: 4 | Responsorial Psalm for January 21 | Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

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presenters of the Catholic faith; to not simply speak about the 'what's' we believe, but the convincing 'why's' as well." Ignited with his new-found knowledge and zeal, he started Fullness of Truth, and the apostolate has enlightened many tens of thousands of attendees over more than two decades. Particularly rewarding is learning how attendees' lives have been changed by attending a Fullness of Truth conference: several men crediting such events in particular as the turning point in their discernment to become a priest; men and women overhauling their lives and careers to glorify God as a priority; and families opening their hearts further by embracing the gift of children.

Registration fees for the conference are priced to enable all

attendees to participate in the full weekend of conference activities. The "early-bird" admission price is \$65 for tickets purchased before Feb. 12. After this date, general admission tickets are \$75. A "Priority Pass" can be purchased for \$150 which includes a "goody bag," lunch on Saturday with the speakers featuring a Q&A, and conference seating near the stage. A "Family Pass", allowing all members of a family and their children to attend is \$175. The "Family Pass" includes youth programming, should children and teens choose to attend.

For more information on the Fullness of Truth Conference in Alexandria, LA, visit: [www.fullnessoftruth.org/alx24](http://www.fullnessoftruth.org/alx24), or call 1-877-218-7884.

## Heart of Saint Kateri Circle

**Do you have a devotion to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha?**

Do you have a desire to learn and become more involved with this vital ministry to and with our indigenous brothers and sisters?

Are you looking for new opportunities to pray, serve and grow alongside believers right in your own community?

**You are invited to COME & SEE what we're all about!**

- Tribal affiliation, though welcome, is not a requirement •

The "Heart of Saint Kateri" Circle meets:  
2nd Thursday of each month 5:30 p.m.

For more information, call (318) 483-3908 or (318) 471-2044

## Season of Service set to kick off Feb. 14

by Deacon Richard Mitchell  
Director of Stewardship  
and Development

Being a native Louisianian, I experienced the generosity and caring spirit of people in our area from a very young age. Whether a hurricane, tornado or some other natural disaster, we come together in a time of need.

Sure, we have our struggles in the South. The roads are horrible, reports of crime and violence in our area take up the majority of the newscast each night, and we can experience all four seasons within a couple of days, but when it comes to responding to a disaster or community need, there is no place I would rather be.

It is this sense of "service" that led to the idea of having a diocesan program giving people an opportunity to come together in "peace time" (as opposed to emergency response) to lend our helping hands to projects that make our church a better place to worship and our community a better place to live.

During the Lenten season of 2022, we launched the program called Season of Service (SoS). Lent is the perfect time to host this program because we are all looking for ways to strengthen our prayer life, observe periods of fasting, and participate in helping others through almsgiving. What

better way to accomplish this than to serve others? Over the past two years, there have been nearly 100 teams made up of approximately 1,000 volunteers working on projects throughout the diocese.

The premise of the program is to recruit team captains who in turn develop a team of 3 to 10 (or so) people. This team decides on

parish; re-stripping parking lots; beginning and supporting a food pantry at the parish...

Our Season of Service program received national attention and I was asked to present the program at the 2023 International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) conference in Orlando, Florida. At the end of



a project to complete during the Lenten season, develops the plan, registers on the diocesan website, and then gets to work on serving their church and/or community.

In the past, teams have consisted of family members, prayer groups, civic organizations, school classrooms, and others. Completed projects include: teams coming together to pray the rosary once per week; minor maintenance around the church

the presentation, those interested in hosting this program were given a flash drive with the logo, flyers, and other forms to make it easy for them to duplicate and offer in their diocese. It was a great honor to show others the great work YOU do in our small diocese!

Lent is quickly approaching and now is the time to begin planning for the next program. If you want to be a part of the 2024 Season of Service initiative which begins on Ash Wednesday (February 14th), please begin developing a team and thinking of a project you and your team would like to accomplish during those 40 days. When thinking about projects (don't overthink it), remember to reach out to our partner agencies such as St. Mary's Residential Training Center, Maryhill Renewal Center, Manna House, and Catholic Charities to see if they need assistance. Once you have your team in place and projects planned, please register on the diocesan website: [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org).

Upon registering, team members will have an option for a free t-shirt, hat, or tote bag.

With our caring spirit and servant's heart, we will accomplish many great things when we work together this Lenten season. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please email me at: [dcnrmitchell@diocesealex.org](mailto:dcnrmitchell@diocesealex.org).

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# Small community, big Christmas spirit!

by Deacon Jason Lavergne,  
Office of Religious Education  
and Faith Formation

As the Red River traverses through the Diocese of Alexandria, within one of its many twists and turns lies the community of Brouillette, LA. This small community at the edge of Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge is a true gem of faith within our Diocese. Fr. Abraham Palakkattuchira, CMI, pastor of the small parish of St. Genevieve Catholic Church, is in the middle of what some may call hunters paradise. Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuge is comprised of 17,500 acres of which contains its namesake lake, a 350 acre permanently flooded body of water.

This small parish of 71 registered families, located in a remote part of Avoyelles parish, away from the hustle and bustle of the city and its street lights, St. Genevieve Church and the community warmed the night air and lit up the night sky with its most recent event.

On Saturday, Dec. 2, the parish and community came together and held a Christmas hayride. After assisting with the 4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass and dressed for the crisp night air, my wife and I were honored to participate in the evening's events. Tractors pulling trailers adorned with Christmas themed decorations



**ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH, BROUILLETTE.** Two of the many tractor-pulled trailers on St. Genevieve's annual Christmas Hayride that winds its way along the Red River down Hwy. 452 in the community of Brouillette, LA, Residents open their homes at one of three stops on the route.

and lights lit up the dark night sky as members of the parish and community rolled down the winding two-lane road. Even those, for whatever reason could not participate in the hayride, watched from inside their homes or along the roadside waving as the line of tractor-pulled trailers slowly made its way down the

road. Members of the community, literally and spiritually, opened their homes to all those in their community. Stopping at three different homes along the way, each home offered various servings of food. From a variety of chips and dips, to fresh fried cracklins and deer meat, fried fish,

gumbo, and many other items, too many to mention, but that was not the end. The final and fourth stop was back at the church hall where we were able to enjoy homemade cakes, (pineapple was my favorite) homemade candies, hot chocolate, and coffee.

St Genevieve is a true witness to the Christmas spirit in our Diocese and especially

the community of Brouillette. A spirit of oneness in a world where division surrounds us. A spirit of peace and expression of faith in the true gem of the season and in the coming of paradise, Christ.

A special thank you to Fr. Abraham and the community of Brouillette for your hospitality and witness of Christ.

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**CHRISTMAS FAMILY SPONSORS.** (above) Staff members of the Diocese of Alexandria collected donations to sponsor a family of 5 from CLASS (Central Louisiana AIDS Support Services). Donations helped provide toys, clothing and food! Pictured at the delivery of the gifts are Lucy Pearson, Sandi Tarver (Diocesan Staff), Ann Lowrey (Executive Director of CLASS), Fr. Craig Scott, VG and Devon Moore (Director of Client Services). Many thanks to all who donated, shopped and wrapped to make a special Christmas for this family! Below: St Rita delivered presents to CLASS for their adopted families. Pictured are Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, pastor of St. Rita, Ann Lowrey, Ryan Brinkman and Devon Moore.



**ST. JULIANA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA.** A reception was held on Friday, Oct. 27 in the St. Juliana Activity Center to honor the senior ladies of St. Juliana Altar Society. For their "Season of Service", dedication, and continued support they were presented an Honorary Certificate. Pictured, standing left to right: President Pat Wells, Rose Franklin, Ethel Dixon, Theresa Fields, and Carol Stulls; Seated left to right: Marjorie James, Delores Brown and Doris Prevot.



**ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH, HESSMER.** The Altar Servers attended First Saturday Mass and Devotions to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and participated in a training of best practices at serving at the altar of the Lord, then enjoyed a delicious breakfast of bacon, eggs and pancakes for an all you can eat feast prepared by The Knights of Columbus members.



**ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH PARISH AWARDS.** St. Alphonsus parish family Thanksgiving gathering. The parish's tradition is to recognize outstanding parishioners each year at this family gathering. Two awards were presented: St Alphonsus parishioner of the Year and St Alphonsus Holy Family of the Year. Daniel Guillot was presented the Parishioner of the Year and the family of Jimmy and Shirley Landry were presented the Holy Family of the Year. Pictured with Fr. Derek Ducote are Daniel Guillot with his wife and son and Jimmy and Shirley Landry along with their family.



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**HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS**  
*for January 2024*

For the gift of diversity in the Church | Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

**ACTS**

**Upcoming Retreats:**  
January 4 - 7  
**St. Rita Men's ACTS 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.

# Father Henri Marie Francois Jacquemin

## Temporary assignment in Moreauville results in one of the longest pastorates in parish's history

Since the Gospel was first proclaimed to the Tensas Indians in 1682 by Fr. Zenobius Membre, over 825 priests are known to have ministered in north Louisiana. The great majority of these have been foreign born missionaries who at great sacrifice have fed the flame of faith in our midst.

In March 1916, Bishop Van de Ven met a French priest who had been serving as a missionary in Mexico. Civil unrest in that country had led to formation of a Masonic government hostile to the Church and her interests. As a result, a law was passed expelling all foreign priests from the country.

Fr. Henri Jacquemin, a native of Nancy in France had been at work in Mexico since 1902 serving as a seminary professor. He accepted the bishop's invitation to work in the Alexandria diocese until such time as he would be able to return to Mexico. Bishop Van de Ven assigned him as 'temporary pastor' of Sacred Heart Church in Moreauville. Little did either man realize that this temporary arrangement would result in one of the longest pastorates in the parish's history.

Fr. Jacquemin began his clerical studies at the minor seminary in Pont a Mousson in the Diocese of Nancy at the age of 10. He was ordained a priest on August 8, 1897 after securing degrees in theology and canon law from the Sorbonne in Paris where he excelled in languages and music. He served as a professor at the Pont a Mousson seminary for two years and then as pro-secretary to the Bishop of Nancy before volunteering for the missions in Mexico in 1902. He served as a seminary professor in Mexico until his expulsion from the country in 1916.

On his arrival in Moreauville, Fr. Jacquemin found that he had inherited an unfinished brick shell of a church. A fire on Christmas day had destroyed the previous church along with the rectory,

school and convent in 1908. A previous pastor, Fr. Regis Gimbert had erected a new rectory and a school building before his early death in 1912 at the age of 51. He was buried in the unfinished church which Fr. Jacquemin inherited.



For the next 16 years, Fr. Jacquemin labored to complete and beautify the church in Moreauville. Due to a lack of funds, the plans for the church had to be scaled down from the original design submitted by the architect, Theodore Grune. Instead of two towers on the front façade, Fr. Jacquemin designed a new single tower with a small dome. Walking the streets of Moreauville, he

collected any wood he could find and painstakingly crafted three elaborate altars as well as the intricate ceiling of the new sacristy.

Traveling to his native France in 1924 and again in 1930, Fr. Jacquemin purchased ornaments and vestments for the restored church as well as a new set of Stations of the Cross.

On May 22, 1934, the completed church was solemnly dedicated by Bishop Daniel Desmond with Fr. Jacquemin offering the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving. During his time as pastor, Fr. Jacquemin also served missions at Big Bend, Evergreen, Red Fish, Rosewood, Tilden and Wayside.

In 1942, after 29 years in Moreauville, Fr. Jacquemin retired from active ministry and took up residence in a private home. In 1952, due to continued ill health, he entered Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria where he remained until his death on April 12, 1956 at the age of 83. His funeral was conducted from the Maryhill Seminary chapel and his body was laid to rest in the clergy cemetery at Maryhill.



**FATHER HENRI JACQUEMIN.** Fr. Jacquemin served as pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville, for almost 30 years.

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**FR. JOY ANTHONY CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY.** On Saturday, Dec. 2, Bishop Robert Marshall was honored to attend the 25th Anniversary Mass celebrated by Father Joy Anthony. Many priests of our diocese and those of several others concelebrated. Father Rusty Rabalais was the homilist and the parish hosted a wonderful lunch afterwards. Thank you for your ministry among us, Father Joy!



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**INVESTITURE OF MONSIGNORI.** On Tuesday, Nov. 28, during Vespers (evening prayers) at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, we celebrated the investiture of Monsignor Scott Chemino and Monsignor James Ferguson as Chaplains to His Holiness. It was a beautiful celebration followed by a reception in the Alexandria Convention Hall. Congratulations, Monsignors and thank you to all who made the joyous occasion possible.

**Seminarian Burses**  
November 2023 Donations

Knights of Columbus Council #9217 .....	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert O. Miller .....	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Mrs. Gary Keran .....	\$500.00
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Mrs. Gary Keran .....	\$2000.00
Maria S. Keran Burse	
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$2,725.00</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

Chancery Office,  
Post Office Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306-0417.  
--- Very Reverend M. Craig Scott, Chairman

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.

*11 prayer for priests*

**Extraordinary Minister Workshops**

**NEW DATE/LOCATION!**

**January 20, 2024**  
St. Mary's Assumption  
Cottonport

**February 10, 2024**  
Minor Basilica of the  
Immaculate Conception  
Natchitoches

**April 6, 2024**  
St. Francis de Sales, Echo

**July 27, 2024**  
St. Patrick Church, Ferriday

**More information and dates will be available at**  
**www.diocesealex.org.**



**WINN PARISH PASTOR APPRECIATION SUPPER.** On October 30, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Winnfield hosted a Pastor Appreciation Supper honoring the pastors of Winn Parish. Reverend Louis Sklar was the host of the evening. The gathering of pastors enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes. Following supper, the pastors spoke on how the Lord led them to HIS service in Winn Parish. It was a blessed evening of fellowship shared by pastors of all faiths!



**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM.** After celebrating Mass at the Cathedral on this Gaudete Sunday, Bishop Robert Marshall attended the Christmas program presented by the CCD classes of Cathedral parish. The children are talented and excited for the coming of Christmas. Pictured with the children are Msgr. James Ferguson, cathedral rector and Bishop Marshall.



**ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL, BUNKIE.** Friday, Dec. 8, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bunkie with the students, faculty, administration and staff of St. Anthony School. After Mass, Monsignor Scott Chemino and Bishop Marshall visited the school. Mrs. Sadie LaPoint, principal, gave Bishop a tour of the school where all of the teachers and students welcomed Bishop into their classrooms.



**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #1134.** Donnie Bolton received an award at the Christmas party for reaching 200% of the required membership quota as his second year of Grand Knight for Council #1134. They currently have 190 members in Council #1134. Congratulations Donnie! Thank you for everything you do for the KC Council and St. Rita Parish.



**ST. RITA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA.** On Monday, Dec. 4, St. Rita held its annual Saint Nicholas Day Children's Party. Kids were able to visit with St. Nick and take pictures as well as participate in special St. Nicholas activities.

**ST. JULIANA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA.** The Knights of Peter Claver Council and Court #268, celebrated Founder's Day Sunday, Nov. 5, at St. Juliana Church in Alexandria. Council and Court both presented financial contributions to St. Juliana Catholic Church and the Church's Scholarship Fund. State Deputy Knight Corey Jeanlouis presented awards for members who have served for 15, 25, and 35 years in the order. State Deputy Jeanlouis also presented an award to the Council for having achieved the State Council of the Year.



Pictured are State Deputy Corey Jeanlouis presenting president Knight Anthony Gilliard and past president Knight Winston Bell the State Council of the Year Award.



State Deputy presenting award to Lady Delores Landry who is one of the first members of the Court.



Deacon Luke White, Council President Knight Anthony Gillard, State Deputy Knight Corey Jeanlouis, Court President Lady Cathy Brown, and Pastor Luke LeFleur.

To see more photos from across the diocese, please visit the photo galleries at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org)

# NOW HIRING

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### THE DIOCESE OF SHREVEPORT

*This is a NEW position in our Diocese and we are looking for the right candidate to make it a success for the faithful in North Louisiana!*

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- Promote a family friendly culture within the Diocese through programs and events designed to foster family and community life!

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# 2024 Louisiana Life Marches

For more information visit: <https://prolifelouisiana.org/>

## Lafayette

Saturday, Jan. 13, 9:00 a.m.  
Parc San Souci, Downtown

## Monroe

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2:00 p.m.  
Meet at the Purple Lot  
at First West

## Baton Rouge

Saturday, Jan. 20, 10:00 a.m.  
Meet at the State Capitol Lawn

## Shreveport

Saturday, Jan. 20, 10:00 a.m.  
Meet at the grassy area near the  
Louisiana Boardwalk

## Lake Charles

Monday, Jan. 22, 6:00 p.m.  
Meet at Veterans Memorial Park

## Natchitoches

Friday, Feb. 2, 10:00 a.m.  
Meet at the Riverbank Downtown

## Alexandria-Pineville

Saturday, Feb. 3, 10:00 a.m.  
Meet at Louisiana  
Christian University

## National March for Life: Washington, D.C.

Friday, Jan. 19, 1:00 p.m.  
National Mall, Washington, DC  
For more information visit:  
<https://marchforlife.org/>

## Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana Services Offered

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### Christian Life Coaching

For personal life changes

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/mental-health-services#COACHING](https://ccenla.org/mental-health-services#COACHING)

### Peace in the Midst of Crisis Divorce Support

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/mental-health-services#SUPPORTGROUPS](https://ccenla.org/mental-health-services#SUPPORTGROUPS)

### Vaping/Tobacco Cessation

For teens and adults

Group or individual sessions

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/mental-health-services#VAPING-TOBACCO](https://ccenla.org/mental-health-services#VAPING-TOBACCO)

### Disaster Relief

Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program: [www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/resource/cdpp/](https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/resource/cdpp/)

If interested in supporting preparedness in your parish, please email [info@ccenla.org](mailto:info@ccenla.org)

### Emergency Basic Needs Assistance

Utilities, rent, fire, information and referral.

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/basic-needs#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE](https://ccenla.org/basic-needs#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE)

### SNAP Enrollment Assistance

Over the phone enrollment

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/basic-needs#SNAP](https://ccenla.org/basic-needs#SNAP)

### Budget Class

Facilitated by Ramsey Solutions Financial Coach

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

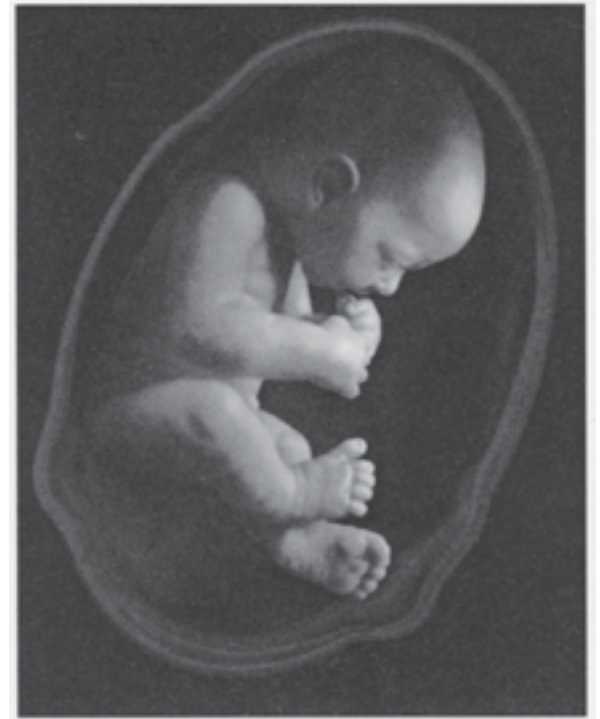
Westside Library, Alexandria

**By appointment only**

To schedule, visit: [ccenla.org/basic-needs#BudgetingClasses](https://ccenla.org/basic-needs#BudgetingClasses)

### Volunteers

If interested in helping out, please email [info@ccenla.org](mailto:info@ccenla.org)



### *The Little One*

I hear a voice, a voice from above.  
I wonder who, and if there will be love.  
As I sleep here in my mother's womb,  
I wonder if it will be my tomb.

My heart aches, and sometimes I cry;  
Just from not knowing if I live or die!  
I plead with my mom to have mercy on me,  
And I pray to God that she may see.

For I have a soul - I am full of life,  
And I don't wish to die via a blade of a  
knife.

I wish to be born and give glory to God.  
And woe the man struck by the rod.  
For when all is said and all is done,  
He must pay - pay for the death  
Of the little one!

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## Save the Date for the Third Annual March for Life



St. Mary's Catholic School, The Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church and the Women's Resource Center will host the third annual Natchitoches March for Life on Friday, Feb. 2, 2024.

Local speakers from various organizations will offer different perspectives on the meaning of being a pro-life advocate. Grae McCullough, a Catholic musician and worship leader from Alexandria, will perform prior to the Rally and March. The day will begin at 10:00 a.m. on the riverbank stage in downtown Natchitoches.

The national March for Life began in Washington, D.C. in January, 1974. Every year, tens of thousands of pro-life supporters, march in support of life. This has become the largest human rights demonstration in the world. The national March for Life "is an inspiring, peaceful, vibrant, and

joy-filled rally of women, men, young people, and children from all across the country." (See [www.marchforlife.org](http://www.marchforlife.org)). Together, they "gather to celebrate life, from the moment of conception, to the moment of natural death, and every moment in between." (See [www.marchforlife.org](http://www.marchforlife.org)).

Local marches began to occur in cities throughout our nation to further expand this celebration of life into our communities.

In Louisiana, rallies occur in major cities during the month of January. This is the third year for Natchitoches to host a Pro-Life Rally and March.

More detailed information will be announced as plans develop. Please contact Jessica Spear (St. Mary's Religion Teacher, [jspear@smstigers.org](mailto:jspear@smstigers.org)) or Lisa Guillet (Director of Development, [fundraiser@smstigers.org](mailto:fundraiser@smstigers.org)) for more information.



**FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE** was Tuesday, Dec. 12. and Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass in Spanish for the Second Sunday of Advent at St. Rita Church in Alexandria. Thank you to Father Raj, Father Josh Burch who concelebrated, Deacon Alex Mangini who assisted, and all of the liturgical ministers and parishioners for their welcome.

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**January 22 is a National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**

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#### WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED:

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

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!

# First things first

## *Blessed is She*

I closed the car door and let the tears well up in my eyes. It was the end of another work day, this one filled with lots of confusing emotions.

We all want to be someone's first choice. The person someone else texts first thing in the morning. The top choice as a candidate for a job position. It stings when you find out you're not. Is it pride? A misguided sense of belonging? Or, is it a natural desire to be wanted, chosen, and loved?

## *We are God's First Choice*

It could be all of the above, but what I believe it ultimately points to is the reality that is at play every day. We, each and every one one of us, without exception, are always God's first choice. He would have suffered on the Cross if there was only one soul for whom to conquer death. He loves us tremendously, deeply, passionately, with fervor and a love set on fire. No one, not one human, can even come close to giving love as profound as our Lord. He loves all of us, with a deep, intimate, and personal love. He is Love, and He encompasses it in its entirety.

Christ, our Bridegroom—as we are members of His Bride the Church—sees and knows each of us in His image. He is so personal with us and seeks us out, speaking the language of each of our individual souls. He crafts each intimate detail of who we are with the absolute best for



laying it all down at His feet and pouring your heart out to Him, the One who created you and knows your deepest desires? Are you confident that, no matter what happens, He never ceases to be in control and wills the ultimate best?

*In the midst of the everyday, how can we honor the One Who awaits us? Our earthly pilgrimage to eternity presents us with countless ways to consciously choose Him.*

1. Pick a morning and nightly prayer and keep it close to your heart. Before you get out of bed, offer a Memorare or Morning Offering through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. At the end of the day, say a prayer for your daily omissions and for the souls in purgatory.

us in mind. He wants your joy and peace more than you want it for yourself. And God as the Heavenly Father cares for His daughters. He searches out the abyss in the human heart; He understands its innermost secrets. The Most High knows all that may be known. No thought escapes Him, and nothing is hidden from Him (see Sirach 42:18, 20).

In the simplest terms, He gets us. God knows the most and knows the best.

My point is this—when you are longing to be first in someone's heart, or in first place, remember, my dear sisters in Christ, Whose heart you ultimately belong to,

and where you ought to place the aches of life. Jesus Christ will always choose us, without fail. He will always relentlessly pursue us, until we can be one with the Beloved. He so desires for every soul to rejoice in the Beatific Vision.

## *Making Him Our First Choice*

So, I ask you this—what is your vision set on? How are you making our Lord and Savior your first choice in the big and little things? Do you default to human consolation, without first resting in His sweet embrace? Do you allow our Lord to console you by

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*If today  
you hear  
his voice,  
harden not  
your hearts.*

Psalm 95: 8  
Responsorial Psalm  
for January 28  
Fourth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

Eventually, you can add in a daily examination of conscience, try a litany, or weave in a novena. As we start and end our day, He is the One ultimately behind every breath and heartbeat. Let us not forget He sustains us and is always with us.

2. Start to pray the Rosary. When we honor Mary, we honor her Son. First, try one decade in the morning or at night. Then, two. Later, as you progress, you can add in the mysteries of each day. Perhaps you can pick a day of the week, like Saturday, to recite five decades and progress from there. It is not the perfect recitation of a prayer but the power of Whom we pray to that moves mountains and makes miracles happen. It is best to pray it well and pray it in full, but the Lord and Blessed Mother are pleased even when we just pray part of a daily Rosary.

3. Dive into a daily devotional. Find a book with two to three pages of meditation per day on Scripture, virtue, or other facets of the devout life (see Divine Intimacy or Imitation of Christ). You can also go straight to the Bible, a missal, or sign

up for daily emails to read the daily Mass readings, doing lectio divina every day or even just once a week. Start with what you know you can offer our Lord and set a structure. This might look like five or ten minutes at the start. Remember that our good Lord sees the intentions of our hearts and values quality over quantity. Even when you don't feel like it, stick to it. Remember that the Lord meets us where we are at—in the stillness of silence or in the busyness of life. Don't neglect to come to Him just because the circumstances are not the best they could be.

Above all, remember to do small things with great love. Pray before a meal to give God gratitude. Make the Sign of the Cross when passing a Catholic Church to honor His Real Presence. Smile at a stranger, for anything we do for our neighbor, we do for Him. Make authentic love your motive in each moment.

The beauty of any of these suggestions is that when we put them into practice, we can continue to grow into abundance. There is no such thing as enough

when it comes to giving ourselves to the Lord. It is an ever-increasing process to strive for perfect unity with Christ, a lifelong endeavor worth the effort. Putting Him first is not one moment in time. It is not reserved only for the wee hours of the morning. It is a constant choosing of how we spend our time throughout the day, with every thought, action, and word.

**How We Use Our First Fruits**

In a consumer-centric world, the clamor of noise can cloud our minds. The instant convenience of online delivery and satisfaction of instant "likes" on social media opposes the nature of forever, which is the eternity we were ultimately created for. We are in constant tension with the society we live in and the Heaven that calls us home. We might be tempted to think that the exterior world needs to change to fit our desires better, but in reality, change begins internally when we totally entrust our lives to the Lord. The beauty of frequenting the Sacraments while striving to cultivate a deep relationship with Christ is the way in which He provides the grace for those who take the first step in giving Him their first fruits. The Heavenly Bread we are fed at Mass and the mercy that washes over us in Confession will heal our souls and make us more like Him. It does not get more intimate than consuming the Eucharist and outright admitting our failures. Through this, the Lord's grace

is sufficient for us to set out and accomplish anything.

We ought to give the Lord our first fruits, the best we can offer each and every day. Sometimes, that means throwing ourselves into His arms with all of our sorrows. The next time something disappointing happens, the next time something hurts you, the next time something dampens your spirit, turn to the Lord. He is eagerly awaiting us and has all the answers.

Before you try to scroll through some posts or text a friend, say a prayer to our Lord, won't you? Ask Him to reveal what this desire for affirmation really means and what it is rooted in. Spend some time in silence, whether it be in front of the Blessed Sacrament or on your commute home from work. Honor His importance in your life by seeking out the Almighty One first. Ladies, let us grow in friendship with our Lord and have recourse to Him. Run to the Father, and never stop until you reach the gates of Heaven.

---

*Paulina is a Jesus loving gal living out in the Midwest. An avid reader, she still has more books on her shelves than she has finished. Good puns, good cups of coffee, and Italian food are some of her favorite things. On a pursuit to go where one feels most alive, she desires to share her passion for the beautiful Catholic faith with others through writing and photography.*

**louisiana life marches**

*open to all*

In 2024, Louisiana will march because **We Are "Here for Her!"** In June 2022, after 49 years, Roe v. Wade was overturned and babies are protected by law! But we MUST continue to march so that every mother and baby know that they are loved and supported. Women can find help at FindHelpLa.com. Please join us and spread the word as we march!

**Life March Northwest: Shreveport**

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

Meet at the grassy area near the Louisiana Boardwalk!

**Life March South: Baton Rouge**

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

Meet at the Capitol Lawn

**Life March Northeast: Monroe**

Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024  
2:00 p.m.

Meet at the Purple Lot at First West

**Life March Southwest: Lake Charles**

Monday, Jan. 22, 2024  
6:00 p.m.

Meet at Veterans Memorial Park

**Life March Cenla: Pineville-Alexandria**

Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024  
10:00 a.m.

Meet at Louisiana Christian University

**Festival De La Vie: Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024**

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Meet at Parc San Souci in Downtown Lafayette

To learn more, please visit: <https://prolifelouisiana.org/la/lifemarch>

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**MENARD CLINCHES 2023 DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP.** Congratulations to the Holy Savior Menard Eagles for their District Championship under Head Coach David Perkins (class of 1980).



**SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE.** Congratulations to our Students of the Year: 5th grader Pierce [redacted] and 8th grader Leah [redacted]. The students will now compete at the diocesan level. Pictured are: Pierce [redacted], Sr. Sandra Norsworthy, principal, and Leah [redacted].



**THOMAS E. ROQUE, SR. SCHOLARSHIP ESTABLISHED.** During a small gathering of friends and family to celebrate his career in education, it was announced that the family of Thomas Roque has established the Thomas E. Roque, Sr. Scholarship in honor of his recent retirement as Superintendent of Catholic Schools. This scholarship will be awarded to a student at one of schools in the Diocese of Alexandria.



**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHE.** St. Mary's Catholic School is pleased to recognize the following students for Students of the Year for the 2023-24 school year: Hudson [redacted] (elementary-5th grade), Chloe [redacted] (junior high-8th grade) and Ava [redacted] (high school-12th grade). The Student of the Year Awards Program recognizes outstanding students who have demonstrated excellence in leadership, citizenship and academic achievement.

### 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."

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# I believe...

By Mari Pablo  
maripablo.com



“Stand for nothing, fall for anything.” One day I decided to write down the things that I stand for. Here is a look into my thoughts. What do you stand for?

I believe in the Catholic Church and all its teachings. I believe that in one moment God can reveal himself to you in the smallest of ways and that you will forever be transformed. I believe that we all desire Love and that it's only by knowing He that is Love that we will be able to love more. I believe that this world will bring you trial and suffering but that if you keep your eyes fixed on the Lord He will guide your path. I believe that by knowing the Lord you discover yourself, and who you were made to be. I believe that people will try to tear you down or build you up and you have to be wise who you trust, but in the end the only person that won't let you down is He who isn't able to fail (God). I believe that our hearts desire true beauty and that this world is making it harder because people are hiding behind their screens instead of making a

true connection with others and themselves. I believe that in the silence is when we are able to hear the longings of our hearts and that people are afraid to face their pain so they often hide behind smiles and materialistic things. I believe that the Holy Spirit was given to be our guide and that in every breath He is present because he abides in us. I believe that I am blessed with the gift of my faith and incredible people that help me grow and who call me on to be a better person just by being themselves. I believe that nothing

can take the place of your family, even if there is drama, you love them no matter what. I believe that music speaks to the soul and that some lyrics make my heart sing and bring hope and peace to my heart. I believe in helping others, and allowing yourself to be a vessel for the Lord. I believe in enjoying Life! I believe in the joy that comes from food, beaches, waterfalls, and even the smallest flowers. I believe in enjoying

every second of your day and that even if you are having a bad day tomorrow is a new day. I believe that Life is Good because God is Good and that for me, my life is God.

---

Mari grew up in a devout, always supportive, boisterous Hispanic family in South Florida. She graduated from Franciscan University with a double

major in theology and psychology; she also holds a Master of Theology from the Augustine Institute. She has worked in youth ministry for over 15 years, including being a youth minister in New Orleans, and a high school theology teacher in Miami. She is currently serving parishes and universities across the country with The Evangelical Catholic.

Mari is a presenter for Ascension Press in numerous projects including the YOU-Theology of the Body program for teens, The 99- An evangelization mission series, Connected - Catholic Social Teaching for this generation, Bible Timeline, Chosen - Confirmation and Ascension presents. Mari is well known for her dynamic presentations presentations at the annual Steubenville Youth Conferences, NCYC, NET, Life Teen events, FOCUS Conference, diocesan events, and more. Mari has a deep love for food but an even greater love for Christ and is dedicated to helping others encounter Him.

Mari is scheduled to speak at the 2024 Steubenville South Conference, June 21 - 23.

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Dinner: Mon.-Thurs. 4 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. • Fri.-Sat. 4 p.m. - 10 p.m.

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

**save the dates:**  
steubenville south conference:  
June 21-23, 2024  
Registration opens January 16  
more information available  
at the newly updated  
steubenvillesouth.com

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**Northwestern State University**  
Catholic Student Organization  
FOCUS Ministries:  
https://nscatholic.org/focus  
evan.morley@focus.org

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

## Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conference - Jan. 12-13

Join us at the Pontchartrain Center in Kenner, LA. for "Encounter Jesus, Go with Joy!" The conference begins with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gregory Aymond at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 12. With 24 breakout sessions to select from on Friday and 17 on Saturday, you are sure to find some topic of interest that fits you and your ministry. Conference Keynote speakers will be Mike Patin, ValLimar Jansen and Dr. Joe Paprocki

Conference pricing options:

Friday only \$105.00; with lunch \$120.00  
Saturday only \$105.00; with lunch \$120.00  
Fri & Sat \$150.00; with lunch \$180.00  
<https://go4th.faith/>

## Discalced Carmelite meeting - Jan. 13

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. \*\*If you plan to attend.....Please call Mary Jo McCoy at the numbers listed above OR Deacon Bill Travis at 318 640-2827 or 318 664-7069 and someone will meet you at the Maryhill gate.

## St. Rita Church Eucharistic Revival Pilgrimage - Jan. 13

Save the date! St. Rita Church Eucharistic Revival Pilgrimage to Natchez, Saturday, January 13, 8:00 a.m. Details to be announced later.

## March for Life across the state - begins Jan. 13

**Lafayette:** Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Festival De La Vie, meet at Parc San Souci, Downtown Lafayette.

**Shreveport:** Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the grassy area near the Louisiana Boardwalk.

**Baton Rouge:** Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the Capitol Lawn.

**Monroe:** Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024, 2:00 p.m. Meet at the Purple Lot at First West.

**Lake Charles:** Monday, Jan. 22, 2024, 6:00 p.m. Meet at the Veterans Memorial Park.

**Natchitoches:** Friday, Feb. 2, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the Riverbank in Downtown Natchitoches.

**Alexandria-Pineville:** Saturday, Feb. 3, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Meet at Louisiana Christian University.

# DIOCESAN BRIEFS

## EMHC Workshops - Jan. 20

The next workshops for Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will be held on the dates, times and locations below. The average time for the workshop is about three hours so please plan accordingly. The same information will be presented at each session. If you would like to sign up, please visit [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org) or contact Dcn Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext 207 or by email at [dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org](mailto:dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org).

Dates, times and locations are:

- NEW! Jan. 20, 8:00 a.m. – St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport
- Feb. 10, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches
- Apr. 6, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo
- July 27, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – St. Patrick Church, Ferriday

## Lector Formation Workshops - Jan. 23

The Diocese of Alexandria will be offering Lector workshops for those individuals who are interested in serving or who currently may serve as a Lector in their parish. To serve in this role, one must be of good standing with their Catholic faith and need the approval of their pastor. If you have any questions, please email or call Deacon Jason Lavergne at [dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org](mailto:dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org) or 318-445-6424, ext. 207. All training workshops will present the same material and will last no longer than two and a half hours. Please sign up for the session that best fits your schedule at the Diocese website at [www.diocesealex.org](http://www.diocesealex.org).

The next times and locations are: NEW! Jan. 23, 2024, 6:00 p.m. – St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria.

## Taste from the Country - Feb. 3

Join us from 5:00-7:00 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 3 for Taste from the Country at St. Genevieve Church, Brouillette. Tickets are \$15 per person.

## "Mary's Tea" tea party - Feb. 10

You're invited to an afternoon tea party for "Mary's Tea" at the Divine Providence Center at Our Lady of

Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria. Wear your finest tea party attire - #Sunday best! Bring a friend and join the ladies of the Alexandria Diocese for a wonderful afternoon of fun, fellowship and food. Our speakers will be Fr. Thomas Kennedy, Lacy Guimaraes and Lynn Raia. Tickets are \$15 each. Ladies, teens, children are all welcome! Full meal, tea, coffee, desserts. For more information contact Lynn Raia at (318) 625-8242.

## Fullness of Truth Conference - Feb. 23-25

This Lent, on February 23-25, 2024 at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria, LA, during our great national Catholic Eucharistic Revival, Fullness of Truth-LA and the Diocese of Alexandria invite you to their exciting Catholic Family Event entitled, "Real Presence, Real Power!: Eucharistic Life and the 'Science of Sainthood'". Featured speakers include "Science of Sainthood" founder MATTHEW LEONARD; Louisiana-native DR. BRANT PITRE; Augustine Institute theologian DR. MICHAEL BARBER; "Spirit World" radio co-host DEBBIE GEORGIANNI; and Louisiana "Mom" blogger ERIN FRANCO. A Youth Track will be offered, as well as Concert/Sacred Music by JOSH BLAKESLEY. Our Lord said that this topic is the "one thing" necessary for one simple reason – it's how YOU get to heaven! Don't Miss It! To register, for room reservations, and schedule, visit [www.fullnessoftruth.org](http://www.fullnessoftruth.org) or call: 877.218-7884.

## Adoration Chapel - Open 24/7

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville possesses a hidden treasure of great worth, something that few other churches possess. We have an Adoration Chapel that is open to you 24 hours every day, 7 days every week. Jesus resides there, body and blood, soul, and divinity, and he is longingly waiting for you to visit. Call 318-445-2497 or visit the church office for the code, and don't keep Our Lord waiting.

## High School Youth Bible Study - every Thursday

St. Rita Church Youth Group holds a High School Youth Bible Study every Thursday evening at 6:00 p.m. in the Moreau Room of the Holy Family Center. All high school students are invited to join us.

## Job Opening: Line Cook, Manna House

Have a passion for cooking, making a difference in the lives of others and teamwork? We are hiring! Line Cook position, 3 days per week. Contact us for more details at 318-445-9053.

## Church Today News Deadlines

January 22  
Deadline for news:  
Thursday, Jan. 11



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# January 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p><b>JANUARY 1</b></p> <p>SOLEMNITY of MARY the HOLY MOTHER of GOD PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN R. CHRISTOPHER</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. CORKERY</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM</p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. W. DECOSTE</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. DEJESUS</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>SOLEMNITY of the EPIPHANY of the LORD PRAY FOR DCN. LG DELOACH</p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. J. DESIMONE</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. A. DHARMARAJ</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. D. DUBROC</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. DUCOTE</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Discaled Carmelite Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center, Pineville. Life March, 9:00 a.m. Lafayette PRAY FOR DCN. R. DUCOTE</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>Special Collection: The Church Today Please help us keep the Church Today free of charge! PRAY FOR DCN. W. ENDRIS</p>
<p><b>15</b></p> <p>MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY PRAY FOR FR. P. FAULK</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. L. FELDKAMP</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria PRAY FOR MSGR. J. FERGUSON</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Alphonsus Church, Hessmer PRAY FOR FR. W. GEARHEARD</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. L. GLANKLER</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>EMHC Workshop 8:00-11:00 a.m. St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport Life March, 10:00 a.m. Shreveport Life March 10:00 a.m. Baton Rouge PRAY FOR FR. J. GOOTEE</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Life March, 2:00 p.m. Monroe PRAY FOR DCN. S. GRAMIGNA</p>
<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children Life March, 6:00 p.m. Lake Charles PRAY FOR FR. R. GREMILLION</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Lector Formation Workshop 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. M. GUIDRY</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. D. HART</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. J. HASIEBER</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. HUMPHRIES</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. H. IMAMSHAH</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. JOHNSON</p>
<p><b>29</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. S. JONES</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. KENNEDY</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. P. KULIGOWSKI</p>	<p><b>FEBRUARY 1</b></p> <p>High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>Natchitoches March for Life 10:00 a.m. Riverbank Downtown Natchitoches PRAY FOR FR. P. KUNNUMPURAM</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>Cenla March for Life 10:00 a.m. Louisiana Christian University, Pineville Taste from the Country 5:00-7:00 p.m. St. Genevieve Church, Brouillette PRAY FOR FR. L. LAFLEUR</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD</p>

Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conf. - Kenner, LA



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