

CHURCH TODAY

Volume LVI, No. 2

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

February 24, 2025



Taste of Echo!

The unanimous winner of “Best Dish” at this year’s St. Francis de Sales Church, “Taste of Echo,” was a trio of creative chefs who impressed the judges with their secret recipe for “Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches.” The winning trio was celebrated for their innovative approach, making this year’s event a memorable success for the St. Francis de Sales community.

INSIDE

Understanding Lent: A time for reflection and renewal

As Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, Catholics are called to fast, give alms, and pray in preparation for Easter. See page 3 to explore the significance of these practices and how they help deepen our faith.

A Pilgrimage of Hope: Reconnecting with faith in the Jubilee Year

Father Taylor Reynolds led a group of 35 pilgrims from Louisiana to Italy’s holy sites, including Turin, Assisi, and Rome, where they passed through the Holy Doors and experienced profound spiritual renewal. Read the full article on page 6.

The laity’s role in encouraging and strengthening calls to priestly and religious vocations

Prayers, fasting, and Eucharistic adoration are key ways the laity can foster priestly and religious vocations, according to speakers at the 2025 Legatus annual summit in Naples. See more information on page 12.

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Season of Service begins 4th year of ministry

The Season of Service (S.O.S.) program has begun its 4th year. As we enter this Lenten season, we are reminded that Lent is a time of prayer, fasting, sacrifice and almsgiving. With this year being a Jubilee Year of Hope, Season of Service is a great way to put our faith into action. Last year over 50 teams comprising of well over 500 volunteers participated in acts of service to their community or church. Some of last year's projects included cleaning of the priest graves at Maryhill, a rosary walk at Maryhill, prayer with those who are shut-ins or in nursing homes, to pressure washing and landscaping church grounds.

Projects for Season of Service are only limited by the imagination. We live in a world where there are many needs around us so it should be somewhat easy to define a project from those who find themselves without shelter, those who may go without food, those who are alone or isolated. From the physical to the spiritual, there are needs around us where we can



SEASON OF SERVICE. Last year over 500 volunteers carried out service projects across the diocese. Young and old volunteered their time to work, pray, visit, create, cook, and clean. Pictured: Fr. Craig Scott leads the St. James team in prayer before volunteering at the Food Bank of Central LA.

gather a group together, and in service, make a huge difference in the lives of people and our parish communities.

Additionally this year, if you are participating in the Jubilee pilgrimage within our Diocese, you will also get a sticker to

add to your Pilgrim's Passport, documenting your work of service during this year of Hope.

To register your team, please visit the Diocese of Alexandria's website at diocesealex.org, click on the S.O.S. logo to register.

You will need the following information to register your team: Team Name, Team Captains name and contact information, a description of your service project and your team members names. If you participate in this years S.O.S., you have the option of the S.O.S. t-shirt like last year or a keychain. *Please keep in mind that T-shirts ordered can take up to two weeks to arrive. Key chains are in limited quantity as well, so get your teams registered as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing and seeing about your service project.

Any photos taken of your teams serving in their project or need any additional information please contact Dcn Jason Lavergne at dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org Photos may be used on our website or on future issues of the Church Today.



SERVICE PROJECTS. (left) Team XII Prayer Group spent a Saturday pressure washing the marble grave markers at the Priests Cemetery at Maryhill. (right) The Immaculate Heart of Mary Team rolled up their sleeves and cleaned and replanted beds on the grounds around the church in Tioga.

Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.
Psalm 92: 2 | Responsorial Psalm for March 2 | Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time



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Lent 101: What every Catholic should know

By Matt Charbonneau
Ascention Press

On the Tuesday before Lent, Catholics and other Christians around the world will enjoy one last hoorah of indulgence, spoiling ourselves before focusing our attention on self-improvement and spiritual growth leading up to Easter.

Whether at a local church or in our own kitchen, we may open our cupboards and pull out any and all ingredients needed to whip up a big batch of pancakes in order to celebrate Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), as it is known in some circles.

Yes, it will be a fine time to party, as life will undoubtedly run downhill for a span of forty-six days after that, right?

Hardly, but the uninformed might have you believe that, presenting Lent as a subdued and downcast time, not in any way ideal in building us up for Christ's resurrection.

Yet, do people fully understand what the Lenten season is all about? When we begin Lent Wednesday with a marking of ashes on our forehead, are we entirely aware of the spiritual adventure we are embarking on for the next several weeks leading up to Easter Sunday?

To help better appreciate the significance and reasoning behind this holy period of purification and preparation, below is a summary, or crash course, into Lent and why Christians observe it.

What Is Ash Wednesday?

On this first day of Lent, Christians attend liturgical activities and receive ashes on our foreheads in the form of a cross, signaling a sign of our faith and a reminder of remorse for our sins. We are told "Repent and believe in the gospel," when we receive the ashes.

With these ashes, we recall our origins from the earth, as well as how our bodies shall return one day to the same form (as indicated



by the dictum "Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return").

In true fashion of life coming full circle, the ashes are produced from the burning of palm fronds of the preceding year's Palm Sunday, which comes the week before Easter Sunday and marks the welcome Jesus received from followers upon his return to Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion.

While many people traditionally eat plenty on Shrove Tuesday, Christians are called upon to fast and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday. As outlined in the Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law:

"Abstinence from meat, or from some other food as determined by the Episcopal Conference, is to be observed on all Fridays, unless a solemnity should fall on a Friday. Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. " Canon 1251

What Is Lent?

With ashes administered, we now begin Lent, a period of forty-six days (forty when Sundays are excluded) that commemorates the time Jesus spent in the desert prior to beginning his public ministry as Messiah.

As described in the gospel readings according to Matthew, Mark and Luke, following his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert, where he fasted for forty days and was subject to temptation by Satan.

To honor this sacrifice and conquest over the devil, Catholics and other Christians elect to set aside the season of Lent to refocus on Jesus as we look ahead to his death on the Cross and rejoice over his miraculous return.

What Do We Do during Lent?

Lent is a time when participants can carry out a three-fold mission, with the key pillars being fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. Certainly, these components are not new within our Catholic teachings nor are they reserved only for Lent, as we are encouraged to practice them regularly throughout the year. However, a special and renewed focus on each of them during Lent can foster growth and appreciation within our collective faith and respective spiritual journeys.

Fasting

As Jesus fasted in the desert for forty days, we, too, are called to forgo something for the same period when observing Lent. It is during this time we can deepen our awareness of his sacrifice on the Cross, as well as Jesus' daily forgiveness of our sins and unconditional love for us.

It should be noted, however, this personal sacrifice should be difficult but healthy, while respecting responsibilities.

For instance, giving up coffee for Lent takes little to no effort if one rarely or never drinks it. Along the same lines, going without something you enjoy regularly—like Netflix, if you watch it often—may seem like an impossible task, but is a small price to pay for a step closer to eternal salvation. A student electing not to do any homework for the Lenten weeks ignores his or her academic obligations and can suffer harmful ramifications. The decision not to use any illicit drugs only during Lent, and then resume the practice afterwards, contradicts our moral duty to obey civil laws and not participate in criminal activities.

Despite the challenge of fasting, we can take solace in knowing Jesus protects us during our struggle, as St. John Henry Newman reminds us:

"Even in our penitential exercises, Christ has gone before us to sanctify them to us. He has

blessed fasting as a means of grace, in that He fasted."

Tears of Christ

During Lent, Catholics and other Christian participants are given a reprieve on Sundays as a "mini-Easter," allowing us to break our temptation. Again, though, this is not designed to allow or condone taking part in any inappropriate behavior, such as beating up a sibling or driving a vehicle while under the influence.

Almsgiving

Stressing the importance of recognizing those in need while demonstrating the model of selflessness that Jesus embodied on earth, Lent offers us an opportunity to further concentrate on displaying acts of charity within our communities.

Whether it be through the giving of time, money, clothing or food, volunteer service provides us a perfect occasion to improve society by living out Jesus' teaching of helping him through helping his people.

Such offerings remind us of the valuable need to remain disciplined and prudent regarding our own desires in life, as well as the standard set in order to be welcomed into God's Kingdom.

Prayer

Another avenue for self-growth during Lent that can lead to closer relationship with God is prayer.

While talking with God is a practice Catholics and all Christians should conduct regularly no matter what point in the year, Lent presents us with an especially meaningful time to connect with our Lord and nurture our bond.

We can strengthen our relationship with God through deeper and more frequent prayer activity, such as Scripture readings before beginning our daily morning routine, or praying at mealtimes, commuting to work

See LENT 101, page 12

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.

**ASH
WEDNESDAY
March 5**

Lent for tired women: Finding grace in the exhaustion

By *Cari Terracina*
Publications Manager

Lent is here again, and if you're already feeling worn out before it even begins, you're not alone. As a woman juggling ministry, family, work, and the countless expectations that come with each, the idea of adding another layer of spiritual discipline can feel overwhelming. But Lent isn't about doing more—it's about drawing closer to Jesus. And for tired women, that might look different than it has in seasons past.

Embracing a Simpler Lent

If the thought of fasting from sugar, committing to an extra hour of prayer, or reading an entire spiritual book makes you want to crawl back into bed, give yourself permission to simplify. Jesus doesn't ask for exhaustion—He invites us to surrender. Maybe this year, Lent isn't about adding but about letting go:

Let go of the guilt of not

doing “enough.”

Let go of perfectionism in your spiritual practices.

Let go of the expectation that your Lent has to look like anyone else's.

Instead, focus on the small, meaningful ways you can encounter Jesus in your everyday life.

Prayer for the Weary

If your season of life makes it hard to carve out long prayer times, embrace short but intentional moments with God. Here are some simple ways to integrate prayer into your day:

Whisper a morning offering before your feet hit the floor.

Pray a decade of the Rosary while driving.

Sit in silence for two minutes and simply rest in God's presence.

Read one verse of Scripture and carry it with you throughout the day.

Prayer isn't about quantity—it's about connection. Give Jesus your small moments, and He will

multiply them.

Fasting with Intention

Instead of a burdensome fast, consider a fast that nurtures your soul:

Fast from self-criticism and replace it with words of kindness.

Fast from overcommitment and embrace quiet space.

Fast from comparison and embrace gratitude for your own journey.

A fast rooted in love will always bear more fruit than one driven by obligation. Ask Jesus what He desires for you this Lent—His invitation is always one of love.

Almsgiving in the Everyday

For many women, generosity is already woven into the fabric of daily life. You pour yourself out for your family, your ministry, and your community. This Lent, rather than adding another obligation, consider reframing what almsgiving looks like:

Offer your presence to someone who needs to be heard.

JOB OPENING: Director of Music & Liturgy

Position available at St. Rita Catholic Church in Alexandria, LA for 3 Masses a weekend, 4:00 p.m. Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Sundays and special celebrations as needed.

Looking for someone who is competent on the organ and piano. Must be able to read music, plan liturgies including major feast days and conduct an adult and youth choir. Salary is negotiable.

For more information contact,
Fr. Anthony (Raj) Dharmaraj at 445-7141 ext. 212 or
Etta Ohrt at 445-7141 ext. 210.

Give yourself grace and rest when you need it.

Speak words of encouragement to someone who is struggling.

Your love and service are gifts to God. Honor them as such.

Resting in God's Love

At the heart of Lent is an

invitation to return to God's love. For tired women, this means letting go of the idea that you must do more to be worthy. You already belong to Him. This Lent, lean into that truth.

Come to Him in your weariness. Let Him hold you. And know that your offering—even in its simplicity—is enough.

Silent Lenten retreat: A journey of spiritual renewal

This Lent, set aside time for spiritual renewal at the Silent Lenten Retreat, April 3-6 at Maryhill Renewal Center. Designed to deepen your relationship with Jesus, this retreat offers peace, reflection, and growth as you prepare for Easter.

Throughout the weekend, you'll have the chance to immerse yourself in a spiritual journey marked by:

Guided Prayer: Personal spiritual direction to help you grow in faith.

Silence: Step away from distractions and open your heart to God.

Spiritual Reconnection: Rediscover the beauty of prayer and reflection.

One past participant shared, “I thoroughly enjoyed the retreat. My Spiritual Director helped me learn ways to improve my prayer life and grow closer to God.” This testimony is a reflection of the powerful experiences others have had at the retreat, and it can be yours as well.

The retreat includes quiet prayer, Adoration, Mass, and time for reflection and confession,

leading you into a transformative Lenten season.

Retreat Schedule:

Thursday: Check-in (3:30-5:00 p.m.), Dinner, Orientation (6:30 p.m.)

Friday-Sunday: Spiritual Direction, Silent Prayer, Adoration, Mass (Departure Sunday at 3:30 p.m.)

Space is limited. To register or for more information, contact:

Charlotte Wasmer:
318-730-1025
cwasmer@diocesealex.org
Ingrid Cannella:
318-792-3331
icnewell@yahoo.com

Take this opportunity to step away from life's busyness and embrace the grace of silence, reflection, and renewal this Lent.

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(318)717-1995

A special blessing: Our Lady of Prompt Succor students encounter Blessed Carlo Acutis' relic

On February 6 and 7, students at Our Lady of Prompt Succor School in Alexandria had the incredible opportunity to see and touch a first-class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who will be canonized as a saint on April 27 of this year.



We are deeply grateful to the Missionary Sisters, Clara and Rochelle, from the Alliance of the Holy Family International at St. Joseph School in Plaquemine, for bringing the relic to our school. Along with the relic, the students received a brown scapular, rosary beads, and a card about Blessed Carlo, which they were able to touch the relic, making them third-class relics.

It was a beautiful experience for our students, especially as they learned about Blessed Carlo, a young man who, just like them, had a deep love for Jesus and the Eucharist. Sisters Clara and Rochelle led the students in Adoration with the relic, sharing the inspiring story of Blessed Carlo's life and his devotion to key themes he wanted to share with the world: CARE - Confession, Adoration, Rosary,



and Eucharist.

The sisters also visited each classroom, blessing them along the way, and sharing the powerful message of this young saint whose faith and devotion continue to inspire people of all ages.

Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us!

IMMEDIATE PART-TIME JOB OPENING

Radio Maria, in Alexandria, has an immediate opening for a part-time Sound Board Operator. Communication or broadcasting experience preferred, but will provide training on sound board equipment and software. Must have working knowledge of the Catholic Church. Hours include 20 hrs a week; mornings + Saturday; \$11 - \$13 per hour. If interested, submit resume and cover letter to kfontenot@radiomaria.us. Deadline to apply is Friday, March 7.

POSITION OPEN: ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Our Lady of Prompt Succor School is seeking an enthusiastic, dedicated, and qualified Assistant Principal for the 2025-2026 school year. Applications will be accepted through Friday, March 14, 2025.

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Bachelor's Degree
- Current Louisiana Teacher's Certificate
- Master's Degree - Educational Leadership Preferred
- Successful, documented teaching experience required (5+ years)

For Application Packet, please contact: Meredith Rhoads, Principal - rhoads_m@promptsuccor.org
Inquiries and applications may be sent to: Our Lady of Prompt Succor School
420 21st Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71301

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Catholics from Central and South Louisiana on pilgrimage in Rome

by Fr. Taylor Reynolds, JCL
Pastor of St. Joseph Church,
St. Joseph, Louisiana

“Hope does not disappoint!”, said St. Paul, two-thousand year ago to the Church in Rome. Now, two-thousand years later, Rome speaks those same words to the Church to open the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope! During this year, Catholics are called to reconnect with their identity as a pilgrim people, through visible pilgrimages both in their local diocese as well as to the holy sites of Rome.

I was blessed to lead a group of about 35 Catholics from Central and South Louisiana, including two seminarians and a permanent deacon of the diocese, on pilgrimage to the Holy sites of Italy. We began in Turin to see the body of Blessed Frassati as well as the place where the Holy Shroud of Turin is conserved. We then made our way to Assisi to visit the tombs of St. Claire, Blessed Carlo Acutis, and St. Francis of Assisi. We finally made our way to the Holy City of Rome and all the major and minor basilicas there.

“The Holy Spirit moved in profound ways, and just seeing the rich traditions and roots of our faith renewed my gratitude and pride to be a member of the universal Catholic Church!” commented Sarah Catherine Laborde, a fellow pilgrim and member of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria.

While in Rome, we were able to pass through all four of the Holy Doors in the major basilicas. Each of the doors was on the right side of the Basilica



PILGRIMAGE TO ROME. Fr. Taylor Reynolds accompanied a group to Rome, Italy recently. Included in the group were Catholics from Central and South Louisiana, two seminarians and a deacon.

representing that Jesus, who sits at the right hand of the Father, is the Door. Only Mary Major is the door on the left as she stands near her son. As we passed through the beautiful polished bronze doors, we were greeted by the Knights of Malta who bowed and saluted as we entered through the doors. You can only enter through the Holy Door, to show you never come out the same after grace.

“What I took from this trip has renewed my faith in ways that I can’t even explain. Not to mention the friendships and faith sharing gained from each and every one who went on this trip,” said Michael Dickerson, member of Jesus Good Shepherd

in Monroe as well as St. Joseph Church in St. Joseph, LA.

In addition to walking through the Holy Doors, the faithful were able to attend mass at the Major basilicas, climb the Holy Stairs, and venerate the relics of the Passion.

“The most heavenly experience of the pilgrimage was participating in the Mass in the crypt of St. Peter’s while another half a dozen masses were also occurring...it gave such a greater sense of community within the universal Church,” noted Renee Aldridge of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria.

HOLY FATHER’S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR MARCH 2025

For families in crisis:

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other’s gifts, even in their differences.

The pilgrimage ended with a visit to the home where St. Maria Goretti was martyred as well as the Shrine of Our Lady of Grace on the Mediterranean Sea.

“To hear the stories of courage and faith of the saints of our early Church brings an excitement in my heart to persevere! It was the trip of a lifetime for me and my family. Just when I thought the next experience could not get any better, it did! Getting to climb and pray the Holy Stairs was indeed the most special thing I have ever done in my life,” said Ellen and Greg Dunn of OLPS, Alexandria.

I invite all Catholics this year to approach the Holy Door of Jesus who stands open to welcome all who walk through in hope!

‘We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and a far-sighted vision.’

Pope Francis on the Jubilee Year of Hope



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BISHOP CELEBRATES MASS AT ST. LOUIS CHURCH, GLENMORA. During his visit to St. Louis Church in Glenmora, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrates Mass in English, sharing the Word of God and the Sacrament of the Eucharist with the local faith community.



BISHOP CELEBRATES MASS AT ST. PETER MISSION, ELMER. Bishop Robert Marshall presides over the Eucharistic celebration at St. Peter Mission in Elmer, gathering with parishioners for a time of prayer and worship.

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hosted by
St. Joseph Church

March 20 - 23
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by
St. Michael the Archangel Church

March 27 - 30
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by
Sacred Heart Church

All retreats are held at Maryhill
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- Monsignor B. A. Scallan
- Father H. Gerald Bordelon
- Father Daniel Corkery (3 Completed)
- Father Michael P. Kammer
- Father Christian Ogbonna
- Father William B. Provosty (2 Completed)
- Deacon Rodrick "Benny" Broussard
- Bobby D. Basco
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- John Dominick Driscoll
- Miss Mary F. Early
- Irvin and Elma Moreau, Harrison P. Moreau, Michael N. Moreau, Deborah S. Moreau Bouche, Emily A. Moreau, Tom and Mary Candiotto, and Ruby Moreau
- David Stafford "Brother" O'Shee
- Mr. and Mrs. Howard E. Shores
- John Gregory Simms
- John T. Simms, Jr.
- Sadie Stroud

The following is a list of established bursees and amounts in each:

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Bishop William Friend	100.00
Bishop Lawrence P. Graves	5,805.00
Bishop Charles P. Greco	1,700.00
Bishop Ronald P. Herzog	450.00
Bishop Sam G. Jacobs	1,200.00
Bishop Robert W. Marshall, Jr.	700.00
Bishop David P. Talley	525.00
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Monsignor Leon R. Aycock	1,535.00
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Monsignor Paul E. Conway	825.00
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Monsignor Allen M. Chenevert	1,000.00
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Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence	100.00
Deceased Members of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court Regina Pacis #1372, Natchitoches	775.00
In Honor of Providence Central High School Class of 1959	1,450.00
Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches	100.00
Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish, Alexandria	3,260.00
St. Edward the Confessor Parish, Tallulah	100.00
St. Mary's Assumption Parish Cottonport	700.00
General Fund	2,000.00
Total	770,779.17



RELIGIOUS SISTERS HONORED AT MASS. On Sunday, Feb. 2, Bishop Robert Marshall welcomed religious sisters from four communities serving in the Diocese of Alexandria during the 11:00 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral. Represented were the Sisters of the Holy Family, the Sisters of the Secular Institute of the Two Hearts, the Teresian Sisters (las Hermanas Teresians), and the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, who brought their Superior, Sister Serena, visiting from the community. The diocese is grateful for the sisters' ministry and the witness of their lives of faith.

Seminarian Burses

January 2025 Donations

Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
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Mr. Vince Aymond, Jr.	\$50.00
Father Daniel O'Connor Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Rusty Rabalais Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Mr. John Vandersypen	\$200.00
Jerome and Audrey Vandersypen Burse	
Total	\$600.00

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Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.
 Psalm 91: 15
 Responsorial Psalm for March 9
 First Sunday of Lent

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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.



SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE.

Catholic Schools Week

National Catholic Schools Week was observed January 25-February 1. Some of the activities at our Catholic Schools within the diocese included participating in area March for Life events, Open House events at schools, vocations presentations, stage productions, special dress up and theme days and celebrating Mass with the Bishop. Our Catholic Schools have a lot to offer! View more photos on the schools events photo gallery at www.diocesealex.org.



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL, NATCHITOCHEs.



HOLY SAVIOR MENARD, ALEXANDRIA.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA.



(left) ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL, BUNKIE.

(right) ST. JOSEPH ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL, PLAUCHEVILLE.

(bottom left) ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION SCHOOL, COTTONPORT

(below) OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA





ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, PLAUCHEVILLE SR. BETA attended the State Convention in Lafayette today Saturday, Jan. 31. They participated in several different events from testing, on-site art, engineering, and many other competitions.



CENLA MARCH FOR LIFE. The community proudly participated in the March for Life held in Pineville, Feb. 1. God bless all who participated and actively demonstrated the value of human life.

Junior Pilgrim's coloring pages

This month's featured Junior Pilgrims are Frances and Niall who visited pilgrimage site St. Paul the Apostle in Mansura. Upload YOUR coloring pages at www.diocesealex.org/jubilee-year-2025/jubilee-pilgrimage/jr-pilgrims/ and you might see your pages here in an upcoming issue of the Church Today!

By Frances M., age 11:



By Niall M., age 5:



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LENT 101

(continued from pg. 3)

or school, or during nature walks and other such exercises.

Lent can also provide us a chance to pray in ways beyond simply asking things from God for ourselves. Praising him for his glory and wonder, acknowledging and thanking him for our many

blessings and calling on God to intercede and aid in the lives of others are all examples of how we can appreciate God's presence and works.

Looking Ahead

So while Lent may seem demanding and perhaps uncomfortable, its purpose is definitely not to cause us pain. During this important season, we are given an opportunity for self-

examination in order to better discover both our identity as children of God and the beautiful relationship with the Lord that can flow from that.

As we embark now on this annual adventure in our faith, may we embrace each day Lent brings as an occasion to advance spiritually and better connect with Jesus and our neighbors.

Prayers, adoration, and getting back to basics of faith seen as ways to encourage vocations

By Tom Tracy
Our Sunday Visitor

NAPLES, Fla. (OSV News) — Prayers and fasting, Eucharistic adoration and getting back to the basics of the Catholic faith are some of the ways the laity can encourage priestly and religious vocations in 2025.

Those were among the recommendations that a panel of lay and religious offered during the 2025 Legatus annual summit for Catholic business men and women Feb. 6-9 at the Ritz-Carlton in Naples. Some 700 people attended the three-day national gathering.

New Jersey native Sister Pia Jude, who entered the Sisters of Life community in 2013 after law school and a short law career in New York City's Wall Street district, recalled the importance of a strong parish engagement within her family.

"Parish life for me was everything — I was a little altar server and that meant being so close to the Lord standing up there, being involved in the parish and

the parish and having Eucharistic adoration Holy Hours available to the young does make a difference," said Sister Pia Jude, who has an identical twin sister, Sister Luca Benedict, also a Sister of Life. Sister Pia Jude currently lives at Annunciation Motherhouse in Suffern, New York, and serves as an assistant to Mother Mary Concepta, superior general of her order.

Pro-Life Holy Hour

"We had a priest in our parish and his thought was to have a Holy Hour for the parish pro-life society that my mom was part of — she brought her two little daughters to this Holy Hour," Sister Pia Jude said.

"And so sitting before Our Lord in the Eucharist praying; I didn't really know how to pray but I knew Jesus was there," she added.

"I do think that we're planting seeds we don't even know and that I couldn't have articulated back then, but the Lord showed me later on as I was in religious life that 'I've seen you and I've known you

from this moment. I saw you there, I was calling you, I was drawing you.'"

"Those confirmed my vocational graces, those were bedrock for me," Sister Pia Jude told the Legatus audience.

'Lift Up Your Heart'

Also on hand was Father John Burns, a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee ordained in 2010 and author of "Lift Up Your Heart: A 10-Day Personal Retreat with St. Francis de Sales." He is the founder of Friends of the Bridegroom, an apostolate dedicated to the renewal of the church through the renewal of women's religious life.

Father Burns noted that canon law defines religious life as the most perfect way to imitate Christ, "not meaning that it is better than other states in life, but it is the fullest way you can cling to Christ, and it is given to us so that the world may see something of what it looks like to being completely to Christ," he said.

Recent decades of secularism, clericalism and scandals among

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the clergy brought the church to a place where many priests are themselves embarrassed by their priestly vocation and identity, he added. They may, as a result, have backed away from the supernatural and attempted to make religious life look more normal and approachable.

“But it isn’t normal; it is supernatural,” Father Burns said of religious vocations.

“I would never trade this life — given a thousand times to redo things I would never choose another pathway,” he said.

Encouraging Vocations

“And as a church we are

getting comfortable saying, ‘We need holy priests and we need holy sisters and it would be a gift if my son or my daughter were called to that.’ It would be an honor if God might be interested in your son, your daughter, your granddaughter, your grandson and to encourage them in that,” Father Burns said.

He also recommended parishes and the laity adopt prayer, fasting and alms to ask God for an increase in vocations even if the fruits of those efforts are not realized in the short run.

“We have to believe that God wants his church renewed,

that God wants holy priests, holy marriages and holy religious and that he is the one doing the work and we have to align with his will,” the priest added. “Be willing to say, God, what do you want to do; how do you want to mobilize us to renew your church?”

Jason Shanks, CEO of the National Eucharistic Congress Inc. which recently announced its next national congress will be held in 2029, told the gathering of his work as a layman organizing a Catholic youth summer camp in Ohio in 2000, replete with jet skis, a ropes course and other adventure sports.

“The kids would leave and would say, ‘We came for the adventure but what we got out of it was the Mass, the adoration, the worship,’” Shanks said. “I think the parents would send the kids for the jet skis and the high ropes course but were tickled and touched that they came back talking about Jesus.”

Quiet Time to Discern a Calling

What families need to do

is carve out more quiet and reflective time for youth to escape the pressures and distractions of daily life in order to discern their calling, according to Shanks. He agreed with Sister Pia Jude that adoration time is a great time and place for such discernment.

“We live in a world of so much distraction and so much pressure on these kids that we need to create that space of silence so they can discern what the voice of the Lord is doing in their life,” he said, adding that last year’s Eucharistic congress seemed to renew the participating clergy and hierarchy as well.

“All of us in Legatus can be part of that healing solution as this revival moves forward and to love and encourage our priests and our religious and our families every day,” Shanks said.

EWTN’s Colm Flynn, who moderated the vocations conversation, added his recollection of reporting from 2023’s World Youth Day Lisbon in Portugal, and how the event featured a broad range of activities

both traditional and secular.

‘It Was the Eucharist’

The morning of the final day before the closing World Youth Day Mass with Pope Francis featured a DJ priest “who for 40 minutes did this really loud techno set” of music, Flynn said. “Not one person we interviewed said that was the highlight that touched me, that made me think differently. It was the Eucharist, or the priest who led late night discussions they remembered.”

“There is this idea that if we don’t be more like the world, they won’t come for us, rather than, ‘Let’s invite the world to be more like the Gospel,’” Flynn added.

“A priest I know back in Scotland who had been in Angola for 30 years said to me: ‘You have to tell more young people that besides the supernatural aspect, it is a great exciting life. You travel, you meet people. He said the church needs to be not arrogant but more bold and say, ‘This is the best thing you could ever do with your life.’”



The Holy Eucharist

God, our Father, in heaven above,
Sent His son down with the
greatest gift of love.

It is the Holy Eucharist, a gift for all,
The greatest source of grace after the fall.

His body is real food,
His blood is real drink,
The changes take place before
the eye can blink.

His body and blood,
the best source of good health.
Better than all things on earth
and all its wealth.

So, when in His presence,
all knees must bend,
Because He will be with us
until the very end.

by Marcus Descant, Leesville, Louisiana

lizdescant@gmail.com

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FR. JOHN CUNNINGHAM INDUCTED TO ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL ACADEMIC HALL OF FAME.

St. Mary's School in Natchitoches recently announced the induction of Fr. John Cunningham, a distinguished alumnus from the Class of 1951, into the St. Mary's Catholic School Academic Hall of Fame during an All-School Mass on Wednesday, Jan. 29. The special event was held as part of the school's observance of Catholic Schools Week. Members of Fr. Cunningham's family, many of whom are also St. Mary's alumni, were present to honor his remarkable journey and witness this meaningful recognition. Pictured are St. Mary's school leaders and members of the Cunningham family (l-r): Deacon Chad Thibodeaux, Fr. John (Class of 1951), Chancellor Fr. Iron St. Romain, Alicia Cunningham (Class of 1980), Teri Cunningham, Peyton F [redacted] (sophomore at SMS), Catherine Cunningham Faucheaux (Class of 1988), Renea Cunningham (Class of 2020), Rachel Cunningham (SMS teacher/coach, 1997-2020), Reagan Cunningham (Class of 2016) and Joe Cunningham (Class of 1956). Back row: Principal Stephen Wren, John Paul Thibodaux, Cole Yopp, Jacob Thibodaux, L'Anne Sciba (niece of Fr. John), John Cunningham (SMS, 1969-1975) and Roger Cunningham (SMS, 1970-1975). Father John celebrated his 91st birthday this month.

Retrouvaille enrollment now open!

Enrollment is now open for the Retrouvaille Weekend, taking place March 21-23, 2025 at Grand Coteau Retreats in Grand Coteau, LA.

Retrouvaille is a three-phase program designed to help couples navigate marriage challenges in a healthy and productive way. It begins with a weekend retreat, followed by post-weekend sessions and ongoing monthly marriage support.

To register, visit helpourmarriage.org, or call 1-800-470-2230.

For more information, contact the Community Coordinator Couple, Randall and Robin Bellard, at 225-271-4092.

Catholic Students of the Year

Judging for the Catholic Student of the Year took place on Wednesday, Jan. 29 at the St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria. Students are judged on a submitted portfolio which includes examples of leadership, activities, discipleship, service, and academic excellence. Each finalist must also write an essay and participate in an interview.

We congratulate all students who participated. Those placing are as follows:

5th Grade: 3rd place, Lucy DeKeyzer, Our Lady of Prompt Succor School; 2nd place, Lane Gauthier, Sacred Heart School, Moreauville; 1st place, Carter H [redacted], St. Mary's Catholic School, Natchitoches



**8th Grade winner
Brees V [redacted]
St. Anthony School, Bunkie**

12th Grade: 3rd place, Bo Pilgreen, St. Joseph School, Plaquemine; 2nd place, Camryn Harrison, Holy Savior Menard; 1st place, Ainsley A [redacted], St. Mary's Catholic School. Winners will go on to state competition.



**5th Grade winner
Carter H [redacted]
St. Mary's, Natchitoches**

8th Grade: 3rd place, Baylor Fall, Holy Savior Menard; 2nd place, Adalyn Rhodes, St. Mary's Catholic School; 1st place, Brees V [redacted], St. Anthony School, Bunkie



**12th Grade winner
Ainsley A [redacted]
St. Mary's, Natchitoches**

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The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Psalm 21: 1
 Responsorial Psalm for March 16
 Second Sunday of Lent

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THE CARMELITE SECULAR COMMUNITY OF ELIJAH THE PROPHET AND SAINT MARY OF JESUS CRUCIFIED celebrated rituals on Saturday, Dec. 12, at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville. Fr. Louis Sklar, Spiritual Assistant, presided along with Deacon Bill Travis. During the Liturgy of the Hours, Ken McDaniel, taking the devotional name of St. Joseph and Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, made his definitive promises. At the same time, Rachel Bruce, Gina Juneau, and Connie Steen were clothed in the Scapular of the Order. From left to right: Ken McDaniel, Dcn Bill Travis, Fr. Louis Sklar, Gina Juneau, Connie Steen, and Rachel Bruce.



ST. RITA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA, ANNIVERSARY COUPLES. The following couples were honored on World Marriage Sunday, Feb. 9 with a Papal Blessing from Pope Francis. 25 years: Jason and Amanda Hebert, Russell and Carla Jeansonne, Michael and Linda Verzwylvelt. 40 years: Wayne and JoAnn Leggio. 50 years: Paul and Arlene Coreil, Conrad and Sharon Ducote, Larry and Wanda Hinton, Michael and Carol Jeansonne, Curtis and Barbara Meaux, Arthur and Monica Newton, Robert and Rita Vandersypen. 60 years: Douglas and Patsy Fries. 65 years: Donald and Hope Lachney. 70 years: Larry and Marguerite Robin Sr. Please join us in congratulating these couples.

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WE INVITE YOU TO SHARE!

If you or your family are participating in the Jubilee Pilgrimage this year and have visited one of the Pilgrim Sites, we invite you to share your story! Submissions will be considered for publication in The Church Today in the new featured article series Pilgrimage of Hope: Journey through the Jubilee Year. This series will run throughout the 2025 Jubilee Year, with a different individual or family from our Diocese featured each month. For more information and submission details, please email hmorgan@diocesealex.org.

The Lord is kind and merciful.

Psalm 103: 8
Responsorial Psalm for March 23
Third Sunday of Lent

Celebrating Faith, Education, and Community: Catholic Schools Week at Holy Savior Menard

by *Abbey Scalisi*
Senior and MAC Team member
at Holy Savior Menard

Each year, Catholic Schools Week gives students, faculty, parents, and the community a chance to come together and celebrate the many blessings of a Catholic education. From January 26-31, 2025, the halls of Holy Savior Menard were filled with joy, appreciation, and deep expressions of faith as we participated in various activities designed to recognize the importance of our Catholic beliefs and the hard work of our school community.

One of the most meaningful experiences during Catholic Schools Week is the opportunity to reflect on and show gratitude for our beginnings in Catholic education. On Monday, January 27, students from Holy Savior Menard returned to their elementary schools within the Diocese of Alexandria. I had the privilege of assisting with the carpool lines, greeting children with a warm

welcome as they arrived for the school day. It was a beautiful way to remember where we began our own academic journeys and to express our gratitude for the faith-filled education we received in those early years.

Tuesday brought even more excitement for the students at Holy Savior Menard. It was a spirited dress day, and throughout the day, a surprise snack cart sponsored by the HSM Parent-Teacher Club (PTC) visited each classroom, offering a special treat to every student. It was a fun way to bring joy to the classroom and remind us of the wonderful community that supports our school.

The blessings continued on Wednesday as we gathered with Father Luke Lafleur to celebrate the blessing of vocations. We are truly fortunate to have Father Luke as our school chaplain. He is always available to hear our confessions, provide spiritual guidance, and help us stay focused on God's path for our lives. This day was a reminder of the importance of following God's



calling and the role that our school plays in fostering spiritual growth.

Thursday was a day of appreciation for the faculty and staff at Holy Savior Menard. Students sent handwritten notes of love and gratitude to their teachers, staff members, and administrators, reminding them of the incredible impact they have on our lives. These notes were incredibly meaningful to those who work tirelessly to ensure that we receive a quality education rooted in faith. The PTC also provided a coffee cart for the teachers and treated them to a wonderful lunch, further demonstrating how much they are appreciated.

Thursday was also a special day for prospective families, as Holy Savior Menard hosted its Preview Day. Families from other schools were welcomed by our principal, Mr. Chris Gatlin, and had the chance to tour classrooms and see the wonderful work happening at Menard. It was a great opportunity to share our experiences with others

and showcase the excellence of Catholic education.

For me, the highlight of Catholic Schools Week was the annual Eucharistic Procession. Students and faculty gathered in front of the school and, led by Father Luke carrying the Eucharist, walked to St. Rita Catholic Church. It was a powerful public demonstration of our faith as we followed the True Presence of Jesus through the streets of our community. Members of the Menard Apostles for Christ ministry team carried banners and a canopy in the procession, further enhancing the public expression of our beliefs. This day holds a special place in my heart because it serves as a reminder that living our faith openly and proudly is something to be celebrated. As the saying goes, "God died for us in public, so why should we live for Him in private?"

Catholic Schools Week is a time for all students and staff in

Catholic schools to come together and celebrate the countless blessings God has given us. Within the walls of our school, we find not only an excellent academic education but also a community where we can grow spiritually, express our faith freely, and be proud of who we are as Catholics. It is a privilege to be part of such a supportive environment where we can proclaim our faith without fear of judgment.

As we reflect on Catholic Schools Week 2025, it is clear that our Catholic education goes far beyond textbooks and classrooms. It is about growing in our relationship with God, supporting one another, and sharing the love and joy that come from being part of the Catholic community. We are truly blessed at Holy Savior Menard to have such an opportunity to celebrate our faith in such a public and meaningful way.



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*The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.*

Psalm 23: 1
Responsorial Psalm for March 30
Fourth Sunday of Lent

Steubenville South: A life-changing weekend for our teens

- Registration is halfway full!

Holy guacamole—Steubenville South is already 50% full! If your parish hasn't registered yet, now is the time to secure a spot for your teens at this life-changing conference.

Each summer, thousands of young Catholics from across the Gulf South gather for a weekend of powerful worship, dynamic speakers, and an encounter with the living God. Steubenville South provides teens with the opportunity to strengthen their faith, build Christ-centered friendships, and be empowered as disciples. It's more than just an event—it's an experience that can transform their relationship with Christ and their role in the Church.

Why Steubenville South?

For many teens, the Steubenville South Conference is a turning point in their faith journey. At a time when young people are bombarded with conflicting messages about identity, purpose, and truth, this conference offers them a firm foundation in Christ.

Throughout the weekend, teens will experience:

- Engaging talks that speak to the challenges they face
- Joy-filled worship that draws them deeper into prayer
- Time for small group discussion to process what they're learning
- The sacraments—including Eucharistic Adoration and the opportunity for Confession
- Encouragement to live their faith boldly long after the conference ends

The energy and joy of Steubenville South are contagious, and the impact lasts well beyond the weekend. Many teens return home renewed, inspired, and ready to take the next step in their faith. For some, this is the



DIOCESAN CONFIRMATION RETREAT. Over 200 youth and adult chaperones gathered for a day of prayer, community, and reflection in preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Led by Kyle Melancon, Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Lafayette, the retreat focused on the theme, "Imago Dei." The day included adoration, Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert Marshall, Jr., and participation from 21 parishes and missions.

moment they fully surrender their lives to Christ.

A Message for Parents & Grandparents: Give the Gift of Faith

Parents and grandparents play a vital role in the spiritual lives of young people. If you have a teen in your life, consider sending them to Steubenville South as a gift of faith.

In today's fast-paced world, teens are constantly connected—yet they often feel more isolated than ever. This conference gives them the opportunity to step away from distractions, encounter Christ, and build friendships rooted in faith.

If your teen is hesitant to attend, encourage them! Many first-time attendees aren't sure what to expect, but by the end of the weekend, they're grateful they came. If cost is a concern, check

with your parish about fundraising opportunities or consider sponsoring a teen who might not be able to attend otherwise.

Even if your own children or grandchildren are grown, you can still make a lasting impact by encouraging young families in your parish to send their teens or by offering financial support for those in need.

A Call to Prayer: Cover Our Teens in Grace

Even if you don't have a teen attending, you can still make a difference. We invite everyone in the diocese to commit to praying for the youth who will attend Steubenville South.

The enemy works hard to discourage young people from growing in their faith, but prayer is powerful! As a community, let's pray that:

- Teens attending will have

open hearts to receive what God has for them

- The Holy Spirit will move powerfully in their lives throughout the weekend
- Group leaders and chaperones will be strengthened in their own faith
- Every teen who needs to be there will have the opportunity to attend

If you're part of a parish prayer group or ministry, consider setting aside time to pray for Steubenville South attendees in the weeks leading up to the conference. Prayer warriors are just as essential to this mission as the teens and group leaders who attend!

Join Us!

- June 20-22, 2025
- Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria, LA

more than just a conference—it's a launchpad for lifelong discipleship. Let's work together to raise up a new generation of young Catholics who are passionate about their faith, confident in their identity in Christ, and ready to share the Gospel with the world.

Spots are filling fast—register today! Visit [Insert Registration Link] to secure your group's place at Steubenville South.

Have questions? Visit www.steubenvillesouth.com/faq for answers to common questions.

Need promotional materials to spread the word? Download flyers, graphics, and more at www.steubenvillesouth.com/resources.

Make sure you're on our email list to receive the latest conference updates each month! Stay informed about deadlines, special announcements, and resources to help make your Steubenville South experience as smooth and impactful as possible.

We can't wait to see what God has in store!



Campus Ministry:

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LSUA Catholic Student Organization, 318-447-2956.
Follow us on Facebook or Instagram @lsuacatholics

Northwestern State University:
NSU Catholic Student Organization
FOCUS Ministries.
Contact Holy Cross Church:
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Catholic Charities Clergy Waiter Dinner - March 3

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana will be hosting their first fundraiser of 2025 at Maryhill on Lundi Gras, March 3! We invite you to join us for a night of Mardi Gras fun with the bishop and clergy of our Diocese as we raise funds for the good work of this organization. There will be a delicious meal, a silent auction, and of course fun with our wait staff! There are two sponsorship levels available as well as individual tickets. Purchases can be made either online at ccenla.org or by check payable to Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana and mailed to 4400 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria, LA 71303.

For more information, please contact Heidi Wampler at hwampler@ccenla.org or call (318) 445-2401, extension 510.

4th Annual Fullness of Truth Conference - March 7-9

The Fullness of Truth Conference will be held at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria. The theme of this year's conference is "Go Make Disciples: The Eucharistic Revival & the Call to Evangelize".

Equip yourselves with the expertise of renown convert scripture scholar & prolific author, Dr. John Bergsma, the dynamic Louisiana-native & veteran Catholic apologist Dr. Karlo Broussard, the spunky Catholic convert "evangelista" & author Sonja Corbitt, and the hilarious comedian & evangelist Paul J. Kim. Sacred music will be provided by NOLA-based & Hallow App's The Vigil Project and a special youth track on Saturday as well. Our Conference will be your guide to what the "New Evangelization" is, and to the next chapter in the National Eucharistic Revival; a new Pentecost! Don't miss it!

To register, room reservations, see the event schedule or to learn more details, visit our website: www.fullnessoftruth.org or call: 877-218-7884 / 877-21-TRUTH.

Discalced Carmelites Monthly Meeting - March 8

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.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

EMHC Workshop - March 11

The next workshop for Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will be held on Mar. 11 at the St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria. The average time for the workshop is about three hours so please plan accordingly. For more information, contact Dcn Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext 207 or by email at dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org. Tuesday, March 11, 6:00 p.m., St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria. No need to register and no charge to attend. When the session is completed you will receive a certificate. We will be happy to have you!

HSM Shamrockin' FEST - March 15

Join us at Randolph Riverfront Center March 15 for the annual HSM Shamrockin' FEST, our annual spring fundraiser that allows us to come together in fellowship among our HSM families, along with many others from our local community. There will be numerous Mixology Teams providing samples of custom beverages, along with a Silent Auction, live band and delicious food. All are welcome!

Proceeds from this year's Shamrockin' event will be used to replace heaters in the school gym. Please consider contributing to our event by purchasing a table, an individual ticket, contributing to a Mixology Team and/or making a monetary donation. Help us reach our fundraising goal! VIP doors open at 5:30 p.m. and general admission begins at 6:00 p.m. For more information, please visit www.hsmfest.com (This is an adult only event.)

Ecumenical St. Joseph Altar - March 16

Sunday, Mar. 16, St. Joseph Church will host an ecumenical St. Joseph altar for the entire community of St Joseph, LA! Begins at 5:00 p.m. with prayer, blessing and scripture lead by pastors of the town and the music offered by church members and a large potluck meal! All are welcome!

Marriage Help Program - March 20-23

Those who are considering marriage separation and those who are already separated or divorced are encouraged to consider this Retrouvaille Program. There is always hope of reviving your relationship. Retrouvaille is a Christian marriage program and is Catholic in origin. Couples of all faiths and those with no faith tradition are welcome and encouraged to attend. Tens of thousands of marriages have

been restored with the simple concept of couples helping couples with the spiritual guidance from caring clergy members. Our next weekend program will be held at Grand Coteau Retreats in Grand Coteau, LA on March 20-23, enrollment is now open. For more information, visit <https://helpourmarriage.org/>.

"Guys and Dolls" presented by HSM - March 21-23

Join us at the Coughlin Saunders Performing Arts Center in Alexandria March 21-23 for a production of "Guys and Dolls" presented by the theater arts department students of Holy Savior Menard High School. To buy tickets visit www.i2tickets.com.

Silent Lenten Retreat - April 3-6

This Lent, set aside time for a profound spiritual renewal. We invite you to experience the grace of silence and solitude at our Silent Lenten Retreat at Maryhill Renewal Center, designed to deepen your relationship with Jesus. Spend a weekend in:

- Guided prayer tailored for you by an individual Spiritual Director.
- Fast from the noise and distractions of your busy life by embracing the silence.
- Give of your time and self and reconnect to the heart of the Lord.

Let this be a time of spiritual growth as you journey towards Easter. Space is limited. Open to everyone. To register or for more information, contact: Charlotte Wasmer at 318-730-1025 or cwasmer@diocesealex.org; Ingrid Cannella at 318-792-3331 or icnewell@yahoo.com.

Seminary Come and See Weekend - April 11-13

St. Joseph Abbey Seminary College is scheduled to have its Spring Come and See weekend from April 11-13. This is a great opportunity for any male 16 years old or older to come and see the seminary campus and what seminary life is like. For more information, please contact the Director of Vocations, Fr. Luke LaFleur at frllafleur@diocesealex.org.

Women's Silent Ignatian Preached Retreat - April 24-27

"Everything is Holy Now," a Silent Ignatian Preached Retreat for Women will be held at Maryhill Renewal Center on April 24-27, led by Ignatian Spiritual Director Becky Eldridge. Cost: \$275. To register, please visit: www.diocesealex.org

Church Today News Deadlines

March 24
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Mar. 16

April 28
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Apr. 10



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March 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
FEBRUARY 24 <small>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</small>	25 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES</small>	26 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH</small>	27 <small>PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</small>	28 <small>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</small>	MARCH 1 FIRST SATURDAY <small>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</small>	2 <small>PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY</small>
3 CCCenla Clergy Waiter Dinner Maryhill Renewal Center <small>PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA</small>	4 MARDI GRAS <small>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</small>	5 ASH WEDNESDAY <small>PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN</small>	6 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. P. SUNDERHAUS</small>	7 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. C. THIBODEAUX</small>	8 Discalced Carmelites Monthly Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center FULLNESS OF TRUTH CONFERENCE -- ALEXANDRIA <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS</small>	9 First Sunday of Lent Rite of Election 2:30 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria <small>PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS</small>
10 VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria <small>PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS</small>	11 EMHC Workshop 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria <small>PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE</small>	12 <small>PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD</small>	13 <small>PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ</small>	14 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. L. WHITE</small>	15 Shamrockin' FEST 6:00 p.m. Randolph Riverfront Center, Alexandria Women's ACTS Retreat hosted by St. Joseph Church -- Maryhill Renewal Center <small>PRAY FOR DCN. J. WHITEHEAD</small>	16 Second Sunday of Lent Ecumenical St. Joseph's Altar 5:00 pm St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph, LA <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE</small>
17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER</small>	18 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. M. YOUNG</small>	19 SOLEMNITY of ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY <small>PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH</small>	20 <small>PRAY FOR FR. A. AELAVANTHARA</small>	21 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. W. ALDRIDGE</small>	22 Guys and Dolls presented by HSM -- Coughlin Saunders Ctr, Alexandria Men's ACTS Retreat hosted by St. Michael the Archangel Church -- Maryhill Renewal Center Retrouvaille Marriage Help Program -- Grand Coteau, LA <small>PRAY FOR DCN. F. ANDRADE</small>	23 Third Sunday of Lent <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. ANTONY</small>
24 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. E.J. BARRE</small>	25 <small>PRAY FOR FR. S. BRANDOW</small>	26 <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. BROCATO</small>	27 <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. BURCH</small>	28 <small>PRAY FOR MSGR. S. CHEMINO</small>	29 <small>PRAY FOR DCN. R. CHRISTOPHER</small>	30 Fourth Sunday of Lent Men's ACTS Retreat hosted by Sacred Heart Church -- Maryhill Renewal Center <small>PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM</small>



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