

CHURCH TODAY

Volume LV, No. 1

www.diocesealex.org

Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

January 22, 2024

It's King Cake Season!

Father Chad Partain blessing the King Cakes on the Feast of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 7, at St. Frances Cabrini Church in Alexandria.



INSIDE

Catholic Schools Week January 28 - February 3

The Diocese of Alexandria Catholic Schools will be observing this year's Catholic Schools Week with special events for students, parents, faculties and staff. Check your school's schedule or page 16 in this issue for information that was available at press time.

Season of Service set for February 14 - March 28

The Season of Service (S.O.S.) program is a coordinated effort to promote service and build community throughout the Diocese of Alexandria during the Lenten Season. Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, sacrifice, and almsgiving. See pg. 2 for more.

Diocese Seminarian recounts challenges in Costa Rica

Blaine Phillips and Gabe Dowden, two seminarians of the Diocese of Alexandria, recently completed a mission trip to Costa Rica as part of their formation at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans. Read Blaine's recount of the trip on page 8.

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CHURCH TODAY



Volume LV, No. 1
 January 22, 2024

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The CHURCH TODAY (USPS 393-240) is published by the Catholic Diocese of Alexandria, once a month, free of charge to members of the parishes in the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana. Out of diocese subscriptions are \$20 a year.

The office is located at 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria, LA 71303. Periodicals postage paid at Alexandria, LA.

Postmaster:
 Send address changes to The CHURCH TODAY, P. O. Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306
 Website: www.diocesealex.org
 To receive a free subscription, call 318-445-6424, ext 255 or e-mail starver@diocesealex.org

2024 Season of Service set for Feb. 14-Mar. 28

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. – Matthew 7:12

In 1 Peter 4:10, we read “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” The S.O.S. gives us an opportunity to use our gifts to help our Church and those in need in our Community.

The program is designed to recruit S.O.S. Team Captains who in turn recruit members to be on their team. The group will name their team and then discern and decide on a project to complete during the Lenten Season (February 14 through March 28, 2024). Projects can be something as simple as coming together to pray a rosary for a specific intention, weeding the flowerbed at the Church Parish,



or tackle a small repair project at a homebound parishioner’s residence.

Role of the Team Leader:

Team leaders determine projects and set dates for them to take place. Team leaders are expected to follow through with their organizing, performing and completing their projects.

Examples of projects:

Projects can be prioritized

and/or ongoing:

- cut grass or regular yard maintenance at the church or for parishioners who are not able
- repairing and maintaining the sign in front of the church
- painting
- parking lot maintenance
- preparing or purchasing food to distribute to the needy in the parish
- other community service
- simply praying for those who

need them

Any photos taken of teams performing their projects will be published in the Church Today diocesan newspaper and on the diocesan website and social media.

Build a team and sign them up!

Visit www.diocesealex.org to register your team. You will need the following information:

- 1) Team Name
- 2) Team Captain’s name and contact information
- 3) Description of your project
- 4) Team members’ name, email address (if applicable)

New this year!

When signing up your team, adults can choose an SOS t-shirt OR an SOS tote bag OR an SOS cap! Only one choice per team member. Please specify t-shirt sizes.

Msgr. Steve Testa passes away

Monsignor Steve John Testa, a priest of the Diocese of Alexandria, passed from this life on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023 at CHRISTUS Cabrini Hospital in Alexandria at the age of 84. Born in Alexandria on February 14, 1939 to Sam and Jennie Testa, Msgr. Testa grew up in Prompt Succor Parish attending Providence Academy and Menard Memorial High School. Msgr. Testa entered Maryhill Seminary in 1955 and graduated in 1958. He finished his philosophical training, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Pontifical College Josephinum in 1960. He finished his theological studies at the Josephinum and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Alexandria on May 30th, 1964.

During his 59 years of ministry in Central Louisiana, Msgr. Testa served first as a parochial vicar in four assignments in Alexandria and Shreveport before serving the Diocese as Vice-Chancellor and Chancellor; Director of the Society of the Propagation of the Faith; Vicar Forane; Vicar for Retired Priests; Defender of the Bond and Ecclesiastical Notary. He served as a member of the Priests’ Personnel Board, the Presbyteral Council and



Msgr. Steve Testa

College of Consultors as well as the Diocesan Finance Council. He also served as a delegate to the Louisiana Interchurch Conference. He was named a Prelate of His Holiness by Pope John Paul II on November 29, 1978.

Monsignor Testa was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church in Alexandria in 1984 where he served until his appointment as pastor of St. Anthony’s Church in Bunkie in 1993.

Msgr. Testa served as pastor of St. Joseph’s Church in Marksville from 2002 until his appointment as pastor of St. Peter’s Church in Bordelonville in 2005. Msgr. Testa retired

from active ministry in 2014 but generously made himself available to serve his brother priests across the diocese. Msgr. Testa continued to actively serve on the Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors until his death. His steadfast faith, his wisdom, his calm clarity of thought and discernment and his collection of anecdotes will be greatly missed.

Msgr. Testa is preceded in death by his parents, Sam Testa and Jennie Bohrer Testa, his sister, Sophia Testa Chestovich; and brother, Samuel Testa.

Msgr. Testa is survived by his nephews and their families: Steven, Sammy (Donna), Mike (Angela), Mark (Adele); five great and eleven great-

great nieces and nephews. Nicholas Chestovich, Dominick Chestovich, Cody Chestovich, Kes Chestovich Gage LoCicero, and Levi LoCicero, will serve as pall bearers together with priests of the diocese.

A Mass of Christian Burial, celebrated by Bishop Robert W. Marshall, Jr. with the priests of the diocese as concelebrants, was held at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria on Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023.

Msgr. Testa is interred at the Priests’ Cemetery at Maryhill.

In lieu of flowers donations made be made to the Priests’ Retirement Fund: St. Joseph’s Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria, LA 71303.

Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted.

Psalm 147:1 | Responsorial Psalm for February 4
 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Catholic groups applaud enhanced Child Tax Credit in framework tax deal

by *Kate Scanlon*
OSV writer

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — The chief congressional tax writers announced Jan. 16 a framework for a bipartisan, bicameral deal that would enhance the Child Tax Credit, a provision some Catholic organizations have long sought as a pro-family and anti-poverty effort.

The framework for an agreement between House Ways and Means Chair Jason Smith, R-Mo., and Senate Finance Chair Ron Wyden, D-Ore., also includes provisions to increase the low-income housing tax credit, another effort sought by Catholic groups.

In a statement, Smith said, “American families will benefit from this bipartisan agreement that provides greater tax relief, strengthens Main Street businesses, boosts our competitiveness with China, and creates jobs.”

Wyden said in a statement that 15 million children “from low-income families will be better off as a result of this plan, and given today’s miserable political climate, it’s a big deal to have this opportunity to pass pro-family policy that helps so many kids get ahead.”

It was not immediately clear what the legislative vehicle for the tax deal may be, or if it could earn enough support from both chambers to reach the president’s



ENHANCED CHILD TAX CREDIT TO HELP ALLEVIATE POVERTY. A woman compares infant formula in a grocery store. The Child Tax Credit will help low-income families rise out of poverty.

desk.

Smith said that “I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this legislation,” while Wyden said, “My goal remains to get this passed in time for families and businesses to benefit in this upcoming tax filing season, and I’m going to pull out all the stops to get that done.”

Catholic advocates of the Child Tax Credit applauded the inclusion of an enhanced credit in the deal.

Brian Corbin, executive vice president for member services at Catholic Charities USA, told OSV News that the Child Tax Credit is “part of the toolkit to break poverty in America.”

The credit, Corbin said, “is not the only answer to getting

children out of poverty, for sure, or getting families out of poverty” but it is “one incredibly important tool.”

“Anything that we can do to help working families get a break out of poverty and stay out of poverty, we’re all very much in favor of,” he said.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau published last year showed that while it was in place, the Child Tax Credit measurably reduced child poverty in the U.S., and the credit’s expiration increased it.

Julie Bodnar, a policy adviser for the USCCB’s Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development, told OSV News that “we’ve been encouraging lawmakers to pass a strengthened Child Tax Credit that really

prioritizes the poorest children.” Bodnar noted the group sent a letter to congressional lawmakers earlier in January urging them to include a strengthened Child Tax Credit in any upcoming tax package.

The bishops argued in that letter that an improved credit should seek to include the poorest of the poor, mixed-status families, and be retroactively available for the year before birth.

“In upholding the dignity of all, the Catholic Church is committed to building an authentically life-affirming society that prioritizes the well-being of families, and we call on Congress to adopt that same approach,” the letter said. “Strengthening the Child Tax Credit is one clear way to respond

to this call.”

Asked if the deal appeared to reflect what the group sought, Bodnar said, “There’s still more work to be done,” but, if signed into law, the framework would make “a really meaningful improvement to the credit and, most importantly, it looks like these improvements are targeted to help low-income families to reach the children that need it the most so that’s that’s what I’m glad to see.”

The lawmakers also said the framework includes a provision to enhance the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, a public-private partnership they said would increase the supply of affordable housing.

“At a time when so many people in Oregon and all across America are getting clobbered by rising rents and home prices, the improvements this plan makes to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit will build more than 200,000 new affordable housing units,” Wyden said.

Bodnar and Corbin both praised that provision in the framework as well, with Corbin calling it “one really powerful tool that we have to actually build affordable housing in the United States.”

Kate Scanlon is a national reporter for OSV News covering Washington.

National March for Life “largest annual human rights demonstration

by *Katie Yoder*
OSV writer

WASHINGTON (OSV News) — This year, the national March for Life in Washington promises to empower women facing unexpected pregnancies with the message that they are not alone — and that the pro-life movement is ready and waiting to help them choose life for their

baby.

“When a woman is facing an unexpected pregnancy, what she most needs to hear is, ‘You can do this. You’ve got this. And I’m going to help you,’” March for Life’s president, Jeanne Mancini, said.

The March for Life, which calls itself the “largest annual human rights demonstration in the world,” began in response

to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which once legalized abortion nationwide. This year’s event is the 51st March for Life and marks the second march since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe* in 2022.

The Jan. 19, 2024 event, which challenges abortion and champions the beauty of life from the moment of conception,

centers on the theme “Pro-Life: With Every Woman, For Every Child.” It highlights, among other things, the pregnancy centers and maternity homes that support women and families in need during and after pregnancy.

The 2024 march comes during an election year when abortion promises to be a major issue in politics and the courts. For its part, the March for Life is

focusing on the culture.

Within five years, the March for Life hopes to organize a march in every state, Dawn Fitzpatrick, executive director of March for Life, told the *Our Sunday Visitor* newspaper last year, now that the Supreme Court’s June 24, 2022, ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* has returned abortion policy to state legislatures.

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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.



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2023: A Diocesan Year In Review

*by Deacon Richard Mitchell,
Director of Stewardship and
Development*

One of my favorite things about the end of a year is looking back and celebrating the good things that happened over the last twelve months. I have done this on a personal level for as long as I can remember and find it helpful to reminisce before getting back to work in the new year. After compiling the below information on a diocesan level, I am excited to report that we have much to celebrate.

As a Catholic in the Diocese of Alexandria, you can be proud of the ministry and work accomplished in 2023 in spreading the Good News of Jesus throughout our 13 civil parishes, 71 church parishes and missions, and 8 Catholic schools. Here are a few highlights from 2023:

Sacraments:

Infant Baptisms – approx. 390
First Communion – 400+ children
Confirmations – 330+
Marriages – 100
Ordinations - 1 transitional deacon and 1 priest

Priest and Deacon Formation:

Seminarians – 7 men are studying at Notre Dame Seminary

Permanent Deacon Aspirants – 12 being formed through Notre Dame Seminary

Schools and Faith Formation:

Catholic Schools - The 8 Catholic Schools in the Diocese received accreditation through Cognia.

Maryhill Retreats - 67 retreats, 27 of which were ACTS Retreats

Hispanic Sisters - We welcomed 3 Teresian sisters into the diocese to minister to our Hispanic communities.

Extraordinary Minister/Lector Workshops - 601 people were trained to serve in these special ministries.

Special Ministries:

Catholic Charities – 650 clients served in all ministries (basic needs, mental health, budget classes, SNAP enrollment, Christmas Cheer outreach...).

Manna House Meals - 96,000

Genesis of Eve Women’s Conference – 600+ women

Steubenville South High School Conference –1700 young people
Season of Service - 25 teams with 250 participants

Annulments – 50 couples were assisted with this healing ministry.

Spiritual Directors - 4 became certified in 2023 for a total of 8 ministering in the diocese

Annual Appeal and Grant Funding:

Annual Diocesan Appeal raised \$927,449!

Thirty-five of our 71 parishes exceeded their parish goal.

These successes are due to YOUR support and involvement in your Church and faith formation. Please pray for the clergy, staff, and volunteers involved in these programs and ministries who give of their time, talent, and treasure. They often go unnoticed and are the unsung heroes of ministry. Please also pray for the continued success of all the ministries throughout the diocese and consider getting involved in the programs we offer throughout the year.

Thank you for your support in 2023...Now let’s get to work in 2024!



SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY. Sister Betty Laurita Oliver, SSF, (seated in the center) is originally from Avoyelles Parish. She will be 89 years old on April 4 this year. She currently resides in New Orleans at the Sisters of the Holy Family convent.

A portrait of Henriette DeLille, founder of the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, hangs on the wall behind Sr. Larurita and her friends and family in this photo.

In 1988, Henriette DeLille’s congregation opened the cause for her beatification with the Holy See (a first for an African American) and DeLille was given the title of Servant of God by the pope. Her cause was endorsed “unanimously” in 1997 by the United States Catholic bishops. Pope Benedict XVI approved her heroic virtue and named her venerable on March 27, 2010. The Congregation for the Causes of Saints gave its formal assent on June 22, 2010, for the commencement of the cause of beatification with the declaration of “nihil obstat” (nothing against). In order for the beatification process to proceed, a miracle is needed. A claimed miracle was being investigated in 2005, and by 2017 other miracles attributed to her were under medical scrutiny. In 2021, it was reported that the most recent alleged miracle could not be confirmed, but another was under investigation.

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*It turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble,
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Psalm 32:1 | Responsorial Psalm for February 11 | Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Highlighting Black History Month: The story of St. James School



Students pose on the steps of St. James Memorial Church in 1946. First row: the faculty, consisting of the sisters who taught at the school and the pastor of the church. The students are lined up by age, youngest on the bottom row to oldest at the top.

The history of St. James parish began in 1894 when Sr. Mary Xavier, a Sister of Divine Providence, opened a school for black children in a one-room building on Watkins Avenue in Alexandria. The school was dedicated by Fr. Leonard Menard in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Sr. Mary Xavier walked eight blocks twice a day to teach the children committed to her care.

A new school was built on property purchased by Fr. Menard between Fisk and Beauregard Streets in 1902. The new school opened with 80 students. In May of 1911, the pastor at that time received permission from Bishop Cornelius Van de Ven to establish a separate black church in Alexandria.

In 1916, a new St. James' school was built on Winn and 7th Streets. The new school included a high school curriculum and more sisters came to augment the faculty. A small convent was built on the grounds and a larger convent was built two years later. The first high school graduation was celebrated in 1919. A larger convent was added to the school grounds in 1938. It was later demolished in 1971. The school remained in operation until it was forced to close in 1967

Connecting Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday

Feb. 14, 2024 is Ash Wednesday. It also just so happens to be Valentine's Day.

There's a unique contrast between these two holidays. Valentine's Day relates to excess: cheesy love songs, over-the-top romance, and elaborate gifts. On the other hand, Ash Wednesday focuses on moderation. It's officially the start of Lent, when most people give up a vice for 40 days.

There is one point of connection between these two days – love. Valentine's Day revolves around romantic love. And Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of Christ's sacrificial love for us. That may not be the most theological explanation, but we can leave that stuff to the pastor.

So what is the church to

do when one of our traditional Christian holidays falls on the same day as a flower-filled, Hallmark-driven, love-fest?

Well, this is actually a great opportunity to connect the two events.

- Instead of giving something up for Lent, give couples ideas of things they can start doing to improve their relationship.

- Post quotes about love on social media to let people know you care; then post a few verses of scripture referring back to Ash Wednesday.

- Reach out to lonely neighbors and friends – those who may not feel loved – and let them know that you care.

Ash Wednesday is an event some within the church know. For others it's a tradition that's at least vaguely familiar. However,

it's not something those outside the church know at all.

The fact that these holidays fall on the same day gives us the opportunity to explain a church tradition. We have the chance to spread God's love on a wider scale.

Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent are about intentional sacrifice, giving something up so you can learn to better appreciate it. Encourage married couples to give up the extravagance of Valentine's Day. Instead of romantic dinners, maybe they partake in a service project. Instead of flowers and gifts, maybe they donate to a charity they love.

Ash Wednesday last fell on February 14 in 2018. It will happen again in 2029, but then not again for the rest of this century.

Lenten Regulations

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. This means that we do not eat meat and we have only one full meal.

The other Fridays of the season of Lent are days of abstinence from meat. The obligation to abstain from meat binds Catholics 14 years of age and older. The obligation to fast, limiting oneself to one full meal and two lighter meals in the course of the day, binds Catholics from the age of 18 to 59. Those who are younger or older may freely embrace these disciplines. But Lenten disciplines should never endanger your health.

It is obvious that abstaining from meat is meaningless for vegetarians, who must choose some other form of abstinence. It is equally obvious that replacing meat with a gourmet seafood meal is not in keeping with the spirit of Lent.

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Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center,
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Thursday, Feb. 29, 6:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart School,
MOREAUVILLE

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.

Documents prepared for Rome to verify cause for Charlene Richard

The morning of Saturday, Jan. 13, about 1,200 people gathered outside St. Edward's Church in Richard, LA, for the Closing Ceremony for the diocesan phase of the investigation into the life, heroic virtue, reputation of holiness and power of intercession of the Servant of God, Charlene Marie Richard.

The investigation began January 2020, with the opening of this diocesan phase. At that time, the bishop recognizes that a person's holiness has had such an impact on the local church that he begins the process of questioning if this person is eligible to be recognized as a saint. After some initial investigation and questioning of local bishops and of Rome, the investigation is officially opened and the person is named 'Servant of God'.

The bishop then elects various people to help with the process. The first phase is to officially document and research the history of the person. Then there is the board of inquiry: a panel of 3 who conduct interviews with witnesses of the Servant of God, document proof, and gather evidence. Together they establish with justifiable proof that the Servant of God had a life of heroic virtue, has a strong reputation of holiness among the people of God, and there is a presence of power of intercession.

Once a sufficient amount



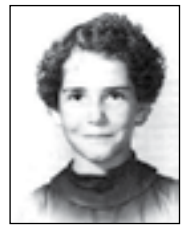
SUPPORT FOR CHARLENE RICARD'S VENERATION. Documents are prepared in triplicate for delivery to Rome by Fr. Josh Guillory of the Diocese of Lafayette and Fr. Taylor Reynolds of the Diocese of Alexandria.

of proof has been gathered to support and argue for the person's holiness, these documents are collected and made into 3 identical sets of documents; one is kept in the diocese and the other two are sent to Rome evaluation. It is at the closing ceremony where this investigation is officially ended on the diocesan level, the boxes are

sealed and a 'carrier' is nominated to hand deliver these to Rome.

After they are brought to Rome, the Dicastery for the Cause of the Saints will examine the contents to first determine that the process was followed accurately, then they will determine if the contents meet the criteria to continue the examination. If they pass that inspection, then the Holy Father himself bestows the person 'Venerable' meaning their life, relics, and any writings can be publicly venerated by the Church. After this, they examine alleged miracles to see if they are truly miraculous and have a direct and immediate connection to intercession to the Servant of God. If one miracle is verified, they are named 'Blessed', and if another is verified they are named 'Saint'

Servant of God Charlene Richard's documents will go to Rome on Jan. 23. Let us pray that soon we can hear her named Venerable and soon after, Blessed Charlene Marie Richard!



Charlene Richard

Charlene Richard was just 12 and a half years old when she died in 1959 from acute lymphatic leukemia.

Charlene was described as "a normal little girl" who liked sports and went to church. A devotion spread to others in the area, where people prayed to "the Little Cajun Saint," asking for her intercession for situations ranging from marital problems, to finding jobs to seeking good weather for their crops.

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



CAUSE FOR CHARLENE RICHARD PROGRESSES. Local news media covers the story about the cause for veneration for Charlene Richard.

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ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, COLFAX. Father John Brocato, St. Joseph Colfax, presenting an Angel Tree Christmas donation to Christi Guillot, St. Mary's Residential Training School.



FOLLOWERS OF JESUS MEN'S CHOIR. The Followers of Jesus, an Avoyelles Men's Choir that visits Catholic churches, gathered this evening for the 6:30 p.m. Mass at St. Alphonsus Church in Hessmer. The 20 men from different church parishes are led by Mr. Ashton Caubereaux, coordinator; Mr. Michael Guillory, choir director; Mr. Nick Ducote, music director. Their devotion and faithful singing led the people of Hessmer in worship during the Solemnity of the Epiphany, offering their voices as a gift to the Christ child alongside the Magis' gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Followers of Jesus will be at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Echo later this month.



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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.

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

For the terminally ill | We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.



Acompaño: accompany in faith

*by Blaine Phillips
Seminarian of the
Diocese of Alexandria*

Acompaño... what is that? This Notre Dame Seminary mission immersion experience began in 1989 with a handful of seminarians under the leadership of Monsignor Gregory Aymond, in which they worked in Mexico to help the people rebuild and recover from Hurricane Gilberto.

While their labor was manual, their primary task was to “walk with/accompany” the people and share the faith, hence the trip’s name, Acompaño. Three decades later, and the only factor which has changed about this mission immersion is the location: our Theology I class served the poor for a week in the

Diocese of Limón, Costa Rica. Under the guidance of Bishop Javier Gerardo Roman Rias and Fr. Pedro Escriva Romani, we served the poor of the city with the Missionaries of Charity (Mother Teresa’s order) and prepared supplies/food to bring to the Cabécar communities on Mt. Alto Cohen.

Just like the previous years, the primary joy and privilege of the trip was to get to know them (our own Gabe Dowden loved playing soccer with them in the pouring rain!) and to bring them the sacraments, as they only get to see a priest and go to Mass once a month (sometimes even less frequent) due to the harsh conditions required to get to them on the mountain. The missionary must drive 2 two hours through

the mountains, crossing three or more rivers in the car (depending on the water level), park at the ‘base’, and hike for another four miles uphill through mud, visiting communities along the way. To endure these conditions to bring people the faith and the sacraments, every missionary felt like St. Francis Xavier! What struck me the most about the Cabécar was their immense piety and devotion to the faith, lived out in a life of charity and work. Furthermore, I saw that Christ’s presence is the one, true universal language which unites all, surpassing every barrier. This love reminds me of words from St. Thomas Aquinas: “To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible.”



Seminarian Burses December 2023 Donations

Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Father Charles Ray Burse	
Ms. Patricia Vandersypen-Basco	\$100.00
Jerome and Audrey Vandersypen Burse	
Deacon and Mrs. LG Deloach	\$500.00
Father Dwight de Jesus Burse	
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Father Rickey Gremillion Burse	
Dr. Joseph W. Landreneau	\$1,000.00
Edna Rabalais Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Brockner	\$3,000.00
Daryl “Pat” Mauterer Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Brockner	\$5,000.00
Father Christian Ogbonna Burse	
Total	\$10,150.00

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

SEMINARIAN COSTA RICA MISSION TRIP. (top photo) Blaine Phillips, in front, with other seminarians. (bottom) Blaine, far left, with fellow seminarians in Costa Rica for the Acompaño mission trip sponsored by Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Sacred Heart School held their school Christmas program on Dec. 19, 2023.



ST. MARY CHURCH, WINNSBORO, held their Christmas play on Wednesday, Dec 20. Lucy [redacted] is Mary, Joseph [redacted] is Joseph, Zaleigh [redacted] is the angel, Bailey [redacted] is the shepherd. Ellie [redacted] was the innkeeper and a wise man, Paul and Matthew [redacted] were the other wise men.



(above) OUR LADY OF LOURDES, WINNFIELD. The youth group presented a shadow light show to Alleluia Christmas on Dec. 13. Leah Rustom directed the outstanding performance. Following the performance, the catechism classes performed the story of the first Christmas (pictured). Narrators of the story were Daisy [redacted] and Juana [redacted]. A delicious reception followed.

THE MINOR BASILICA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH, NATCHITOCHE. Mrs. Anna Airhart was recently presented with the Catholic Daughter of the Year award for 2023. This award is given every year to one member for their dedication and service to the CDA organization. Pictured are: Anna Airhart and Kathleen Hicks, Regent for The Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Regina Pacis 1372.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, BUNKIE. Grand Knight, David Patin, from the Knights of Columbus Council #2395, Bunkie, presented a \$712.35 check to Christi Guillot, Administrator of St. Mary's Residential Training School. These funds came from the donations received from the Tootsie Roll drive held on Main Street in October.



ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE CCD PROGRAM held its 11th annual "Caring at Christmas" Gift Card Drive. This year's recipient was the Faith House Outreach for Victims of Domestic Violence in Avoyelles. CCD students, with the help of St. Joseph parishioners and parish ministries, collected \$2,040.00 in gift cards to assist victims of domestic violence. Our sincere thanks to everyone who supported this worthy cause. Pictured is Fr. Dan O'Connor, Pastor, Mitzi Smith, Cenla Services Manager and Nancy Dessel, DRE.



NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY CHURCH, CAMPTI. Nativity BVM's Annual CCD Youth Christmas Program.



SACRED HEART CHURCH, MOREAUVILLE. 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Vigil Mass and program.

To see more photos from across the diocese, please visit the photo galleries at www.diocesealex.org

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- Help parishes to identify, recruit and train a team of mentor couples and help them to develop their parish ministry!
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Send Your Resume/Inquires to Dcn. Michael Straub: mstraub@dioshpt.org

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana 2023 wrap up

As we reflect upon 2023, we are thankful for the many opportunities to serve others in Central Louisiana. During the past two years, Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana (CCCL) has been able to get people into housing, feed the hungry, assist with rent and utility bills, support the local homeless population, provide blankets and coats for the needy, and much more. For our Lord said, "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me'" (Matthew 25:34-36).

In preparation for the Season of Advent, Catholic Charities held a raffle during the months of October and November to raise funds for our Christmas Cheer Program. First prize was a handcrafted farm table with

two benches. This was made and donated by Mr. William Starkey. The winner of this beautiful piece was Lisa Rizzo. Second prize was a Paragon Casino & Resort Package that was donated by Paragon. The winner was Charlotte Feazell. Third prize was a basket of gift cards donated by our Board Members and employees of Catholic Charities. The winner was Mary Laird. Congratulations to these raffle winners and a big thank you to all of our sponsors. Raffle ticket sales totaled over \$4,000. This money sponsored projects that provided support to people throughout our deaneries. Food boxes were purchased for families in Winnfield, St. Joseph, and Ferriday. Healthy Blue sponsored the purchase of turkeys to include with the food boxes. Money was also used to buy slim belts to give to the Homeless Coalition of Alexandria. These slim belts will be used by the homeless to secure their documents and identification



to prevent theft.

Mary Mother of Jesus Church in Woodworth and some local businesses and institutions had giving trees and/or collection boxes to collect games for Faith House in Avoyelles Parish and Hope House in Rapides Parish. Games were placed in the Family Rooms in both of these facilities.

Additionally, turkeys sponsored in part by Healthy Blue were given out in these two parishes. Again, we would like to thank all of our sponsors and all those who purchased raffle tickets. Because of your generosity, we were able to spread Christmas Cheer throughout the Diocese of Alexandria.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION. Handing out food boxes at St. James Memorial Church in Alexandria.

Finally, the Knights of Columbus from St. Frances Cabrini Church collected coats and gave them to Catholic Charities to distribute to individuals in need. We were able to help Horseshoe Drive Elementary and a local coat closet to keep people in our local community warm this winter.

As we enter a new year, please remember Catholic Charities and the many people that we serve on a daily basis. It is only through your generosity that we can continue to serve others as our Lord Jesus instructed us to do. Please continue to support us in any way that you can whether it be financially or in prayer. For information on upcoming Catholic Charities projects, fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc. visit our website www.cccenla.org and be sure to read our articles in the Church Today.

Services Offered by Catholic Charities of Central LA

Counseling Services For professional therapy

By appointment only. To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/mental-health-services#COUNSELING

Christian Life Coaching For personal life changes

By appointment only. To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/mental-health-services#COACHING

Peace in the Midst of Crisis Divorce Support

By appointment only. To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/mental-health-services#SUPPORTGROUPS

Vaping/Tobacco Cessation

For teens and adults

Group or individual sessions

By appointment only

To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/mental-health-services#VAPING-TOBACCO

Disaster Relief Catholic Disaster Preparedness Program

www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/resource/cdpp/

If interested in supporting preparedness in your parish, please email info@cccenla.org

Emergency Basic Needs Assistance

Utilities, rent, fire, information and referral

By appointment only

To schedule visit: cccenla.org/basicneeds#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE

[basicneeds#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE](http://cccenla.org/basicneeds#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE)

SNAP Enrollment Assistance Over the phone enrollment

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Budget Class

Facilitated by Ramsey Solutions Financial Coach

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Volunteers

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OUR LADY OF LOURDES, WINNFIELD. On Dec. 20, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church received 35 turkey dinners from Catholic Charities. The meals were delivered to families in Winn Parish. The project was chaired by Vickie Weeks. Pictured are: Heidi Wampler of Catholic Charities, Laure Derr, Fr. Louis Sklar and Chris Walker.

March 19-23: APT All Pro Tour & ProAM Golf Tournament benefits Manna House

The annual APT All Pro Golf Tour and the Walker GMC ProAM Golf Tournament, hosted at Links on the Bayou golf course in Alexandria La., will once again benefit Manna House. Professional golfers from all over the world will travel to Alexandria, La. for the Coca-Cola Dr. Pepper Open March 20 – 23 which will be played at Links on the Bayou golf course.

This is the Manna Houses' signature event which proceeds help to continue our long-standing tradition of providing hot nutritional meals to all those who are suffering from food insecurity in our community. Last year the Manna House served 104,861 meals.

The Walker GMC ProAM Tournament will be held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at Links on the Bayou golf course. Each



ProAM team of three(3) will be paired with a professional golfer.

The entry fee of \$1,000 per team includes green fees, golf cart, hole sponsorship, food and drinks including the opportunity to play with a professional golfer. Entry forms are available on the Manna House website – givetomannahouse.com and Manna House Facebook page.

“We are excited to be the beneficiary of this world-class golf tournament,” said Jessica Viator, executive director of Manna House. Viator said a number of sponsorship packages are available including Presenting Sponsors, Driving Range, Putting Green, Cart Sign, Hole Sponsors. Viator explained, it provides a great opportunity to promote your business as well as your personal commitment and support of the less fortunate in our community.

If you are not a golfer and would like to make a donation or purchase a sponsorship visit our website:

givetomannahouse.com or send a check to Manna House P.O. Box 6011 Alexandria, LA. 71307.

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

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Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

Psalm 25:4 | Responsorial Psalm for February 18 First Sunday of Lent

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

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

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The Lord's Unexpected Love

by *Katy Cassidy*
Blessed Is She
Contributor

Baptism can conjure up all sorts of images for us: perhaps the Baptism of a child, the reception of a loved one into the Church on Easter Vigil, or your own entrance into the family of God. To be sacramentally Baptized is to do an about-face from living one way, to living another.

Advent ushered in the new Liturgical year, and we shifted from hearing the Gospel of Saint Matthew (year A), to that of Saint Mark (year B). Mark is the earliest to have written his Gospel, having recorded his account around the year 70. The feast we commemorate today, the Baptism of the Lord, comes from the very beginning of Mark's Gospel. Mark sets the scene by including prophetic words from Isaiah 40:3:

"Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths'" (Mark 1: 2-3).

Immediately, Saint John the Baptist is described as having appeared in the wilderness, doing what was prophesied by proclaiming a baptism of repentance and baptizing folks from all over the Judean countryside. He quickly and humbly proclaims that the one who is to follow him will baptize with more than water in the Holy

Spirit. Although not personally in need of the baptism of repentance, Jesus Himself is baptized by John in the Jordan River. Immediately following His baptism, a voice from heaven is heard saying:

"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

On some level, isn't that a phrase we are all waiting to hear?! Perhaps from our earthly parent(s), but certainly from God at the end of our lives on earth: "You are my beloved son (daughter); with you I am well pleased." Having been claimed and affirmed by the One Who loves us best, Who has held us close, witnessed our highs and lows, and rooted for us all the way. To have seen us through it all and be pleased with what has been seen, feels like the very way I hope to be welcomed into Heaven one day—or even with the words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23).'

And, it feels worth noting that God spoke these words to Jesus at the time of His Baptism—not at the end of His life, but at the very beginning of His ministry.

Several weeks ago I was running errands with my toddler. Slowly plodding down the sidewalk as she likes to walk all by herself now, she was looking in every window. At one point, she realized that someone was standing behind the blinds of this neutral-looking, strip mall office. She paused, waved, made funny faces, and generally delighted the



woman behind the blinds. What I heard from my daughter next took my breath away. "I love you," she said to the woman behind the glass. Unfortunately, she couldn't have heard, and likely wouldn't suspect that this passing child was whispering words of love to her, but she was! At that moment, I couldn't shake the feeling that the Lord was doing that for me all day long, and in all likelihood, I do not suspect such lavishness.

Rather than waiting to hear the voice of God, reserved for some special meeting in the unknown future, what if this passage from Mark of the Baptism of Our Lord were a reminder to us that we are beloved by the God of all—not only when we finish things, but when we have the courage to start them, when we're working unnoticed (or so we think) in a bland strip mall office building. It may be that we don't have to cross any sort of "finish line," or check a

box before we hear these beautiful and affirming words from God that Jesus hears today.

Take some time in prayer with these scriptural reminders of God's love for us:

We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. // 1 John 4:16

continued on next page

*I will walk
before the Lord,
in the land
of the living.*

Psalm 116:10
Responsorial Psalm
for February 25
Second Sunday
of Lent

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For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither present things nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Lord. // Romans 8:38-39

See what love the Father has bestowed in letting us be called the children of God! Yet that is what we are. The reason the world does recognize us is that it never recognized the Son. // 1 John 3:1

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. // John 15:12

Understand, then, that the LORD, your God, is God indeed, the faithful God who keeps his merciful covenant down to the thousandth generations toward those who love Him and keep His commandments. // Deuteronomy 7:9

With age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy

toward you. // Jeremiah 31:3

The Baptism of the Lord is a beautiful example of God demonstrating perfect love. Scripture is littered with reminders that the Lord loves us, too. As we begin our short stay in Ordinary Time before the beginning of Lent, it feels appropriate to be on the lookout for this unexpected and lavish love that the Father speaks over us, his beloved children.

Katie Cassidy is a regular contributor to the BIS blog. She is a wife and mom to three little girls in Denver, CO. Steeped in theological reflection, beekeeping and motherhood, she is appreciative of any and all wisdom she can glean from those living intentional lives of faith. Find out more about her here: <http://www.unexpectedhoney.com/> Read all of Katie's posts here: <https://blessedisshenet/>

Catholic Foundation of North Central Louisiana

by **Becky Crooks,**
Chairman of the Board,
The Catholic Foundation of
North Central Louisiana

Joseph L Hebert

Please join me in extending our best wishes to Joe Hebert who is retiring as President of The Catholic Foundation. Joe leaves us with 36 years of service and we are indebted to Joe for his vision and commitment, bringing us to our present position. Since 2007, Joe's work with The Foundation has attributed over \$2,267,200 in distributions to Catholic entities in our Diocese. His work has assured our success and ability to help families continue to leave a legacy.

Joe is married to Yvette Eleazar Hebert. Joe and Yvette have been active members of Our Lady of Prompt Succor since moving to Alexandria in 1985. Joe worked as an accountant for Ratcliff Construction for 36 years as well as his tenure with The Foundation. They have one son, Brian Hebert (Julie), two daughters, Leslie Contreras (Alex), and Renee Hebert. They have eight grandchildren, Amelia, Stuart, Evan, Grant, Ethan, Jack, Nicholas, and Benjamin. The Foundation Board would like to thank Joe's family for sharing him with us these past 36 years.

In addition to Joe's work at The Foundation, Joe has been an



Mr. Joe Hebert



Mr. Curtis Meaux

active member of The Center for Action and Contemplation. The CAC is designed to help deepen prayer practice and strengthen compassionate engagement in the world.

Joe will be honored with a retirement luncheon hosted by the Board of Directors of the Catholic Foundation.

Curtis Meaux

Please join us in welcoming our incoming President of the Catholic Foundation, Mr. Curtis P. Meaux.

Curtis was born in Lake Charles, LA, graduated from LaGrange Senior High School and obtained a BS degree in Accounting from McNeese State University. He achieved his CPA certification in 1996. Curtis is married to Barbara Castille Meaux. They have two children; Eric (Kristine) and Michelle Anger (Sean) and they have four

grandchildren - Aiden, Austin, Amelia, and Audrey. Curtis and Barbara are active members of St. Rita Catholic Church, serving in lay ministry positions and advisory committee roles.

In May 2016, Curtis retired from full-time employment after serving 23+ years as Accounting Manager and Treasurer of Roy O. Martin Lumber Company, LLC and related entities in Louisiana and Texas. After his full time retirement, Curtis worked part-time with Payne, Moore and Herrington, CPAs in Alexandria, primarily during "Tax Season" assisting with tax preparation and training their staff.

We are honored to have Curtis leading The Catholic Foundation of North Louisiana as our President. If you would like to know more about the Foundation please contact Curtis at (318) 487-9222 or cfncloisiana@gmail.com

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Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.
Psalm 19:8
Responsorial Psalm for March 3
Third Sunday of Lent



4-H SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. The 4-H Club decorated over 250 cookies for the Polar Express event. Thank you La Petite Affaire Boulangers in Marksville for baking 100 of those cookies for the group. Sponsor was Kayla Normand.



SHS COLUMBIAN SQUIRES. Sacred Heart School's Columbian Squires collected canned goods for The Food Pantry of Avoyelles before Christmas. Group sponsor is Mr. Dan Soldani.



ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH, BROUILLETTE. Praise Fest was held Sunday, Jan. 14. The day included speakers, scripture breakout sessions, games and fitness, live music, adoration and Holy Mass.

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Catholic Schools Week: Jan. 28 through Feb. 3

OPEN HOUSE:

Monday, Jan. 29:

Sacred Heart School, Moreauville: 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

St. Frances Cabrini School, Alexandria: 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 30:

Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria: 8:15 a.m.- 12:15 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria:

Catholic Schools Week Mass, 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 28

Prayer on the Playground, 8:00 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31

Mass with the Bishop, 8:00 a.m. Friday, Feb. 2

FUN FRIDAY Celebration

Sacred Heart School, Moreauville:

Catholic Schools Week Mass, 9:30 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 28

Parent Day, Art Exhibits, Spelling Bee, Tuesday, Jan. 30

Science Fair, Thursday, Feb. 1

School Mass, Friday, Feb. 2

St. Anthony School, Bunkie:

Baby Shower for Cenla Pregnancy Center, Monday, Jan. 29

Religion Fair, 1st-8th Grade, Thursday, Feb. 1

Last Intramural Basketball game, Saturday, Feb. 3

CSW Closing Mass, 10:30 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 4

St. Mary's Catholic School, Natchitoches:

SMS Mass at MBIC, 11:00 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 28

Bible Trivia Bee, 1st-5th Grade, 2:15 p.m. Monday, Jan. 29

School Mass, 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 1

Natchitoches March for Life, 10:00 a.m., Friday, Feb. 2

St. Joseph School, Plaquemine:

SJS Mass at Mater Dolorosa Church, Sunday, Jan. 28

Family & Faith Night, 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 31

Grandparents Mass, Mater Dolorosa Church, Friday, Feb. 2

St. Frances Cabrini School:

Pull Pork dinners, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 28

Pro-Life Rosary for the Nation, Wednesday, Jan. 31

Grandparents Mass Prek-3rd Grade, 8:00 a.m. Thurs, Feb. 1

Grandparents Mass 4th-8th Grade, 8:00 a.m., Friday, Feb. 2



SHS TEACHER OF THE YEAR.

Congratulations to Mrs. Katherine Freeman, 8th Grade teacher at Sacred Heart School, on being chosen 2024 Teacher of the Year from The VFW Post 3149. Pictured left to right: Mr. James Rabalais, Mrs. Katherine Freeman, Sr. Sandra Norsworthy, principal, and Mr. Michael Veade.

A message from the Diocese of Alexandria's Safe Environment Program

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

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

For updated information, news articles, and documents regarding ongoing activity and planning for securing and maintaining a Safe Environment for all, visit www.diocesealex.org/our-faith/healing (visit www.diocesealex.org and look for "A Safe Environment For All" under the "Our Faith" tab). Here, you can find more information, as well as updates from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Also found on this page is the letter from Pope Francis to all Bishops in the United States regarding a meeting in February 2019 at the Vatican entitled "The Protection of Minors in the Church."



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL VIRTUE OF THE MONTH. The religion department has a different virtue each month that is discussed and taught. Students that display characteristics of that particular virtue for that month are selected by their teachers. It is announced at Morning Prayer in the gym once a month. The Virtue of the Month for December was "Joy."



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL VIRTUE OF THE MONTH The Virtue of the Month for November was "Gratitude."

Ash Wednesday is February 14
 go to www.diocesealex.org for
Ash Wednesday service times
 across the diocese.

Campus Ministry:

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

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

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CLOSED TUESDAYS

Lunch: Mon.-Sat. 11 a.m. - 3:30 pm.

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



Catholic Schools Week - Jan. 28 to Feb. 3

The Diocese of Alexandria Catholic Schools will be observing this year's Catholic Schools Week with special events for students, parents, faculties and staff. Check your school's schedule or page 16 in this issue for information that was available at press time.

Natchitoches March for Life - Feb. 2

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.

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.

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

Cenla March for Life - Feb. 3

Saturday, Feb. 3, 10:00 a.m. Meet at Louisiana Christian University. The route will travel down Main Street Pineville to the Jackson Street Bridge in 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.

EMHC Workshops - Feb. 10

The next workshop for Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will be held at the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches on Saturday, Feb. 10, at 9:00 a.m. The average time for the workshop is about three hours so please plan accordingly. If you would like to sign up for the next workshop, please visit www.diocesealex.org or contact Dcn. Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext. 207 or by email at dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org.

Disalced Carmelite meeting - Feb. 10

The Order of the Disalced 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.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

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.

Ash Wednesday - Feb. 14

Ash Wednesday is February 14. Please visit www.diocesealex.org for Ash Wednesday schedules across the diocese. The first Sunday in Lent is Sunday, Feb. 18.

2024 Season of Service - Feb. 14-Mar. 28

The Season of Service (S.O.S.) program is a coordinated effort to promote service and build community throughout the Diocese of Alexandria during the Lenten Season. The S.O.S. gives us an opportunity to use our gifts to help our Church and those in need in our Community.

The program is designed to recruit S.O.S. Team Captains who in turn recruit members to be on their team. The group will name their team and then discern and decide on a project to complete during the Lenten Season (February 14 through March 28, 2024). Projects can be something as simple as coming together to pray a rosary for a specific intention, weeding the flowerbed at the Church Parish, or tackle a small repair project at a homebound parishioner's residence.

Visit www.diocesealex.org to register your team. **New this year!** When signing up your team, adults can choose an SOS t-shirt OR an SOS tote bag OR an SOS cap! Only one choice per team member. Please specify t-shirt sizes.

Fullness of Truth Conference - Feb. 23-25

This Lent, join us Feb. 23-25 at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria, during our great national Catholic Eucharistic Revival. Fullness of Truth-LA and the Diocese of Alexandria invite you to this 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 or call: (877) 218-7884.

Golf Tournament benefits Manna House - March 19-23

The annual APT All Pro Golf Tour and the Walker GMC ProAM Golf Tournament, hosted at Links on the Bayou Golf Course in Alexandria, will once again benefit Manna House. Professional golfers from all over the world will travel to Alexandria for the Coca-Cola Dr. Pepper Open on March 20-23 which will be played at Links on the Bayou Golf Course.

If you are not a golfer and would like to make a donation or purchase a sponsorship visit our website: givetomannahouse.com or send a check to Manna House P.O. Box 6011 Alexandria, LA. 71307.

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

4th Annual Adam Jeansonne Golf Tournament - April 12

Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church Youth Group is having their 4th annual Adam Jeansonne Memorial Golf Tournament at Links on the Bayou on Friday, April 12th, 2024. Proceeds help fund summer camps. Tournament format is four person scramble. Lunch and beverages included, great prizes, team entry fee is \$400 or \$125 a person. To register a team of four go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/4th-annual-adam-jeansonne-memorial-golf-tournament-tickets-793709696067?ref=eios> or church office. For more information email or call Felicia Schneider at : jrhigh@olpschurch.org or call (318) 445-9748, ext. 228.

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.

Church Today News Deadlines

February 26
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Feb. 15

March 25
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Mar. 14



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February 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
JANUARY 29 Open Houses Sacred Heart School, Moreauville, 8:00 a.m. St. Frances Cabrini, Alexandria, 5:30 p.m.	Open House 30 8:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria	31 Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria	FEBRUARY 1 High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria	2 Natchitoches March for Life 10:00 a.m. Riverbank Downtown Natchitoches	3 Cenla March for Life 10:00 a.m. Louisiana Christian University, Pineville	4
National Catholic Educational Association's Catholic Schools Week -- see pg. 16 for a schedule of events						
PRAY FOR DCN. S. JONES	PRAY FOR FR. T. KENNEDY	PRAY FOR FR. P. KULIGOWSKI	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	FEAST of the PRESENTATION of the LORD FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. KUNNUMPURAM	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. L. LAFLEUR	PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD
5	6	7 Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria	8 High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria	9	10 EMHC Workshop 9:00 a.m. Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches Discalced Carmelite Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center, Pineville	11
PRAY FOR FR. P. LAPALME	PRAY FOR DCN. J. LAVERGNE	PRAY FOR DCN. G. LEBLANC	PRAY FOR DCN. A. MANGINI	PRAY FOR FR. V. MANUEL	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR FR. R. MATHEWS
12	13	14 Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria ASH WEDNESDAY	15 High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria	16	17	18 First Sunday of Lent OCIA (Rite of Election) 2:30 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria
PRAY FOR DCN. P. MCCUSKER	PRAY FOR FR. D. MEADE	PRAY FOR FR. L. MELCHER	PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS	PRAY FOR MSGR. B. MILLER	PRAY FOR DCN. R. MITCHELL
19	20 VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria	21 Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria	22 High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria	23	24	25 Second Sunday of Lent
PRESIDENTS DAY PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	PRAY FOR DCN. D. MOREAU	PRAY FOR DCN. L. MOREAU	PRAY FOR DCN. T. MOULARD	Fullness of Truth Conference - Alexandria		
PRAY FOR FR. A. MULLOTH	PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK	PRAY FOR DCN. S. NEWBURY				
26	27	28 Sharing Your Faith Series 6:30 p.m. OLPS, Alexandria	29 VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. Sacred Heart School, Moreauville High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. St. Rita, Alexandria	MARCH 1	2	3 Third Sunday of Lent
PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL	PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIEKWE	PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN	PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR	PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA	PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA



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