

CHURCH TODAY

Volume XLVI, No. 1

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January 19, 2015

ON THE INSIDE

Bishop Herzog celebrates 10-year anniversary as bishop of diocese

Bishop Ronald Herzog celebrated his 10-year anniversary as bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria Jan. 5 with a Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria. See details on pg. 3.

Catholic Schools Week to be celebrated January 25-31

Our eight Catholic schools are gearing up for a week of activities during Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 25-31. Open houses and related stories are on pg. 14-15.

Mardi Gras season in full swing; Ash Wednesday is only 4 weeks away

It seems like only yesterday we were taking down the Christmas tree -- and now it's Mardi Gras season with Lent right around the corner! Find out more about Mardi Gras traditions and their roots in Christianity, on pg. 20.

The beautiful music of

Church Choirs



THE ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH (Marksville) CHOIR. Members of the choir at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Marksville enjoyed the annual Choir Christmas party in the home of Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Jeannette Knoll, who also serves as the choir director. Where would our Liturgical celebrations be without the beautiful sounds of our parish choirs? What a special ministry that involves so many in our diocese! Check out our special section on Church Choirs, pages 5-11.



Father Fernand Cheri III
Auxiliary-bishop elect of N.O.

Pope Francis names new auxiliary bishop of New Orleans

Pope Francis has named Franciscan Father Fernand Cheri III, 62, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Bishop-elect Cheri is a member of the Sacred Heart Province of the Order of Friars Minor and currently serves as director of campus ministry at Quincy University in Illinois.

The appointment was published in Washington, Jan. 12, by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, apostolic nuncio to the U.S.

Fernand Cheri III was born Jan. 28, 1952, in New Orleans. He studied at Notre Dame University, N.O., where he received a master's of divinity in 1978, and at the Institute for Black Catholic Ministry at Xavier University, New Orleans. He was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of New Orleans on May 20, 1978.

As a priest of the archdiocese, he served in various capacities from 1978-1991. In 1992, he entered the novitiate for the Order of Friars Minor, Sacred Heart Province, and made solemn profession in 1994. As a Franciscan, he was assigned to several ministries from 1995-2011, including a year in New Orleans as associate director of campus ministry at Xavier University. Since 2011, he has served as director of campus ministry at Quincy University in Quincy, Illinois, and as vicar of the Holy Cross Friary.

Ordination ceremonies are expected to be held on Monday, March 23 at 2 p.m. at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans.

Catholics in Congress: What makes them eager to serve?

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

(CNS) -- The numbers don't lie. Once again, there are more Catholics in Congress than members of any other religious denomination. And the numbers stay strong term after term.

Even though Catholics account for only about 22 percent of the U.S. population -- admittedly the largest body of religious belief in the country -- they make up 31 percent of the House and the Senate.

If you're looking for differences between the two major parties, there's indeed some -- but Catholics are still overrepresented in both the Democratic and Republican parties. There are 83 Catholics among the 234 Democrats in the House or Senate, good for 35 percent of the Democrats' total, and 81 Catholics among the 301 Republicans in Congress, or 27 percent of the GOP's total, according to figures issued in a Pew Research Center study issued shortly before the 114th Congress was sworn in Jan. 6.

What makes Catholics so eager to want to serve in electoral office, and what makes them so electable?

Daniel Philpott, director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the University of Notre Dame, speculated there is a "strong tradition of social thought in the Catholic Church, more developed than in the mainline Protestant churches."

Philpott pointed to the issuance of Pope Leo XII's 1891 encyclical "Rerum Novarum" as the starting point "where the church decided to engage the modern nation-state." Philpott said the Second Vatican Council also did much -- even more than the election of John F. Kennedy as the first, and so far only, Catholic



SPEAKER BOEHNER OPENS 114TH CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON. Incumbent Speaker of the House John Boehner opens the 114th Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Jan. 3. Boehner is one of 164 Catholics currently serving in Congress. (CNS photo/Kevin Lamarque, Reuters).

U.S. president -- to advance the notion of politics as a noble vocation. Vatican II's endorsements of religious freedom, human rights and democracy left an imprint in the minds of Catholic laity at that time.

Closer to home, "the American Catholic bishops have for decades touted and advocated social justice as part of the mission of the church, it may be in part because of the immigrant character of the church" that led bishops to go to bat on such issues as workers' rights and welfare benefits,

Frank Orlando, a political science instructor at St. Leo University in Florida, said Catholics benefit from voters' strong preference for their elected officials to profess religious faith. He cited a 2013 Pew study that showed that 53 percent of those responding said they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who was an atheist. By the same token, ac-

ording to Orlando, only 8 percent of voters said they would be less likely to vote for a Catholic candidate; that number more than doubles to 17 percent for evangelical candidates.

Pew statistics reveal that 20 percent of Americans now profess no religious belief or are atheists. But only one self-proclaimed atheist serves in the House, and she was only first elected in 2013.

The traditions of Catholic moral teaching and Catholic social teaching can appeal to Catholic office-seekers and voters across the political spectrum.

"In a bad year for Catholic Democrats, they get replaced by Catholic Republicans," Orlando said. "And in a bad year for Catholic Republicans, they get replaced by Catholic Democrats."

Catholics have such appeal, Orlando added, that they can get elected in districts in the Deep South where the Catholic popula-

tion registers in the single digits.

Rev. Kuehne, ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church of America -- "If there's another minister with a degree in politics, I'd like to meet him," he said -- recalled when he taught political science for five years at a Baptist college in the Midwest. "The students would come to me and say how can we win and still be Christians," he noted. "At St. Anselm, students would come up to me and say, 'How can we win?' It wasn't that Catholic students were less committed to their faith. But there was a recognition that to get something done, you had to win."

"I don't think it's unique to (people with) faith perspectives to want to make the world a better place. If you have a faith perspective, you should want that. I think a lot of people get into it for that reason," Rev. Kuehne said.

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Bishop Herzog celebrates 10 years as bishop of Alexandria

By Jeannie Petrus
CT editor

Bishop Ronald Herzog celebrated his 10-year anniversary as bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria Jan. 5 with a Mass at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria.

A luncheon with the priests of the diocese was held immediately following at Xavier Hall.

Bishop Herzog was named the 11th bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria on Oct. 27, 2004 by Pope John Paul II and ordained Jan. 5, 2005 by Archbishop Alfred C. Hughes of New Orleans.

He had served as a priest for 30 years as a military chaplain and priest in the Diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi.

During the past 10 years, Bishop Herzog focused much of his episcopacy on seminarian education and communications.

In 2005, after Hurricane Katrina closed Notre Dame Seminary (where most of our seminarians were studying), Bishop Herzog arranged for the seminarians to transfer to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, which was his alma mater, and where he has served on the Board of Directors.

Since that time, a majority of the seminarians from the diocese attend the Josephinum, in addition to St. Joseph Seminary in Covington and Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

Bishop Herzog was also instrumental in promoting seminarian studies at the North American Pontifical College in Rome.

Priests who most recently completed their studies at the



DIOCESAN PRIESTS APPLAUD BISHOP HERZOG. Bishop Ronald Herzog waves from the steps of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Jan. 5, to the priests, deacons and friends of the diocese after celebrating his 10-year anniversary Mass.

N.A. Pontifical College in Rome include Father Martin Laird and Father Taylor Reynolds. Seminarian Daniel Hartt is currently pursuing studies there now.

In the last 10 years, Bishop Herzog has ordained 10 deacons to the priesthood including Peter Faulk, Ryan Humphries, Joseph Bordelon, Luke Melcher, Blake Deshautelle, Anthony Catella, Irion St. Roman, Thomas Paul, Adam Travis and Charles Ray.

In 2007, Bishop Herzog organized the formation of the first class of permanent deacons in more than 30 years. Using a program offered by St. Meinrad Seminary in Indiana, 21 men from the diocese signed up for the four-year program.

In February 2012, Bishop

Herzog ordained the first class of 15 permanent deacons, all who are still active in the diocese today. Another class of 14 diaconate aspirants are currently in their first year of study in the same program. If all of the diaconate aspirants complete the program, the diocese could have close to 30 deacons actively working in the diocese by 2018.

In 2007, Bishop Herzog initiated Taste of Faith, a benefit dinner designed to raise money for seminarian education. The bishop himself, planned the menu and coordinated the preparations and cooking of the elaborate multi-course meal, with the help of the seminarians and later, deacons.

Through the Bishop and the coordinating efforts of Ann Mas-

den, director of Development, the Taste of Faith annual dinner has raised more than \$150,000 for seminarian education during the past 10 years.

In the area of communications, it was Bishop Herzog who made the bold decision to offer the Church Today free to every Catholic household in the diocese.

Prior to Bishop Herzog, the Church Today was distributed to those in the diocese who paid \$20 a year subscription fee to received the bi-monthly publication. The mailing list was about 1,200.

In 2006, when the publication was offered free, the distribution list ballooned to more than 14,000 homes. With that, advertising increased, offsetting some

of the expenses.

Bishop Herzog has also served on the USCCB Communications Committee for the past 10 years, as well as a long list of other state and national committees and Boards.

In February 2014, Bishop Herzog suffered a stroke. After several months in the hospital, the bishop underwent extensive physical and occupational therapy. Through the power of prayer and with the help of his fellow priests, diocesan employees, and friends, the bishop returned to work this fall and continues to progress each day.

“It’s truly miraculous to see how well the bishop has progressed since his stroke almost a year ago,” said Father Scott Chemino, vicar general for the diocese. “But even more so, we are grateful for his leadership in this diocese since 2005.”



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A blessed 2015!

We have now completed the Christmas season as well as the calendar year. With the start of a new year, many people make resolutions about changes in their lives. Some of these are serious; others frivolous. Why not resolve to work on a deeper faith!

As you may already know, I have moved back to the residence and was able to host most of the usual holiday gatherings. A taste of normal returning. Such things as fixing meals is very satisfying.



ONE IN THE LORD

Most Rev. Ronald P. Herzog
Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria

My deep thanks to all who joined me on Jan. 5 marking my 10th anniversary as Bishop of Alexandria. Time does pass quickly. These have been rewarding years for me. I appreciate all you do to

continue the Lord's ministry.

There are still many things on the horizon. We hope the new Congress will be more in tune with faith issues. Later this month we will again mark the landmark decision that opened the abortion flood gates. Our work is not done.

We are also moving along with the Maryhill enhancement. We are close to selecting the company that will assist us in this important project.

The annual observance of Catholic Schools Week calls at-

tention to the great service our schools have provided for decades.

Lent is also close at hand. May the Lord specially bless all who are making the journey to the sacraments of initiation.

May the new year of 2015 be even more rich in the Lord's graces and blessings!

Pray for vocations Feb. 8 on World Day of Consecrated Life

Last December a reality series, called *The Sisterhood: Becoming Nuns*, aired on television. Maybe the show piqued your curiosity – it did mine – and I have to admit that I had a negative opinion of it before even watching the first episode. I assumed that it would be impossible for a secular reality show to portray religious vocations with depth or truthfulness.

After the show's first episode, several staff members asked me all kinds of questions about religious life. I decided that aside from the show's actual content, if it could stimulate conversation about religious vocations – just as the Church was beginning to celebrate the Year of Consecrated Life – then *The Sisterhood* might be a providential instrument of grace!

In fact, one of the five young women who appeared in the show – and who has visited our novitiate several times – joined in an online discussion. "I'm proud to represent an often hidden and misunderstood calling," she wrote. "The conversation this show is starting is great! And I pray that God brings grace out of it for everyone who watches."

I am not interested in critiquing *The Sisterhood*, but in continuing the conversation it started by sharing the "real" experiences and convictions of a few of the young women who recently joined our congregation. Their reflections help to illustrate the reality that God touches each of us in a deeply personal way, and that there are many paths to the religious life.

After completing an extended "come and see" with our community, a young college student who has since begun her



GUEST EDITORIAL

Sister Constance Veit, LSP
Little Sisters of the Poor

postulancy wrote, "I learned that Saint Jeanne Jugan once said, 'In serving the aged, it is He himself whom you are serving... They are the suffering members of Our Lord.' I found this to be entirely true. He smiled at me from faces creased with age; He reached out to me with frail hands; He spoke from the voiceless; there was never a moment [during my visit] when I did not feel both surrounded by and a part of His love."

A young Little Sister who began volunteering in one of our homes at age 16 recalls those days, "I loved being with the residents and the Sisters and I had an increasing desire to know Jesus and to deepen my prayer life. I first learned hospitality in

my family, for which I am deeply grateful, and then I continued to learn from the countless Little Sisters who have accompanied me on my journey so patiently over these years. I am now in my second year as a professed Little Sister and could not be happier!"

A moment of Eucharistic Adoration was a decisive moment for a couple of the discerners in *The Sisterhood*. One of our novices recalls the centrality of the Eucharist in her own discernment: "I started to go to daily Mass, but I was searching for more. The more I was in church, the more I wanted to help in the community. I helped with the youth group, prayed at local abortion clinics and worked at a homeless shelter,

but I still felt that wasn't enough."

It was when she was asked to accompany some younger girls to a retreat at our novitiate that she unexpectedly found her vocation: "God works in mysterious ways, because the first day I was there I felt that my searching was over. A week later I visited the Little Sisters' home in Mobile, Alabama. I didn't want to leave, so I started volunteering on Saturdays. That turned into staying the whole weekend, every weekend. I was strongly drawn. I no longer felt the need for 'more.' I knew this was where God wanted me."

As these young women witness, a vocation is the response to a call of love. "I hear something within me which moves me and

I answer 'yes,'" Pope Francis recently wrote. "The laborers for the harvest are not chosen through advertising campaigns or appeals of service and generosity, but they are 'chosen' and 'sent' by God. It is he who chooses, it is He who sends...."

The annual World Day of Consecrated Life will be celebrated nationally on Sunday, February 8. On this special occasion, let's pray for the young women of *The Sisterhood* – and for all young women and men in discernment and formation programs – including our Little Sister novices and postulants! Help us keep the conversation about consecrated life going!

CHURCH TODAY

Volume XLVI, No. 1 • January 19, 2015

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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

The CHURCH TODAY is a member of the Catholic Press Association.
Website: www.diocesealex.org
To receive a free subscription, call 318-445-6424, ext 255 or e-mail jpetrus@diocesealex.org

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CHURCH CHOIRS

in the Diocese of Alexandria • A Special Section of the Church Today

What would be our Liturgical celebrations be without music?

Dedicated volunteers sing praises of worship at Mass each week

By Jeannie Petrus
CT editor

Dedication.

That has to be the one word that describes all the choirs, the choir directors, and the organists who provide music every Sunday at Mass.

Take for instance Estelle Prevost. She's been playing the organ at St. Peter Church in Bordelonville for 45 years -- even longer if you count the first time she played the organ in church at age 15.

"It was during WWII and the regular organist had to go out of town to pick up her husband who was coming home from the war," she said. "Since she had been giving me piano lessons, she knew I could do it, so she asked me to fill in."

Over the years, she continued to fill in at times -- in between going to college, getting married and raising a family. In 1969, she took over as the main organist and has been faithfully fulfilling her role since then.

Her love of music was so great that when Msgr. Isidore C. Deceulaer (former pastor of St. Peter), passed away in 1971, he willed his own personal organ to her.

"I still have it in my house



ST. PETER CHURCH (Bordelonville) GETS NEW ORGAN. Father Ramji Shoury, pastor of St. Peter Church in Bordelonville, blesses the new organ for the church choir. Estelle Prevost (seated at the new organ) has served as the choir organist for the past 45 years.

today," she said. "I wouldn't part with that organ for all the money in the world."

A few towns across from Bordelonville -- at St. Joseph Church in Marksville -- is another dedicated choir with a high ranking choir director.

Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Jeannette Knoll currently serves as the director of the St. Joseph Adult Choir. Although her job is extremely demanding and deadline oriented, Justice Knoll has remained dedicated to the weekly practices and leading the

choir at 8 a.m. Sunday Mass for the past 10 years.

"We have an outstanding, dedicated choir," she said. "Whether it's the cold winter rain or the hot muggy summer, the choir members come to practice on Mondays and sing at Mass on Sunday."

A gifted singer and one of 10 children who was born of talented musical parents, Justice Knoll has always loved music. In high school, she received a Metropolitan Opera Scholarship. She took on the leading roles of Maria Von Trapp and Eliza Dolittle in community musicals.

When Father Rusty Rabalais asked her to direct the choir 10 years ago, she hesitated because of her demanding schedule.

But the love of music and her faith made her determined to somehow make this a priority.

"It is only through the grace of God that I am able to do this," she said. "This is one small way I can return to God the many gifts he has given me."

Another person dedicated to her choir can be found in Natchitoches at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

Wanda St. Andre has been serving as its choir director of the Sunday morning choir for 39 years.

"I was hired as choir director on July 1, 1976, when Father Frank Foret was the pastor," she said. "I just love being involved with the choir."

Although members have come and gone over the years, Wanda describes the choir members in general as "a good, dedicated group of people" she said.

As it is in many churches, the choir most often sings in the "choir loft" which requires climbing a set of stairs to reach. This presents a problem for many of the aging choir members, who find it difficult to maneuver the steps. Such is the case at Immaculate Conception.

"We often lose members because they can no longer climb the stairs," she said. "But as long as they can get up the stairs, our dedicated members continue to serve in this ministry."

In Alexandria, St. Juliana Church faced the same problem a few years ago until the pastor, Father Remi, had renovations made to move the choir loft from upstairs to downstairs, near the altar.

The St. Juliana "Love" choir was organized on Aug. 8, 1975 by Paul Desselle. Mr. Desselle has continued to serve as choir director at St. Juliana for the past 40 years -- another shining example of a dedicated choir member!



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ST. JULIANA (Alexandria) LOVE CHOIR. Members of the St. Juliana Love Choir are (front row) Elizabeth Coleman, (musician) Flora Mays, Mary Roque, Sylvia Martin, Velda LaCour, Mae Rose Nash, Paul Desselle (director). Back row: Carol Stull, Gail Blade, Norman Nash, Audrey Day, Linda Broussard, Margaret Johnson, Elias Williams, Charles Johnson, and Betty LaCour. Not pictured are Sylvester Jones, Sylvia Davis, and Valarie Bandy, Emily Boswell.



CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Campiti) CHOIR. Members of the choir are Janet Ernst (organist) and Celeste Bryant, Clara Silvie, Nancy Gallien. Not pictured is Tec Markle. Members of the Our Lady of the Rosary Choir in Black Lake are (not pictured) Betty Creamer and Geneva Walker.



CHRIST THE KING (Simmesport) CHOIR. Members of Christ the King parish choir are (front row) Regina Guillot, Gloria Patterson, Velma Guillot, Juanita Moreau, and Joan Cashio. Back row: George Mayeaux, Carol Chagnard, Walter Moreau, Betty Lemoine, Wayne Coco (choir director), Liz Coco, Jeffery Gremillion, Wanda Moreau and Alfred Couvillion. Not pictured is Merkle Dupuy, organist.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES (Vidalia) CHOIR. Members of the choir at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Vidalia.



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Dupont) CHOIR. Members of the choir at Immaculate Conception Church in Dupont are (front row) Father George Krosfield, pastor; Debbie Ortego, Josie Poret, organist; Eva Bordelon, and Father Abraham Palakkattuchira. Back row: Jessica Bordelon, Amanda Norred, Dianne Dalgo, organist; Vilms Dufour, LouAnn Ganey, Gerneda Broussard, and Michael Bordelon.



ST. MARY ASSUMPTION (Cottonport) ADULT CHOIR. Members of the St. Mary's Assumption Adult Choir are (front row) Peggy Taylor, Karen Moreau, Sharon Juneau, Nettie Chenevert (organist) Kathy Joffrion, Joan Thevenot, Elaine Juneau, and Sandy Joffrion. Back row: Nathan Laborde (St. Mary's school principal), Brother Tony Dugas (choir director), Jean Lemoine, and Ginger Ducote. Not pictured: Brenda Ducote and Dean Dailey.



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA (Bunkie) CHOIR. Members of the St. Anthony of Padua Adult Choir are (front row) Lynette Nash, Janet Geal, Nettie Chenevert, Lesley Dupont, Jeanette Armand, and Jo Firmin. Back row: Nolan Ortego, Joyce Brunson, Will Leonards, Donna Newton, Veronica Redmon, and Debbie Thayer.



ST. MARTIN CHURCH (Lecompte) CHOIR. Members of the St. Martin Choir are (front row) Scottie Durio, Pam Nessmith, Betty Chop, Layne Gaiennie, Donna Scarber, and John DeChiaro, (choir director). Middle row: Ginny Baker, Madeline Runyan, Stephen Hart, Johnnie Hart, and Bonnie Lee. Back row: Joseph Baker, Tim Hart, Kurt Vanderlick, Mark Scarber, James Lee, Nicholas Runyan.



ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA (Bunkie) CHILDREN'S CHOIR. Members of the St. Anthony of Padua (Bunkie) Children's Choir



ST. MARY ASSUMPTION (Cottonport) STUDENT CHOIR. Members of the St. Mary's Assumption Student Choir



MATER DOLOROSA (Plaucheville) CHOIR. Members of the Mater Dolorosa 9:30 Sunday Choir are (front row) Holli Lachney (choir director), Renee Green, Michelle Bordelon, Laurie Bordelon and Yvette Sprague (organist). Back row: Kaye Jeansonne, Amy Chenevert, Cynthia Jeansonne, Sue Lemoine and Theresa Matthews. Not pictured: Cynthia Mayeaux and Karen Gremillion. The choir just started about a year ago.



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHOIR (Deville). Members of the St. John the Baptist Choir in Deville are (front) Sandy Fry. Middle row: Carolyn Alwell, Helen Beran, Ester Chapman, and Sarah Normand. Standing: Mary Ann Deville and Gordon Beran.



HOLY GHOST CHOIR (Marksville). Members of the Holy Ghost Church Choir in Marksville are Gloria Guillot, Elizabeth Augustine, Linda Francisco, Uraldine Bonton, Theresa Murray, Bernard Sampson, Tykesia Prier, Barbara Frank, Doritha Abram, Annatrail Simon, Walter Rogers, Bernadette Rogers (choir director), Fr. Abraham Varghese (pastor) and B.G. Sherian Cadoria. Not pictured is Floyd Jones.



ST. RICHARD CHAPEL CHOIR (Hickory Hill). Members of the St. Richard Chapel Choir are Mary Ford, Velma Lockwood (choir director), Freeman Ford, Cynthia Bonton, , Clementine Bonton, Frances Guillot, Mary D. Simon, Angie Champ, Father Abraham Varghese (pastor) Eura Lee Hayes, Almatine Dison, and Patricia Lavallais.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHOIR (Moreauville). Members of the choir from Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Moreauville are (front row) , Carlos Mayeaux, Carolyn Ducote, Glenda Rachal, Janice Coco (choir director), Linda Rachal, Kitty Soldani, and Peggy Bordelon. Back row: Fabian Barbin (organist), Scott Coco, Molly Lemoine, Claudette Lemoine, Peggy Bordelon, Charlene Coco, and Burt Rachal. Not pictured is Marie Bordelon.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES (Fifth Ward) CHOIR. Members of the choir at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward are (front row) Glenda Yeske, Ellen Surek, Cilta Carmouche, Collen Lamartiniere, Marie Laborde, Clina Villemarette(Organist), Shirely Guillot, Rae Anna Laborde, Shaun Reynaud, Krystle Reynaud, Janis Ducote, and Father Silverino Kwebuza-AJ, pastor.



ST. MARY'S RESIDENTIAL TRAINING SCHOOL CHOIR. Members of the St. Mary's Residential Training Facility "seasonal choir" are (kneeling), Jessica Austin, Brittany Dauzat, Guy B, Sister Mavis Champagne, St. Mary's administrator and choir director; Jessie P, and Crystal T. Standing: Becky White, Jamie W., Linda Glass, Greg W., Russell Miller, Catarina Donnelly, Tim L., Frances Marshall, Bubba C., and Tanya Masson.



ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH CHOIR (Isle Brevelle). Members of the St. Augustine Church Choir in Isle Brevelle are (front row) Estelle Coutee, Vivian Jacobs, Bessie Lacour, Deloris Jones, and Darnell Conant. Middle row: Rosa Sarpy, Ellen Bogaczova (organist), Isabelle Arceneau, Father Thomas Paul (pastor), Sister Elizabeth Ann Holmes (choir director), Joseph LaCour, Barbara Balthazar, and Mary Jones. Back row: Kathie Roque, Diane Riley, Thomas E. Roque, Sr., Sister Annalee Prather, Chad Nelson, and Victor Jones.



ST. PETER CHOIR (Bordeloville). Members of the St. Peter Choir in Bordeloville are (front row) Jean Guillory, Joy Maillet, Estelle Prevost (organist), Maerena Bordelon, Marlene Desselle, and James Armand (choir director). Row 2: Diane Bordelon, Vickie Bordelon, Gayle Juneau, Rhonda Bordelon. Back row: Kenneth Maillet, Gary Bordelon, Scotty Bordelon, and Sheile Guillot.



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHOIR (Moncla). Members of the St. John the Baptist Choir in Moncla are (front row) Vivian Ryland, Sylvia Milligan, and Sarah Brouillette. Row 2: Gerard Dupuy, Christine George, Margaret Borrel, and Tony Brouillette. Back row: David Brouillette, Susan Brouillette, Gerald George, Nathan Gaspard, Thomas Borrel, Linda Andes, and Linda Kelly.



ST. PATRICK CHOIR (Ferriday). Members of the St. Patrick Catholic Church Choir in Ferriday are (front row) Sandra Ruble, Becky Gremillion, Cindy Galloway, Theresa Pullon, and Diane Martin. Back row: Desha Norwood, Anna Ferguson, Emily Guida, Sherrie Jacobs, and Richard Alwood (organist). Not pictured: Betty Beverly and Mary Creighton.



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY (Tioga) CHOIR. Members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Tioga) Church Choir are (front row) Roger Christopher, Rhoda Christopher, Merle Ferrant (organist), Anna Jane Cooper, Ariana Christopher, Dot Cassell, and Chris Jardoine (cantor). Back row: Don Brouillette, Doug Chenevert, Linda Dupuis, Mona Robertson, Rachal LaBorde, Josh Christopher. Not pictured is Diane Gremillion (organist) and Rose Nugent.



ST. FRANCIS DE SALES (Echo) CHOIR. Members of the St. Francis de Sales Choir in Echo are (front row) Jean St. Romain, Pat Pawlak, Nancy Lacombe, Juanita Lemoine, and Sonie Milton. Back row: Father Jose Kumbumkal, CMI, Bill Teller, Linda Tassin, Richard Tassin, Ida Brooks, and Kent Milton.



ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE (Mansura) CHOIR. Members of the Choir at St. Paul the Apostle Church in Mansura are (kneeling in front) Cynthia Flanders. Middle row: Barbara E. Lemoine, Agatha Bordelon, Louise N. Neck, Joyce Gaspard, Eloise Guidry, and Ann Dorgant. Back row: Lionel Guidry, David McLaine, and David Flanders.

BASILICA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Natchitoches) CHOIR.

Members of the Immaculate Conception Choir are (front row) Roxanne Lane (pianist/organist and occasional soloist), Denise Roper (flute player), Cindy Zulick, Cindy Johnson, Angela Dickson, Viv Duggan and Wanda St. Andre (director). Row 2: Marie Soileau, Rachael Gardiner, Janette Aaron, Kate Dickson, Marguerite Felchle, and Myrtle Powell. Back row: Leo Abraham (deceased on Dec. 1, 2014), Charles LaCour, Dr. Bryan Picou, Burley Johnson, Tim Felchle (vocal and guitarist) and Ted Duggan. Not pictured are Kathy and John Batten, Alanna Benoit (vocal and clarinet), Melanie Hall and Kelli Weaver-Lorenz. Wanda St. Andre has served as choir director at Immaculate Conception since July 1, 1976 (39 years)!



ST. JOSEPH (Marksville) ADULT CHOIR.

Members of the choir from St. Joseph Church in Marksville are (front row) Ruby Jean Smith, Father Agnel Figredo, Dr. Paula Childress (organist), Jane Normand, Teddi Magday, Joy Dupuy, and Barbara Robbins. Row 2: Father Anthony Pallakkatuchira, Father Rusty Rabalais (pastor), LA Supreme Court Justice Jeannette Knoll (choir director), Leila Ducote, Rochelle Baldoz, and Nel Eroja; Row 3: Carol Gagnard, Veronica Dauzat, Cora Garcia. Row 4: Roy Riche, Nancy Dauzat. Row 5: Lloyd Dupuy, Patricia Piazza, Angelo Piazza, II; Row 6: Tony Saucier, Sherril Laborde, Dr. Donna Breen, June Fadler, and Billy Decuir.

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Bar Association).

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"Questionable Retirement and the Small Business Owner," "Crisis of
Confidence: The Inadequacies of Vocational Evidence Presented at
Social Security Disability Hearings."

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SACRED HEART OF JESUS (Pineville) "YOUTHFUL" CHOIR. Under the direction of Denise Daniel with Stacy Mayeux as accompanist, this choir sings modern music on the 4th Sunday of the month at the 10 a.m. Mass. Members of the choir are (front row) Crystal Mallett, Jeannie Gauthier, Holly Billiot, Stacy Mayeux, and Denise Daniel. Row 2: Carmen Robichaux, Katherine Marino, Patti Soileau, Gary Hays, and Sherry Rabalais. Row 3: Dave Daniel, Richard Murray, Larry Dupre'



SACRED HEART OF JESUS (Pineville) ADULT CHOIR. The 10 a.m. Adult Choir at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville sings traditional music of old and new composition in English and Latin. They are under the direction of Linda Gaspard with Michael Williams as cantor and Thomas Robichaux as principal organist, Eileen DeBoer, organist; and Mei-En Chou, pianist. Members of the choir are (front row) Linda Gaspard, Joy Miller, Peggy Tordoff, Pat Paul, Barbra Murray, and Anita Normand. Row 2: Connie Falks. Carolyn Hann, Pat Hammer, and Peggy O'Neal. Row 3: Pat O'Neal, Francis Bordelon, Audrey Monette, and Raymond Monette. Back row: Walter Pastor, Richard Murray, Richard Paul, and Michael Williams.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS (Pineville) ADULT CHOIR. Judy Gross (director), George Gross (pianist) and Mary Ann Deville (guitarist) lead the 4 p.m. Adult Choir at Mass in the modern idiom for worship. Members of the choir are (front row) George Gross, Judy Gross, Mary Young and Liz Gauthier. Row 2: Mary Ann Deville (with guitar), Kathy Cole, Sandy Corley, Susan Humphries, and Sharon Parker. Back row: Reggie Dauzat, Mike Clark and Edna Clark.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS (Pineville) PRAISE BAND. The Praise Band leads worship at the 11:30 a.m. Mass. Pictured are (left to right) Caroline Dessen, singer/guitarist; Candace Churchman, singer/guitarist; Leia Graham, singer/guitarist; Cole Churchman, bass guitar; and Carmen Robichaux, singer. Not pictured is Thomas Robichaux, singer/pianist; and Will Lee, electric drums.



ST. LOUIS (Glenmora) CHOIR. Members of the St. Louis Choir in Glenmora are (seated) Betty and Reily Spitzfaden and Tom Heinle (back).



ST. CECILE CHORALE OF AVOYELLES. Members of the St. Cecilia Chorale are (front row) Roy Riche, Haroldine Dailey, Brenda Ducote, Kathleen Gauthier, Nettie Chenevert, accompanist, Paula Childress, accompanist. R2: Richard Tassin, Bill Telfer, accompanist, Carl Ducote, Jennifer Dubea, Becky Descant, Annie Lacombe, Margaret Ducote, Nancy Dauzat. Top row: Mark Dubea, Alfred Couvillion, Phillip Ducote, Carolyn Lemoine, Buddy Lemoine, Claudette Lemoine, Linda Tassin, Peggy Bordelon, Carla Moreau, Francine Sons, Merkel Dupuy, director. Not pictured: Percy Armand

Christmas Around the Diocese



ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL (Bunkie) VISITS NURSING HOME. Mrs. Susan Picket's 2nd grade class at St. Anthony School in Bunkie visited The Bailey Place and Bayou Vista Nursing Home where they sang Christmas songs for the residents and handed out ornaments. Pictured at left are the students singing and pictured above is Kole Dopson passing out ornaments to the residents.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR (Alexandria) CHRISTMAS SENIOR LUNCH. Members of the Prompt Succor student choir sang Christmas carols for the Christmas Senior Lunch held Dec. 10 at the Divine Providence Center at Prompt Succor. Seniors (at right) fill their plates with lots of good food.



ST. MARY'S CHURCH. Young people and adults from St. Mary's Church spread Christmas cheer to two nursing homes and to parishioners who are unable to attend Mass. Accompanied on guitar by Gene Thompson, the children sang Christmas carols to the nursing home residents, then delivered cards and fruit to parishioners.



STS. FRANCIS & ANNE (Kolin) BLANKET DRIVE. The Youth Group ran a parishwide blanket drive for Oak Haven Nursing Home residents. More than 90 blankets were collected, which were delivered the day before Christmas Eve and passed out to the residents. We would like to thank all those who donated blankets for these deserving senior citizens.





SACRED HEART IN PINEVILLE PARADE. Several members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville decorated a float and participated in the annual Pineville Christmas Parade held Dec. 12.

Adults riding the float are Robert Anderson, his wife Monica Anderson, and Kay Beverley.



SACRED HEART (Pineville) CCD CHRISTMAS PLAY. Children in the CCD program at Sacred Heart Church in Pineville presented a Christmas program Dec. 24 at the 4 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass.

(far left and below) **ST. RITA (Alexandria) 9TH GRADE GROUP DELIVER PRESENTS.** Members of the 9th grade youth group at St. Rita Church, along with Father Taylor Reynolds, delivered presents to the family they adopted at Christmas.

(below) **ST. RITA (Alexandria) ALTAR SOCIETY CHRISTMAS PARTY.** The St. Rita Altar and Rosary Society had their annual Christmas party on Dec. 14 at the home of James and Jean Hollier.



2015 OPEN HOUSES

AND REGISTRATION DEADLINES

Sunday, Jan. 25
Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria
 11:30 a.m. -- Divine Providence Center

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the OLPS Open House on Sunday, Jan. 25 at 11:30 a.m. at the Divine Providence Center, located behind the OLPS Church. Open House includes refreshments, a short introduction to OLPS from Mrs. Jo Tassin (principal), a visual showcase and tour of the campus. All OLPS parents are encouraged to attend along with friends and family with school age children (gr. K-6th). For more information, please contact OLPS School at (318) 487-1862.

Wednesday, Jan. 28
Sacred Heart School, Moreauville
 All day during school hours

Thursday, Jan. 29
Holy Savior Menard, Alexandria
 6 p.m. -- School Gym

If you have a student headed to junior high or high school next year, and are interested in what Holy Savior Menard has to offer, don't miss our Open House for Prospection Students on Thursday, Jan. 29 at 6 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Meet first in the gym and learn how we integrate faith, academics, and service into a well-rounded package for your student. Visit the classrooms and meet the teachers. Student tour guides will help you find your way around and refreshments will be available in the Mall Area. Hope to see you there! For more information, please contact Menard at 318-445-8233.

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Thursday, Jan. 29
St. Frances Cabrini School Alexandria
 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Come visit St. Frances Cabrini School on Thursday, Jan. 29 and see what we can for your child. From our exceptional math and reading programs to the spiritual foundation we set for your child, we think you are going to like what you see!

March 16-20
Registration Week
St. Anthony School Bunkie
 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Registration for the 2015-16 school year at St. Anthony of Padua School in Bunkie will be held March 16-20, from 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. Come by the office today and register your child for next year.



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK CELEBRATED JAN. 25-31. National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week, which in 2015 is January 25 - 31. The theme for the National Catholic Schools Week 2015 is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our nation. (Above) Students from St. Anthony School in Bunkie collected toys and personal items for families in need at Christmas.

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Where did the diocesan Catholic school system come from?

St. John Neuman established 98 Catholic schools in his diocese

Catholic Schools Week, celebrated Jan. 25-31, could make one wonder how the Catholic school system was started.

The answer is an American saint, born in Bohemia in 1811 -- St. John Neuman.


St. Neuman was looking forward to being ordained in 1835 when the bishop decided there would be no more ordinations. It is difficult for us to imagine now, but Bohemia was overstocked with priests. John wrote to bishops all over Europe but the story was the same everywhere--no one wanted any more priests! John was sure he was called to be a priest but all the doors to follow that vocation seemed to close in his face.

But John didn't give up. He had learned English by working in a factory with English-speaking workers so he wrote to the bishops in America. Finally, the bishop in New York agreed to ordain him. In order to follow God's call to the priesthood John would have to leave his home forever and travel across the ocean to a new and rugged land.

In New York, John was one of 36 priests for 200,000 Catholics. John's parish in western New York stretched from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania. His church had no steeple or floor but that didn't matter because John spent most of his time traveling from village to village, climbing mountains to visit the sick, staying in garrets

St. John Neuman

1811-1860



- Founder of Catholic education in this country
- Established 98 Catholic schools in his diocese
- First man in the U.S. to become a saint
- Migrated to U.S. from Bohemia
- Appointed Bishop of Philadelphia
- A member of the Redemptorists
- Learned 6 languages so he could hear confessions of immigrants
- Founder of a religious order for women, the Third Order of St. Francis of Glen Riddle
- The School Sisters of Notre Dame likewise regard Bishop Neumann as their secondary founder.
- Organized the first diocesan schedule of the Forty Hours' Devotion in America.

and taverns to teach, and celebrating the Mass at kitchen tables.

Because of the work and the isolation of his parish, John longed for community and so joined the Redemptorists, a congregation of priests and brothers dedicated to helping the poor and most abandoned.

John was appointed bishop of Philadelphia in 1852. As bishop, he was the first to organize a diocesan Catholic school system. A founder of Catholic education in this country, he increased the number of Catholic schools in his

diocese from two to 100.

John never lost his love and concern for the people -- something that may have bothered the elite of Philadelphia. On one visit to a rural parish, the parish priest picked him up in a manure wagon. Seated on a plank stretched over the wagon's contents, John joked, "Have you ever seen such an entourage for a bishop!"

The ability to learn languages that had brought him to America led him to learn Spanish, French, Italian, and Dutch so he could hear confessions in at least

six languages. When Irish immigration started, he learned Gaelic so well that one Irish woman remarked, "Isn't it grand that we have an Irish bishop!"

Once on a visit to Germany, he came back to the house he was staying in soaked by rain. When his host suggested he change his shoes, John remarked, "The only way I could change my shoes is by putting the left one on the right foot and the right one on the left foot. This is the only pair I own."

John died on January 5, 1860 at the age of 48.

Prayer for the Intercession of St. John Neuman

O Saint John Neumann, your ardent desire of bringing all souls to Christ impelled you to leave home and country; teach us to live worthily in the spirit of our Baptism which makes us all children of the one Heavenly Father and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the first-born of the family of God.

Obtain for us that complete dedication in the service of the needy, the weak, the afflicted and the abandoned which so characterized your life. Help us to walk perseveringly in the difficult and, at times, painful paths of duty, strengthened by the Body and Blood of our Redeemer and under the watchful protection of Mary our Mother.

May death still find us on the sure road to our Father's House with the light of living Faith in our hearts.

Amen.



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DEACONS ON RETREAT VISIT ST. JOSEPH ABBEY. Four deacons from the Diocese of Alexandria visited seminarian Thomas Kennedy at St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary in Covington, while they were on their annual deacon retreat Dec. 4-7. Pictured at the St. Joseph Abbey are Deacon L.G. DeLoach, Deacon Ray Gibson, seminarian Thomas Kennedy, Deacon Greg LeBlanc, and Deacon Gary Schupbach.

Seminarian Burses

December Donations

Judy McClaran	\$10.00
Providence Central Academy Class of 1959	
Henrietta Bordelon Dinnat	\$10.00
Providence Central Academy Class of 1959	
Knights of Columbus #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Dr. Joseph Landreneau	\$25.00
Monsignor Milburn Broussard Burse	
Deacon & Mrs. Rodrick Broussard	\$50.00
Father Dan O'Connor Burse	
Father Rickey Gremillion	\$50.00
Deacon L.G. DeLoach Burse	
Mary Despino	\$80.00
Providence Central Academy Class of 1959	
Dr. Joseph Landreneau	\$100.00
Monsignor Henry Beckers Burse	
Deacon Aspirants	\$100.00
Father Dan O'Connor Burse	
Dr. & Mrs. Bernard Patty	\$100.00
in memory of Will Bollich	
Dr. & Mrs. Bernard Patty	\$100.00
in memory of Robert Upton	
Dorothy Lacour	\$100.00
Floyd Lacour Burse	
Lud McNeely	\$100.00
Father John H. Cunningham Burse	
Mr. & Mrs. Robert O. Miller	\$200.00
Father Daniel Corkery Burse	
Geraldine Deptula	\$1,000.00
Father Bruce Miller Burse	
Floyd Morgan	\$1,000.00
Helen Morgan Burse	
Mrs. Joseph T. Simms	\$1,000.00
Joseph T. Simms Jr. Burse	
Deacon & Mrs. L. G. DeLoach	\$3,000.00
Father Rickey Gremillion Burse	
Total	\$7,050.00

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SHS CHILDREN OF MARY & COLUMBIAN SQUIRES VISIT PHILOMENA SHRINE. Sacred Heart School's *Children of Mary* and *Columbian Squire* clubs visit the Shrine of St. Philomena in the St. Paul Catholic Cemetery in Mansura Dec. 15.



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL (Leesville) RECEIVES \$3,155 FOR BUILDING FUND. Father Kenneth Michiels, pastor of St. Michael Church in Leesville recently received a check for \$2,800 from KC Council #4156, \$225 from John Paul II Columbian Squires Circle #5592, and \$130 from the St. Therese Roses Circle (at right).



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SEEK 2015 sends college students out to change the world

By Andy Telli
Catholic News Service

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS) -- The founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students implored nearly 10,000 young adults to put Christ first in their lives so they can help change the world.

"You were willed into existence because you were meant to be amazing. "The invitation Christ is extending is to choose him first and become the man or woman you were meant to be," Curtis Martin said during his keynote address Jan. 4 at the SEEK 2015 conference.

"If you allow Christ to be the principle and foundation of your life, you will be a world changer," he said.

Sponsored by FOCUS and held Jan. 1-5 at the Opryland Hotel and Resort in Nashville, the conference drew young people from college and university campuses across the country.

Martin told attendees, "The great truth of the Christian Gospel is not that we love God, but that God loves us. ... We need to respond with a full, all-in effort."

"If you become who you are meant to be, you will set the world on fire," he added. "Go set the world on fire."

Attendees felt inspired to do just that.

"It moves my heart to tears to



SEEK 15. University of Kansas student Kayla Burditt takes a selfie with the rest of the delegation from the state of Kansas Jan. 4 at the SEEK 2015 conference in Nashville, Tenn. The conference, sponsored by FOCUS Ministries, drew more than 9,500 college students and young adults from around the country. Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kan., is pictured at center. (CNS photo/Andy Telli, Tennessee Register)

see people encountering Christ," said Gage Shirley, one of more than 75 students from the University of Kansas in attendance.

The SEEK conference was the second for Shirley. The first, in 2013, came as he was going through a conversion in his faith and was helped along in that journey by older students he met

through the FOCUS missionaries at the university.

Two years ago, Shirley said, he "saw how big the church is, and how many college students are pursuing Christ."

His goal this year was to mentor younger students attending their first conference, just as he was mentored, and to discern

the path his life should take after he graduates in the spring. Shirley said he is considering working as a missionary with several organizations, including FOCUS.

Heather Nelson, another Kansas University student at the conference, has already made that decision: she will become a FOCUS missionary after spring

graduation, working on a college campus to help students develop a relationship with Christ.

The conference has been a learning experience, a surprise for Nelson. She said she thought the conference would be geared more for people still seeking a relationship with Christ, and as a student leader at the St. Lawrence Catholic Campus Center at the university, she thought she already had that.

But by listening to the conference speakers, Nelson said she learned a lot that she plans to take to the Bible study group she leads at her sorority, Alpha Gamma Delta.

FOCUS has more than 400 missionaries serving on 100 campuses nationwide in a campaign to invite college students to build a relationship with Christ and the Catholic faith. The FOCUS model begins first with establishing genuine friendships and helping students, through small-group Bible study and one-on-one mentorship, to develop the tools needed to maintain their faith while in school. Students also are sent to share their faith with others.

SEEK and FOCUS help students know the love of Christ and develop a true relationship with him, Nelson said. "That's what's lacking."

People may know about Jesus, Nelson said, "but they don't know him as their best friend."

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JANUARY S.A.L.T. RETREAT.

High school students attending the Jan. 10-11 S.A.L.T. Retreat at Maryhill Renewal Center gather around a campfire during reflection time after the outdoor Stations of the Cross. Candance and Cole Churchman provided music.

The last S.A.L.T. Retreat for this Spring will be held Feb. 14-15 at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville for students in grades 9-12. The cost is \$87 per students. Registration forms are available online at www.sacredheartpineville.com or call Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville at 318-445-2497.

Camps and Conferences

Crossroads Catholic Conference

The annual Crossroads Catholic Conference will be held March 6-8 at Maryhill Renewal Center for adults. The Ministry Team includes Bishop Ronald Herzog and Fr. Marc Noel, Liturgy; Chad Judice, a national motivational speaker and the author of *Waiting for Eli* and *Eli's Reach*, keynote speaker; Paul Hood, host; Kelly Pease Lombardi, worship leader; and Fr. Charlie Ray and Ann Masden conducting workshops. Cost is \$55 per person up to Feb. 9; \$65 afterwards. For more information, go to www.diocesealex.org/crossroadsconference, or email lnoe1@diocesealex.org, or call 318-445-6424, ext 207.

Louisiana Camp Joshua

Louisiana Camp Joshua (LCJ), a weekend pro-life camp to train high school students to be pro-life leaders, has the following dates set for 2015 -- Baton Rouge: March 13-15 and April 10-12; Covington: May 1-3; and Shreveport: May 15-17.

At Camp Joshua, you will experience top-notch workshops, classes, and activities, and you'll learn from the nation's leading pro-life experts. You'll also make great pro-life friends and have a ton of fun! For more information, Contact Kandace Landreneau of LA Right to Life, at 1.866.463.5433 or kandace@prolifelouisiana.org



LSU-A STUDENTS FILL AND DELIVER GOODY BAGS AT CHRISTMAS.

The Catholic Student Organization at LSU-A and Louisiana College united with students at the Baptist Collegiate Ministries to gather food and personal items to distribute to area families in need at Christmas. Together the students filled more than 100 bags. Pictured are Cassie Gremillion, DaHon Mitchell, Elisia Sampson, and Nicole Orzeck.

Martha Neil Anthony



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Diocese of Alexandria

Krewe of Antigua welcomes revelers 60 years and over

Think Mardi Gras is just for young folks? Think again.

Presented by the Rapides Senior Citizens' Center, INC, the Krewe of Antiqua is comprised of anyone over the age of 60 who wants to participate. Seniors from Rapides, Avoyelles, Winn and Beauregard Parishes are invited to attend the party on Thursday, Feb. 12 at the Divine Providence Center at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church from 6-9 pm.

Entertainment will be provided by the Gary Cathey Band. Refreshments will be provided beginning at 6 p.m.; food at 7 p.m.; and dancing from 6-9 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased at any Rapides Senior Citizens Centers, the RSCC administrative office or at the door on the day of the event. Ticket prices are \$1 for those 60 and older and \$3 for those 59 and under.

For more information call 318.487.1561.



Celebrate Mardi Gras Feb. 17 with a King Cake

Enjoy the popular Mardi Gras dessert now; Lent starts Feb. 18

The Epiphany marks the coming of the wise men who brought gifts to the Christ Child. Epiphany is also called Little Christmas on the Twelfth Night, and is celebrated twelve nights after Christmas.

Liturgically, the Epiphany marks that last day of the Christmas season and the first day of Ordinary Time. It also welcomes in the festive season of Mardi Gras.

People from all of the world celebrate Epiphany and/or the start of Mardi Gras, by exchanging gifts and feasting. A very popular custom that is still celebrated is the making of the "King's Cake" which represents the three kings who brought gifts.

A plastic baby is baked inside the King Cake, and the tradition is whoever receives the baby in their piece of cake must buy the next King Cake or throw the next party.

King Cakes are made of a cinnamon filled dough in the shape of a hollow circle. The cake is topped with a delicious glazed topping and then sprinkled with colored sugar. The three colors of the sugar



are Purple (representing Justice), Green (representing Faith) and Gold (representing Power).

Today the King Cakes are baked with a wide assortment of fillings inside the cake. King Cake is the preferred dessert and snack in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. Hundreds of thousands of King Cakes are eaten in New Orleans during the Carnival season.

Many are shipped throughout the U.S. for those displaced New Orleanians longing for a taste of

Mardi Gras. In fact, a Mardi Gras party wouldn't be a Mardi Gras party without a King Cake.

It's believed the festivities of Carnival were brought to Louisiana by French-Canadian explorer Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville. He led an expedition on behalf of the French crown and on March 2, 1699, he set up camp along the Mississippi River, 60 miles south of the present location of New Orleans. It just so happened the next day was Mardi Gras, and so began its celebration. The King

Cake tradition is thought to have been brought to New Orleans from France in 1870.

The King Cake is synonymous with Mardi Gras tradition in New Orleans. King Cake parties bring families and community members together to celebrate the joyous season of Mardi Gras, with its celebratory krewe parades and festivals. In fact, many in New Orleans take more pride in the Mardi Gras King Cake tradition than the parades.

The dessert's ability to engage friends and family in the "search for the baby," the small figurine located inside the cake, is a fun way for residents of New Orleans to celebrate their Christian faith.

The dessert's significance to the city was evident in the first Mardi Gras season after Hurricane Katrina in 2006. Thousands and thousands of King Cake orders flooded bakeries both inside and outside of Louisiana.

This showed that in a time of great need, the people of New Orleans felt security and safety in being able to gather around King Cakes after the disastrous storm.



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Unbroken: story of one U.S. airman's experience during WWII

Inspirational, but fails to emphasize forgiveness he gives to his abusers

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) -- Positive values permeate the inspirational fact-based drama "Unbroken" (Universal). Despite its admirable qualities, however, the film also represents something of a missed opportunity.

That's because, in bringing Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling account of one U.S. airman's experiences during World War II to the screen, director Angelina Jolie emphasizes his sufferings at the expense of the remarkable attitude of forgiveness he was eventually able to adopt toward those who had abused him.

The aviator in question is Louis "Louie" Zamperini (Jack O'Connell). As early scenes demonstrate, Louie started life as a mischievous, directionless boy (C.J. Valleroy). With the help of his supportive older brother Pete (John D'Leo), though, Louie discovered his talent for running, a gift that propelled him all the way to the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

As an Air Force bombardier serving in the Pacific Theater, Louie would go on to confront far more formidable challenges than those to be found on the track. Together with his best friend, Capt. Russell "Phil" Phillips (Domhnall Gleeson), and their crewmate



UNBROKEN. Jack O'Connell stars in a scene from the movie "Unbroken." Though inspirational, this screen version of Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling account of one U.S. airman's (Jack O'Connell) experiences during World War II emphasizes its subject's sufferings at the expense of the remarkable attitude of forgiveness he was eventually able to adopt toward those who had abused him. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13(CNS photo).

tail gunner Francis "Mac" McNamara (Finn Wittrock), Louie survived a crash landing at sea, only to face nearly seven weeks adrift on the open ocean.

Eventually taken prisoner by the Japanese, Louie was singled out for mental and physical mistreatment by Mutsuhiro Wata-

nabe (Miyavi), the unbalanced commander of his POW camp. In response, he drew on the same determination that had enabled him to rise to the top as an athlete to endure through a marathon of cruelty.

Working from a script by Joel and Ethan Coen, Richard

LaGravenese and William Nicholson, Jolie vividly re-creates the brutality to which Allied captives of the Japanese were all too often subjected. But she relegates her main character's unusual, if not unique, spiritual achievement in reconciling with his former persecutors to a written epilogue.

MOVIE REVIEWS

Viewers of faith will be all the more disappointed by that decision since the movie's opening suggests that Louie's Catholic upbringing was at least the indirect inspiration for this hard-won ethical accomplishment.

Louie later shows ambivalence toward Phil's uninhibited display of prayerful devotion in the wake of a close call in the air. Yet the screenplay implies that at least a residue of Louie's religious training remained with him as he faced the soul-testing rigors of his traumatic confinement.

The film contains combat and other violence, including torturous beatings, rear male nudity in a nonsexual context, a couple of uses of profanity and of crude language, a few crass terms as well as a bit of mild sexual humor. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

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Retrouvaille Marriage Help

Retrouvaille (announced retro-vi) has helped tens of thousands of couples at all stages of disillusionment or misery in their marriage. This program can help you too. For confidential information about or to register for the program to be held on Jan. 23-26 at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit: www.HelpOurMarriage.com.

Diocesan Catechetical Conference

The 2015 Catechetical Conference will be held on Saturday Feb. 7, 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center (4400 Coliseum Blvd. Alexandria). Lunch will be served. The charge is \$15. Registration is required. For more information, or to register, please call Emily Ann McCullough: (318) 445-6424 ext. 251 (leave your name and phone number), or email: emccullough@dioceseslex.org. Come enjoy a day of learning and fun.

Willwoods Married Couples Retreat

Would you like to break away with your spouse and spend quality time enriching your marriage? Join us Feb. 7-8 on our next Married Couples Retreat at the St. Joseph Abbey's Christian Life Center in Covington. The retreat begins on Saturday at 9 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. on Sunday. To register, call Jason Angelette at (504) 830-3716 or visit www.faihandmarriage.org. A suggested donation of \$275 is requested but not required. Pre-registration deposit, which is part of the donation, is \$50. Gift certificates available!



Kara Klein coming to St. Anthony

Kara Klein, a Christian singer/songwriter, worship leader and inspirational speaker from New Orleans, will speak at St. Anthony Church Hall in Natchitoches on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 6:15 p.m. In addition to her presentation, titled "Inspiring Stories of Faith," Kara will also perform one of her many award-winning songs. Kara has released five original albums, and won six United Catholic

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Music & Video Association (UCMVA) Unity Awards, including the award for "Best Female Vocalist of the Year" in 2008. The event is free and open to the public.

Marriage Prep Workshop

A one-day marriage prep workshop, Strong Foundations Marriage Preparation, will be held Sunday, Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. in the Madonna Room at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church in Alexandria. Couples may register at www.comprehensivetherapygroup.com. For more information, call 318-792-9940.

Women of Grace Study Group

St. Rita Church in Alexandria will host a Women of Grace study group on Monday evenings Feb. 9 - May 4 from 6 - 8 p.m. at the Holy Family Center. This life-changing spiritual formation program was put together by EWTN personality Johnnette Benkovic. Registration is closed, but call Christine Gormsen at cgormsen@strita.org, 445-7141 ext 213; to be put on waiting list.

Training for Suicide Intervention seminar

The Office of Religious Formation and Training will host a two-day seminar Feb. 10-11 titled ASIST: Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, at the St. Joseph Catholic Center in Alexandria. ASIST provides practical, face-to-face intervention skills for individuals to use when encountering a person at risk for suicide. Pre-registration is required and closed on Feb. 6. Cost is \$95 per person. For more information, contact Cathy Norris at 318-448-6121.

Charismatic Day of Renewal

The Diocesan Service Committee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Alexandria and CENLA Magnificat will host a Day of Renewal on Saturday, Feb. 21, at St. Anthony's Church Hall in Natchitoches. Speakers are Fr. John Pardue, Aggie Neck, and Joan Gahagan. The day will begin with registration at 8:30 and Praise and Worship at 9. Continental breakfast and lunch is included in the \$15 registration fee. The day will end with a Vigil Mass at 4 p.m. at St. Anthony's. This event is open to men and women. For more information call Diane at 318-419-1547 or Mary at 318-359-7735. Make checks



CDA COURT BISHOP DESMOND (St. Rita) presents a check to Bishop Ronald Herzog for the Seminarian Education Fund. Pictured are (l-r) Mrs. Barbara Cancienne, Mrs. Ona Wilson, Regent; Bishop Herzog, and Ms. Jane Roth.

payable to the "DSC" and mail non-refundable registration fee to: Diane Ardoin, 1415 Creed St, Pineville, La. 71360. Registration must be received by Feb. 17. No on-site registration.

Sacred Heart Men's A.C.T.S Retreat

We would like to invite you to join us for a life-changing weekend at Maryhill Renewal Center in Pineville for the next Sacred Heart A.C.T.S. Retreat March 12-15. This is an opportunity for spiritual renewal and fellowship beginning Thursday evening and concluding with Sunday Mass at Sacred Heart Church. For more info, contact Randy Pierce at Randy.pierce@apria.com or 318-308-0406.

Catechetical Quiz Bowl

The third annual Catechetical Quiz Bowl will be held March 14 at Holy Savior Menard in the Activities Bldg. The quiz will consist of questions from the books of Genesis and Matthew in the Bible. Questions and answers are now available from the Office of Religious Formation and Training at the Diocese Center by calling (318) 445-6424 ext. 251 or emailing emccullough@diocesealex.org, so that students may begin studying. A parish or school can have any number of teams. A team is made up of four members, 6th, 7th, and/or 8th grade students from Catholic Schools and from Parish CCD programs. There is a registration fee of \$10 per team. Dress is casual. First place is a cash award of \$500 and a trophy. Second place is \$200 and a trophy. Lunch will be provided.

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Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>19</p> <p>Diocesan Offices Closed</p> <p>MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S BIRTHDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. FAULK</p>	<p>20</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE</p>	<p>21</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. FEY</p>	<p>22</p> <p>VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p>DAY of PRAYER for the LEGAL PROTECTION of UNBORN CHILDREN PRAY FOR FR. A. FIGREDO</p>	<p>23</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. GARRIONE</p>	<p>24</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. GOOTEE</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Open House 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. W. GEARHEARD</p>
<p>26</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. GREMILLION</p>	<p>27</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. HASIEBER</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Open House All day during school hours Sacred Heart School, Moreauville</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. HERZOG</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Open House 6:00-8:00 p.m. Holy Savior Menard High School, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR MSGR. R. HOPPE</p>	<p>30</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. HUMPHRIES</p>	<p>31</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. H. IMAMSHAH</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 1</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. HERZOG</p>
Catholic Schools Week						
<p>2</p> <p>FEAST of the PRESENTATION of the LORD PRAY FOR FR. B. IBE</p>	<p>3</p> <p>FEAST of ST. BLAISE (Blessing of the Throats) PRAY FOR FR. K. ISHMAEL</p>	<p>4</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. KAYALAPARAMBIL</p>	<p>5</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. G. KROSFIELD</p>	<p>6</p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. P. KULIGOWSKI</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Diocesan Catechetical Conference 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria</p> <p>Willwoods Married Couples Retreat, Covington</p> <p>FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. F. KUMAI</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Strong Foundation Marriage Prep Workshop 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. KUMBLUMKAL</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Women of Grace Study Group 6:00-8:00 p.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. KUNNUPURAM</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Suicide Intervention Seminar, SJCC, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. S. KWEBUZA</p>	<p>11</p> <p>FEAST of OUR LADY OF LOURDES PRAY FOR FR. M. LAIRD</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Krewe of Antigua 6:00-9:00 p.m. Divine Providence Center, OLPS, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. P. LAPALME</p>	<p>13</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. LEMOINE</p>	<p>14</p> <p>S.A.L.T. Retreat, Sacred Heart Church, Pineville</p> <p>ST. VALENTINE'S DAY PRAY FOR FR. R. MATHEWS</p>	<p>15</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. MELCHER</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Women of Grace Study Group 6:00-8:00 p.m. St. Rita Church, Alexandria</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. MESSINA</p>	<p>17</p> <p>MARDI GRAS PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK</p>	<p>18</p> <p> ASH WEDNESDAY PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS</p>	<p>19</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. MILLER</p>	<p>20</p> <p> NO MEAT on FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Charismatic Day of Renewal 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. St. Anthony Church Hall, Natchitoches</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. NAYAK</p>	<p>22</p> <p>FIRST SUNDAY of LENT PRAY FOR FR. J. NELLIKUNNEL</p>

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