CHURCH TODAY

Volume LV. No. 3

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March 25, 2024



New Catholic Schools Superintendent appointed

Bishop Robert Marshall, Jr. has announced the appointment of Sylvia Yancy Davis as Catholic Schools Superintendent, effective April 1, 2024. See page 2 for more information.

Sylvia Davis receives Black Excellence Award

Sylvia Davis was named the first recipient of Pineville High School's new award, also named in her honor, the Sylvia Yancy Davis Black Excellence Award. See page 6 for more information. Congratulations, Sylvia!

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana hosts a Volunteer Recruitment Breakfast

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is in need of volunteers in office administration, graphic design, fundraising, and more. See page 12 for more information on how you can help.

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LENTEN PILGRIMAGE TO NEW ORLEANS. Msgr. Scott Chemino, pastor of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bunkie, led a Lenten pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor and the National Shrine of Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos in New Orleans.

CHURCH TODAY



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P. O. Box 7417 Alexandria, LA 71303 churchtoday@diocesealex.org 318-445-6424

Publisher:
Most. Rev. Robert Marshall
Publication Manager / Editor:
Cari Terracina, ext. 255,
cterracina@diocesealex.org
Multimedia Manager /
Advertising:
Joan Ferguson, ext. 264;
joanferguson@diocesealex.org
Circulation: Sandi Tarver, ext. 209;
starver@diocesealex.org

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e-mail starver@diocesealex.org



SEASON OF SERVICE, ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH, HESSMER. On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, the Men of Commodities and Jesus' Helping Hands of St. Alphonsus Church handed out food boxes and hygiene products to the needy of the Hessmer community. These are ongoing services that these two ministries support and serve the local community each month.

New Catholic Schools Superintendent appointed

Bishop Robert Marshall, Jr. has announced the appointment of Sylvia Yancy Davis as Catholic Schools Superintendent, effective April 1, 2024. Mrs. Davis has served the diocese as Coordinator of Catholic Schools for the past seven months.

Mrs. Sylvia Davis has been an educator for more than four decades and has taught in both public schools and our Catholic schools for 47 years. She began her professional career in the Rapides Parish public school system at Pineville High School. She started as a ninth-grade English teacher and retired from the public school system as an assistant principal. Mrs. Davis received a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Grambling State University, and a Master's of Education degree from Northwestern State



Sylvia Yancy Davis

University with certifications in Secondary Reading, Administration, Supervision, and Supervision of Student Teachers. Additionally, Mrs. Davis completed 30+ hours of

continued studies at Northwestern and Louisiana State University.

Because of her significant contributions to the public school system and to the community, she was recently honored with the inaugural Sylvia Yancy Davis Black Excellence Award during a ceremony held at Pineville High School. (See story on pg. 6)

After a five-month retirement from the public school system, Mrs. Davis began teaching at Holy Savior Menard Central High School in Alexandria. She remained at Menard until coming to the Catholic Schools Office in 2020 as Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

When she is not working with schools, she can be found working at St. Juliana Catholic Church, her church parish in Alexandria or working with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority,

Inc. She is also known to tell an occasional story to audiences of the young and young at heart. She loves spending time with her family and cheering on the New Orleans Saints football team.

Before being named Coordinator of Catholic Schools, Mrs. Davis served as the Curriculum Specialist for Middle and High Schools and the Administrative Assistant for the Catholic Schools Office.

The Diocese of Alexandria Catholic Schools' Office assists the bishop in implementing his vision for Catholic education and provides support to principals and pastors of the eight schools located in the Diocese. The Catholic Schools Office will continue to provide support for our Catholic schools to ensure that we offer the highest quality education for our young people.

Experts: Historic rise of 'never-marrieds' calls church to act on marriage's 'three-alarm fire'

By Kimberly Heatherington Our Sunday Visitor

(OSV News) — A recently released study from the Institute for Family Studies, a Charlottesville, Virginia-based think tank dedicated to strengthening marriage and family life, reveals that a record number of young adults are predicted to never marry.

The research brief by IFS research fellow Lyman Stone found that based on current marriage data "plausibly, one-third of men and women who turn 45 in 2050 (those who are about 18 or 19 today) will not have married."

Stone's research indicates the percentage of never-married adults is at a historic high in the U.S. and because marriage is coming later and later in life, a growing share of Americans will never marry at all.

According to Stone's figures, 61% of 35-year-old men were ever married in 2023, down from 90% in 1980; 70% of 35-year-old women were ever married in 2023, down from 93% in 1980.

"I think economic factors delaying the life course are the dominant force shaping declining marriage, alongside marriage penalties in tax and welfare policies," Stone told OSV News. "Overwhelming majorities of young people still report strong desire to marry, and at younger ages than the current median age of marriage."

Stone said, "The long delay between adulthood and economic independence is the main cause of declining marriage."

Asked if individualism plays a role, Stone replied that something more fundamental is going on.

"Highly individualistic societies often still have high marriage rates," he said. "The bigger values shift is about marriage as a 'capstone' to

personal success rather than marriage as a 'foundation' for couple success."

The best way to deal with these outcomes, Stone said, "is to try and help people get into good marriages earlier in life. There is no societal substitute for marriage."

IFS' collected data is "a rather bleak portrait of where marriage is now, and where it's heading," said Julia Dezelski, associate director of marriage and family life at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth.

"Unfortunately, I would say I'm not so surprised," she told OSV News.

Changes in social attitudes have made a major impact upon marriage, Dezelski reflected, citing "the pervasive permissiveness in society towards those things that enable other forms of so-called marital life that's not officially married. The promiscuity, and the cohabitation, and all the so-called 'perks' that come with this kind of lifestyle, obviously does not lend itself to encouraging couples to marry if they can reap the benefits of just cohabiting at a lower cost — and without the risks of pregnancy, thanks to contraception.

"And then, why not delay if IVF would allow them to have children later on, too?" she asked rhetorically, referring to in vitro fertilization. The church opposes the artificial reproduction method on the grounds that it treats the child as a product, divorces sex from procreation, and the process often involves the destruction of human embryos in order to achieve pregnancy resulting in birth

"It's this permissive society in which young people are living," Dezelski said, "that doesn't make marriage much of an incentive in the light of all of these other things." The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes that marriage as a vocation "is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator."

But Georgetown University's Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate notes that in 1965, U.S. Catholic sacramental marriages reported from the previous year numbered 347,179. In 2022, the figure was 98,354.

A 2020 Pew Research Center study of millennials the generation usually defined as anyone born between 1981 and 1996 — also gave cause for concern, stating, "Millennials are much less likely to be living with a family of their own than previous generations when they were the same age." Pew found that in 2019, 55% of millennials lived with their spouse, their own child or both, noting, "This compares with 66% of Gen Xers in 2003, 69% of Boomers in 1987 and 85% of members of the Silent Generation in 1968."

"The church has a huge responsibility here, in trying to paint a picture of marriage as truly the beautiful vocation that it is — and also, just to hearken back to how it fits into God's plan for salvation," Dezelski said. The costs of not reversing the nonmarriage trend "are enormous, really — for everyone; for the church, and for society," she observed. "If we're not supporting the family, then we will not have families in church to support."

The marriage shift, said J.P. De Gance, founder and president of Communio, a Virginia-based nonprofit ministry that trains and equips churches to renew healthy relationships, marriages, and the family, is nothing short of seismic

"Too frequently, our Catholic pastors do not see the revolutionary moment that we now live in — or at least if they see it, they're not altering their pastoral practices given this revolutionary moment," De Gance told OSV News. "Whatever pastoral steps that we've been taking — given where we are in the free-fall of marriage — we didn't make a change."

And that conversion, De Gance said, must happen now.

"We need a metanoia," De Gance declared, referring to the Greek word for a radical reorientation. "I think we have to recognize that parishes are frequently functioning as sacramental service stations."

Buying into the prevailing social narrative also has endangered marriage, De Gance explained.

"A lot of faithful Christian parents, faithful Catholic parents, will simply repeat what the culture has to say about it — like, 'You're too young to get married; why don't you make sure to get that advanced degree; make sure to land a great job; make sure to have these great life experiences; and then — later on — then you could consider getting married," De Gance said. "It's great to have a great career — of course it is. It's great to have a good education. But is it more important than the transcendent and enduring things?

Parish-level accompaniment, De Gance emphasized, is essential.

"My question for every priest, pastor, and bishop is: How much longer do we have to continue to see the annual, year-overyear decline of marriage before we start becoming effective and strategic about actually promoting the vocation of marriage? Eightytwo percent of all Catholic parishes spend zero dollars on marriage ministry each year," he said. "It may be nice that there's somebody who's compensated by the diocese to be the Marriage and Family Life Director — but life change doesn't happen in a diocesan office."

A survey by Barna, a Christian research organization, commissioned by Communio found 72% of all American churches lack a substantive marriage ministry, while 74% have no ministry for newlyweds to help them through their first critical years of marriage. Additionally, 93% of churches don't offer any ministries for which singles, Communio identifies as a "huge opportunity area to encourage healthy habits around dating or finding the right spouse for marriage."

De Gance spared no words to urge collective responsibility by the church.

"There are people who will read this article and will nod vigorously. There are priests who will read this article and will nod vigorously. There are bishops who will read this article and will nod vigorously," he said. "And so I want to ask them a question: 'What are you currently doing - right now to promote marriage, and to equip people to discern marriage, and to equip them to live marriage?' If there aren't specific answers that they have — and if there's not a specific amount of money that they're allocating to that then they shouldn't be nodding vigorously."

De Gance explained that this illustrates how the church is "part of the problem" — and indicated the church's leadership needs to actively address these issues to be part of the solution.

"We're long past the time for polite concern," he said. "We're at a point where marriage is in a three-alarm fire."

Kimberley Heatherington writes for OSV News from Virginia.schools to ensure that we offer the highest quality education for our young people.

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



Diocese of Alexandria Website www.diocesealex.org



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Feast of St. Joseph celebrated across the Diocese

(left) OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH IN **WINNFIELD** celebrated St. Joseph's Day on March 19 with a beautiful mass followed by a delicious meal. Pictured are Dcn. Lee Moreau, the altar servers and Fr. Louis Sklar.

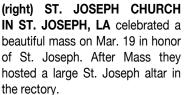


ST. RITA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. Sunday, March 7, blessing of the altar with a fish and spaghetti luncheon. Donations were collected for the Manna House.



IN ST. JOSEPH, LA celebrated a beautiful mass on Mar. 19 in honor of St. Joseph. After Mass they hosted a large St. Joseph altar in the rectory.

(left) SACRED HEART SCHOOL IN MOREAUVILLE had a wonderful Grandparent's Day Mass on March 15. The devotional St. Joseph Altar was set for the occasion in anticipation of St. Joseph Day on March 19. Fr. Brian Seiler blesses the St. Joseph Altar.





MARCH 25, 2024

ST. CHARLES CHAPEL, GOUDEAU. Fr. Ramji Shoury celebrated the Feast of St. Joseph on Sunday, Mar. 17, with this beautiful St. Joseph's



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The Easter Octave

The word octave comes from the Latin word for "eighth". In the context of the liturgy, Octave has two distinct meanings. First, it's the eighth day after the feast day or it can mean the entire period of the eight days. So, the Easter Octave is the eight days which begins with Easter and continues through to the following Sunday.

But why do we celebrate for eight days? In fact, why do we celebrate Christmas and Easter for eight days as each liturgical celebration has an octave associated with them. Long ago the Church recognized that celebration of such high feast days needed more than just one day to prayerfully observe the mysteries. In that, our hearts need more time to reflect on what God is revealing to us during these holy days.

The scriptural evidence of these long-celebrated days is thought to have come from the Old Testament. In Leviticus 23:36 we read; "For seven days you shall offer an oblation to the LORD, and on the eighth day you will have a declared holy day. You shall



(Photo: Sacred Heart School, Living Stations of the Cross, 2023)

offer an oblation to the LORD. It is the festival closing. You shall do no heavy work." The scripture passage describes the Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths) which was celebrated by the ancient Jews. We also read in Leviticus 14:10; "On the eighth day the individual shall take two unblemished male lambs, one unblemished yearling ewe lamb, three tenths of an ephah of bran flour mixed with oil for a

grain offering, and one log of oil." And in the Book of Numbers 6:10; "On the eighth day they shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting." There are also references in 2 Chronicles 7:9 for the feast of the dedication of the Temple and the Temples purification in 2 Chronicles 29:17.

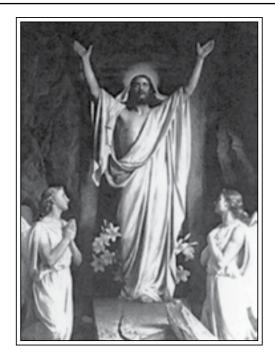
In 1955, Pope Pius XII removed all octaves from

the church's calendar except, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost In 1969 the Octave of Pentecost was removed. The Christmas Octave has several holy days contained within it; the feast of the Holy Family, the Holy Innocents, along with Saint feast days ending with Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Unlike the Octave of Christmas, the Easter Octave has no commemorations or feast days. This is so all our prayerful reflection is centered on the resurrected Lord. Truly, each day of the Octave of Easter is a solemnity, a mini-Easter if you In 2000, Pope John Paul II, designated the eighth day of the Octave as Divine Mercy Sunday. This was in response to a private revelation to St. Faustina Kowalska.

By the church extending over eight days the observance of these sacred solemnities, she is calling us to more deeply reflect on these great mysteries that mark the beginning and end of Our Lord's earthly life.

Source:

https://www.simplycatholic.com/ why-celebrate-octaves/



The Resurrection

O Jesus, Our Savior, rose from the dead Giving us grace to stay ahead.

He wants us all with Him above, We can make it happen with His mercy and love.

His Father called Him from this life, To free Him from all hate and strife.

He made a place for Him by His side, A place where the Holy Spirit also resides.

Because of Christ's resurrection we have been freed from sin, Making our hearts and souls pure and holy from within.

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Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love is everlasting.

Psalm 137:1 | Responsorial Psalm for April 7 | Divine Mercy Sunday

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Tuesday, April 9, 6:00 p.m.
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NATCHITOCHES

Tuesday, April 16, 6:00 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle Church (Church Hall) MANSURA

Tuesday, April 23, 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center ALEXANDRIA

NOTE: Minors are not allowed to attend because of the adult content of the videos and discussions.

To register, go to www.virtus.org. For more information, call 318-445-6424, ext. 213.

Sylvia Davis receives Black Excellence Award

by Melinda Martinez The Town Talk, Part Of The USA Today Network (reprinted with permission)

Sylvia Yancy Davis imagines that Darryl, her late husband of 50 years, is looking down on her smiling for being the first recipient of Pineville High School's new award that is also named in her honor, the Sylvia Yancy Davis Black Excellence Award. The award will be presented at 10 a.m. Wednesday (Feb. 28).

"My husband was a quiet man and he always supported quietly, in the background, but there was this little smirk, on his face, a smile, when he was proud of something I or my daughter or my grandson had done. And I can just see him sitting in the corner with that smirk on his face. I can see it," said Davis, a longtime PHS educator who retired in 2014 after 38 years.

Darryl was among her three biggest supporters. The other two were her parents, the late Mattie and Gordon Yancy.

"Although my daughter, grandson, friends, and family are most supportive of all of my accomplishments, three of my biggest supporters are not here anymore," said Davis.

She had a few words to say to them during the interview: "Mom, Dad and Darryl, look what I've got!"

PHS senior class president Zoria Sapp said they wanted to



(Photo: Melinda Martinez, The Town Talk)

honor someone, not necessarily someone from PHS, but someone who contributed to the Pineville community, particularly the Black community.

"We thought of Mrs. Davis. She worked here for a longtime time," she said.

Davis has been retired for 10 years so Zoria, junior class secretary Alayna Jones and student Aaron Coggins had never met her or had her as a teacher but they can't wait to meet her.

"We have heard so many great things about her," said Zoria. "So we decided to give her the award and we decided to name the award after her since she played such a big role in Pineville High School and the Black community."

"It's a good honor to be able to do this. It's good to recognize the important people who contributed," said Aaron.

Alayna said the ceremony will feature a guest speaker, choir and special performances including a special tribute to Davis by the dance line. It was Davis who started the first Red Hot Dixie Dancers, said Zoria.

Davis was an English teacher at PHS for 28 years before working for 10 years in administration, becoming the school's first Black female administrator.

"I started my teaching career at Pineville High and ended it there," she said. "I got to start out at a wonderful place, and never left."

Davis loved the whole atmosphere and the students.

"Students know when you love them and when you care and when you want the best for them. And they usually reciprocate your feelings," said Davis.

She said it's funny that she was an English teacher because she didn't want to teach English.

"My dad didn't care where I went to college but he was determined that I would go and that I would graduate," said Davis.

She thought she was going to be an actress.

"I majored in speech and theatre. And if I could not be an actress, I was going to be a traveling journalist," said Davis.

But her father, who was paying for her education, let her major in speech and drama but not minor in journalism.

She said her father told her, "You make straight As in English, you're going to minor in English. Anything you can do in journalism, you can do with an English minor. So you aren't going to waste my money with that."

She did as her father told her and thought she would never use the English minor for anything, but ironically, it has supported her for all of these years.

Davis said she became an educator because "it was all I knew"

"My parents were educators. And my paternal, my Dad's mom, was a teacher. I always add that when people who looked like my grandmother, it was not popular for them to be teachers," said Davis.

Her paternal grandmother had nine children and made sure they all of them got college degrees.

"My parents instilled in me that with a good education and a strong faith background, you can't not succeed," she said. "Watching them be educators all of my life, I knew nothing else to do."

After retiring from PHS, Davis never really stopped

continued on next page...

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Signature Series • Lafayette Interior Fashions

Continued from previous page...

working. In the fall of 2014, she started teaching at Holy Savior Menard High School. Three years ago, she went into the Diocese of Alexandria's Catholic Schools Office as the administrative assistant to the superintendent of Catholic schools.

"Today, I am the coordinator of Catholic schools, which means I collaborate with the pastors and the principals of all over our Catholic Schools in Natchitoches Parish, Rapides Parish and Avoyelles Parish," she said.

Davis has slowed down over the years

"Today, I am a semi-retired professional storyteller. I have traveled the United States telling stories," said Davis. One of her favorite places to tell stories is at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.

She is very active in her church and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Davis used to be very involved with City Park Players, having won numerous best actress awards, and was on their board of directors for about 20 years.

Alayna said they ask other students and the school administrators about people who

have impacted Pineville High School and the Black community.

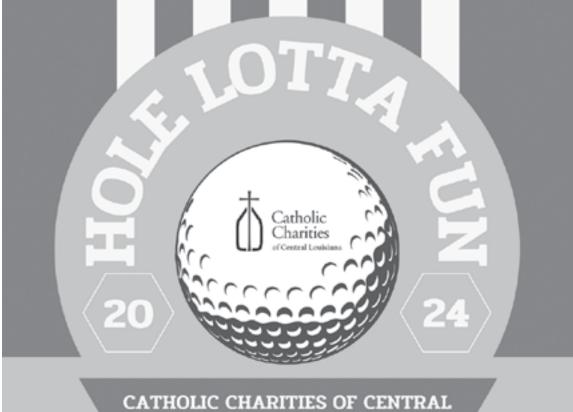
"We'll look at their characters, we'll look at what they've done and from there we'll determine who gets in," she said.

"We thought about giving it just to alumni but just opened it up to a wide breach of anyone in the Pineville community who has contributed, obviously, to the Black community and the Pineville community and someone who has just played a role and left a legacy and that's what Mrs. Davis has done for us and for Pineville High School as well as Menard," said Zoria.

Student council advisor Amy Thomas said the students are the ones who came up with the idea for the award "which is really nice because we do encourage studentled activities."

"It was their brainchild and they planned it and put it together. It makes us very proud," said Thomas

"It's an honor for all of us because Pineville has never done anything like this and it's great kickstart to something we can do every year or every other year just to showcase the Black culture and the arts and just give recognition," said Zoria.



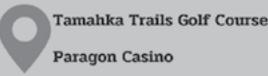
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HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS for March 2024

For the new martyrs | We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.



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CHURCH TODAY Confirmation



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH, LEESVILLE. On Saturday, March 2, "Confirmation Season" opened at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Leesville. Nine young people were confirmed by Bishop Robert Marshall at the anticipated Mass for the Third Sunday of Lent. Thank you to Fr. Kenneth Michiels, Deacon William Endris, the catechists, choir, and altar servers who assisted with the liturgy.



SACRED HEART CHURCH, MOREAUVILLE. Sunday, Mar. 3, the Third Sunday of Lent, thirteen young parishioners of Sacred Heart Church were confirmed. Bishop Robert Marshall thanks Fr. Brian Seiler, Dcn. Reggie Ducote, the catechists, parents, sponsors and parishioners for their support of these Confirmandi, and to Deacon Richard Mitchell who served as MC.



ST. PETER CHURCH, BORDELONVILLE. Monday, Mar. 4, Bishop Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Peter Church in Bordelonville. Three young men were confirmed. Thank you to Fr. Paul Kunnumpuram, MSFS, pastor, the catechists, parents and sponsors for their support of these Confirmandi.



ST. MARTIN CHURCH, LECOMPTE. Thursday, Mar. 7, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Martin Church in Lecompte. Six young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Fr. Marc Noel, the liturgical ministers, catechists, parents and sponsors who assisted and supported these Confirmandi.



ST. RICHARD CHAPEL, HICKORY HILL. On Laetare Sunday, Mar. 10, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Lent and the Sacrament of Confirmation. Three young parishioners of Holy Ghost parish, Marksville and St. Richard Chapel were confirmed. Thank you to Fr. Abraham Varghese, Deacon Ted Moulard and the parishioners of St. Richard for their welcome.



CONFIRMATION, ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE. On Friday, Mar. 15, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Joseph Church in Marksville. Fourteen young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Father Wade DeCoste, Deacons Ken Primeaux, Reggie Ducote, and Gary Schupbach and the catechists, parents, sponsors and parishioners for their assistance and prayerful support of these Confirmandi.



ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH, BROUILLETTE. On Saturday, March 16, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Fifth Sunday of Lent and the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Genevieve Church in Brouilliette. Five young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Fr. Abraham Palakkattuchira and Deacon Richard Mitchell for their assistance with the Mass and to the catechists, sponsors, parents and parishioners for their support of the Confirmandi.



BLESSING THE FIELDS. On February 26, Fr. Taylor Reynolds blessed the fields at various farms in Tensas parish where he is pastor at St. Joseph Church in St. Joseph, LA. Planting season began on March 1.

Seminarian Burses

February 2024 Donations

Deacon Clifford Pelto\$20.00 Father Anthony Dharmaraj, MSFS Burse Deacon Clifford Pelto\$20.00
Father Joshua Burch Burse
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--- Very Reverend M. Craig Scott, Chairman

Gracious and loving God, we thank you for the gift of our priests. Through them,

we experience your presence in the sacraments. Help our priests to be strong in their vocation. Set their souls on fire with love for your people. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Inspire them with the vision of your Kingdom. Give them the words they need to spread the Gospel. Allow them to experience joy in their ministry. Help them to become instruments of your divine grace. We ask this through Jesus Christ, who lives

and reigns as our Eternal Priest. Amen.

Il prayer for priests

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord April 8

The Annunciation of the Lord refers to the time when the angel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the Savior.

Mary was the first to hear and believe that God would do

what he promised the world.



ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH, HESSMER. The 2023 Confirmation class of St Alphonsus under the leadership of their catechist Mr. Brandon Roy and their DRE Mrs. Tina LaBorde performed a life-sized shadow presentation of the Stations of the Cross for our Church community and the entire CCD program. This is a fourth annual event, a beautiful tradition to prepare for the resurrection of our Lord.



HOLY SAVIOR MENARD, 2024 STATE CHAMPS, GIRLS INDOOR TRACK. Congratulations to the Holy Savior Menard Girls Indoor Track Team on their 2024 Louisiana Division II State Championship. The championships were held February 17 at LSU Field House in Baton Rouge.



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ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE. On Thursday, Feb. 22, several members of the St. Joseph Altar Society pruned and fertilized the rose bushes in front of the church office and rectory. Pictured are Father Wade DeCoste, Dianne Dubroc, Kate Moreau, Pam Mitchel, and Laura Dauzat.



SEASON OF SERVICE, IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, TIOGA. Saturday, March 2, several of our parishioners held a "Service day" at IHM Catholic Church, donating their time and talents and tackled much needed grounds work.



SEASON OF SERVICE, ST. JAMES. Parishioners of St. James Memorial Church in Alexandria collected and delivered toiletries and flowers to residents at the nursing home of Veteran's Administration Hospital in Pineville on Saturday, March 9.



SEASON OF SERVICE, ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL. St Francis Xavier Cathedral Knights of Columbus Council #3200 And Cathedral Altar Society annual Lenten Fish Fry. Held on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14.

(top photo) Left to right: Mary Ann Couvillon, Frankie Carver, Charlene Elliott, Shirley Flavin, Elizabeth Battalora, XX Rabalais, Arlene Ryder, Betty Smith, David Birdsall.

(right photo) Left to right: Gary Bonnette, Peter Lemoine, Mike Ferguson, Daniel Carnahan.

See more photos from across the diocese at www.diocesealex.org/ our-diocese/all-photogalleries/



We need you! Volunteer Recruitment Breakfast

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is busy at work to serve the needs of our community in the areas of mental health, disaster relief and basic needs. We need volunteers in the following areas: office administrative assistance, graphic design/marketing, fundraising and standby for disaster relief.

Please join us for a light breakfast and learn more about our services at Catholic Charities and how you may share your gifts and talents with us! We appreciate your prayerful consideration of working with us.

The Share Your Heart Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Breakfast will be held Thursday, April 4, 2024, 8:30 a.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center Conference Room. Please RSVP to Jennifer Gilchrist at jgilchrist@cccenla.org by Monday, April 1.

Upcoming Fundraiser

The 2nd annual Hole Lotta Fun Golf Tournament in memory of Mr. Kenny Brocato will be held on April 26, at Tamahka Trails, Paragon Casino Resort, Marksville. If you are interested in sponsorship and/or signing up a team, please contact Kevin Switzer at kgswitz@bellsouth.net or Heidi Wampler at hwampler@cccenla.org.

The deadline to register is April 12.

Volunteers

If interested in helping with any service offered by Catholic Charities of Central LA, please email info@cccenla.org.



Services Offered by Catholic Charities of Central LA

Counseling Services For professional therapy

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

Christian Life Coaching For personal life changes

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

Peace in the Midst of Crisis Divorce Support

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

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By appointment only

To schedulevisit:cccenla.org/basicneeds#EMERGENCYASSISTANCE

SNAP Enrollment Assistance Over the phone enrollment

By appointment only. To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/basic-needs#SNAP

Budget Class

Facilitated by Ramsey Solutions Financial Coach

2nd Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m., Westside Library, Alexandria By appointment only

To schedule, visit: cccenla.org/basic-needs#BudgetingClasses





Many thanks to Father Dwight de Jesus and the parishioners of St. Joseph Church in Cheneyville for welcoming the priests and deacons of the Avoyelles Deanery for a delicious meal and an evening of fellowship and fraternal support. I was grateful to be included in such an uplifting gathering.



Saturday, Mar. 9, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Natchitoches with the Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. Fathers Peter Faulk and Jacob Thomas concelebrated. After Mass, we had a wonderful lunch at the home of Richard and Mary White. Thank you to all of the Knights and Dames.

"It is Finished"

Our Lord and Savior was nailed to the cross, For all of us sinners and those who were lost.

He looked down on each one of us. Giving us hope and someone to trust.

His heart was grieved and He hurt so much, Hoping one day we would keep in touch.

His side was pierced with a lance, His pain was terrible, but it gave us another chance.

His arms stretched out, and His hands were nailed, His feet were pierced, and I know He yelled.

He then died on the cross after He cried out, "It is finished," thus giving us a new route.

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Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm 206 Choupique Lane • Cottonport, LA 71327 Kim & Stewart Wixson, Owners Psalm 4: 7a
Responsorial Psalm
for April 14
Third Sunday
of Easter

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

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

LECTOR FORMATION WORKSHOPS

6:00 p.m. April 9 St. Joseph Catholic Center Alexandria

8:00 a.m. June 15 St. Mary's Assumption Cottonport

To sign up go to www.diocesealex.org

The stone rejected by the builders has become the corner stone. Psalm 118: 22 Responsorial Psalm for April 21 Fourth Sunday of Easter

What is Easter?

The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning simply the "East." The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth, and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, who is the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle used during the Easter Vigil is a central symbol of this divine light, which is Christ. It is kept near the ambo throughout Easter Time and lit for all liturgical celebrations.

The Easter Vigil is the "Mother of All Vigils" and Easter Sunday is the greatest of all Sundays. The season of Easter is the most important

of all liturgical times, which Catholics celebrate as the Lord's resurrection from the dead, culminating in his Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. The octave of Easter comprises the eight days which stretch from the first to the second Sunday. It is a way of prolonging the joy of the initial day. There are 50 days of Easter from the first Sunday to Pentecost. It is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: "If

Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith." (1 Cor 15:14)

"What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind;...So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is

also a spiritual one. So, too, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being," the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one." (1 Cor 15:36-37, 42-49)



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ECUMENICAL MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST, ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, BUNKIE. St. Anthony and KC Council #2395, hosted their annual Ecumenical Men's Prayer Breakfast on Tuesday, Jan. 6. The event was well-attended by men and students from all over the parish as well as First Baptist Church Pastor, Phillip Boone and United Methodist Pastor, Joe Hoover, both churches in Bunkie. Msgr. Scott Chemino, pastor of St. Anthony, gave a reflection.

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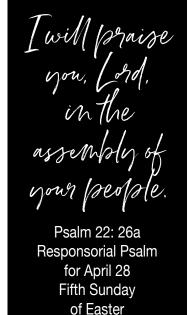
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Visit the sign-up form at www.diocesealex.org, or email starver@diocesealex.org with your name and mailing address to receive the Church Today FREE of charge! FULLNESS OF TRUTH. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at the Randolph Riverfront Center in Alexandria for the participants in the Fullness of Truth Conference, Feb. 23-25. The theme of the conference has been "Real Presence, Real Power: The Eucharistic Life & the Science of Sainthood," and has featured some nationally known speakers.





THE CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHURCH, COTTONPORT donated \$300 to the Family Justice Center of Avoyelles, a branch of the organization based in Pineville. This non-profit organization provides victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault (including children, adults and the elderly) a secure place to receive services from multiple agencies all under one roof. They strive to stop family violence, make victims safe, hold batterers accountable, and provide long-term support for victims and children through collaboration and coordinated services. Court Padre Pio #2141 voted this organization as part of their Catholic Daughters 7 Pillars project.



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

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

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

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





ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR BETA CLUBS competed at the state convention in Lafayette held the week of Feb. 20. Elementary Beta Club:1st Place Champions - Living Literature; 1st Place Champion - Visual Arts, Jewelry; 4th Place - Digital Portfolio; 5th Place - 4th grade Social Studies. Junior Beta Club: 5th Place - Living Literature; 2nd Place - Visual Arts, Color Photography; 4th Place - Creative Writing. The students will travel to Savannah, Georgia this summer to compete in the National Beta competition.

NATIONAL BETA MEMBERS FROM OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL are celebrating their recent participation in the Louisiana Elementary and Junior Beta State Convention held the week of Feb. 20 in Lafayette, LA. OLPS placed in the following competitions: Elected Elementary Beta President; 1st Place - Performing Arts, Solo; 1st Place - Campaign Skit; 3rd Place - Recyclable Art; 3rd Place - Elementary Book Battle Team; 4th Place - Elementary Musicology Team.





SACRED **HEART** SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Dr. Seuss was celebrated.



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CLOSED TUESDAYS

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

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BUFFET

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



(left) KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL #2395 PRESENTED THE AWARDS FOR THE 2024 CYLA (Catholic Youth Leadership Award) to Bunkie Magnet HS students Rylie and Noah . Each received \$500 and both students plan to attend LSU in Baton Rouge this fall. Pictured are: David Patin, Grand Knight, Rylie , Bill Longoria, KC Project Officer and Noah

(right) LSUA CAMPUS MINISTRY SEASON OF SERVICE. On March 6, the LSUA Catholic Campus Ministry students cleaned the pews in the big chapel at Maryhill Renewal Center. That afternoon, they also helped set up for another group's silent retreat.

(below left) OLPS 5TH GRADE RETREAT. Holy Savior Menard Central High School MAC team holds retreats for our 5th and 6th graders each year! March 7 was our 5th grade's turn! The half-day retreat began after Mass. Thank you MAC team for your guidance!







LOUISIANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY. Pictured with Amelia Bordelon, campus ministry coordinator for the diocese are the Wildcat Catholics group who regularly meet at LCU this semester.



Northwestern State's ADVANCE Program for Young Scholars

(ADVANCE) is a three-week summer residential program in

Natchitoches, Louisiana, that offers challenging classes for honors,
gifted, and/or talented students currently in grades 7 - 11.

Course offerings include arts, computer science, finance, humanities,
math and science. Visit the website, www.advance.nsula.edu or call
318-357-4500 for more information!

Program dates: July 7-27, 2024

Financial Aid application deadline: April 1, 2024

Application deadline: May 1, 2024



Ⅲ NORTHWESTERN STATE

LCU WILDCAT CATHOLICS. (below) Fr. Luke LaFleur and Amelia Bordelon, Director of Campus Ministry, welcomed potential new students to the LCU campus on Preview Day.



Campus Ministry:

LSU of Alexandria:

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

Northwestern State University:

NSU Catholic Student Organization FOCUS Ministries Contact Holy Cross Church: (318) 352-2615

Louisiana Christian University:

LCU Catholic Student Organization "Wildcat Catholics" 318-447-2956

Follow us on Instagram @wildcatcatholics

Catholic Charities Volunteer Recruitment Breakfast - April 4

Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana serves the needs of our community in the areas of mental health, disaster relief and basic needs assistance. We need help with office administrative assistance, graphic design/marketing, fundraising and standby for disaster relief. Thank you for prayerfully considering to share your gifts and talents with us! Join us April 4 at 8:30 a.m. at the St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria for this event. Please RSVP by Monday, April 1 to jgilchrist@cccenla.org or leave a message at (318) 445-2401, ext. 533.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Workshops - April 6

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

Dates, times and locations are:

Apr. 6, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – St. Francis de Sales, Echo

July 27, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – St. Patrick Church, Ferriday

Please note that if a date results in low registration, it
may be cancelled.

4th Annual St. Rita Golf Classic - April 8

St. Rita's 4th Annual Golf Classic Tournament, benefitting their youth programs, will be held at Oakwing Golf Course, Monday, April 8. The tournament is a 4-person scramble, lunch and registration begin at noon, shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. Cost is \$125 for each team member or team sponsorship package is \$600, includes 1 mulligan. Participants must be 21 years or older. Call (318) 445-7141 ext. 210 for more information.

Lector Formation Workshop - April 9

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

Tuesday, April 9 at 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

4th Annual Adam Jeansonne Golf Tournament - April 12

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

Veritas Mission of Truth - April 13

The Veritas Mission of Truth event will be held at the Cajundome Convention Center in Lafayette on Saturday, April 13 at 7:00 p.m. Join us for an evening with talented actor Jim Caviezel, known for his roles in movies such as "The Passion of the Christ" and "Sound of Freedom." Jim will delve deep into what it means to seek Truth in today's world by sharing his own life experiences that have shaped him. Presented by John Paul the Great Academy in Lafayette. Tickets start at \$59. Sponsorships available. For more information call (337) 889-5345.

Mini-retreat: Spiritual Warfare and the Discernment of Spirits, Baton Rouge - April 20

Find the keys to true spiritual freedom in a powerful series of talks by Dan Burke, author of Spiritual Warfare and the Discernment of Spirits. Join Dan for a "Setting the Captives Free" mini-retreat at St. Agnes' Catholic Church on April 20 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Mass will begin 8:00 a.m. (confession at 7:30 a.m.). This mini-retreat will include Q&A with Dan Burke. The cost is \$29 per person or \$65 for the Family Bundle, which will include a goodiebag. Register at SpiritualDirection.com/events.

2nd Annual Hole Lotta Fun Golf Tournament - April 26

2nd annual Hole Lotta Fun Golf Tournament in memory of Mr. Kenny Brocato on April 26, at Tamahka Trails, Paragon Casino Resort, Marksville. If you are interested in sponsorship and/or signing up a team, please contact Kevin Switzer at kgswitz@bellsouth.net or Heidi Wampler at hwampler@cccenla.org. The deadline to register is April 12. Benefiting Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana.

Women's Silent Retreat - April 26-28

SAVE THE DATE! "Seeking Grace" Women's Silent Ignation Retreat will be held at Maryhill Renewal Center from April 26-28. Author, speaker, spiritual director and retreat facilitator, Becky Eldridge, will guide this women's preached retreat. Deadline to register is April 19. Cost is \$225 per person. \$100 deposit in the form of a check is required. To register, visit www.diocesealex.org.

Steubenville South Conference - June 21 - 23, 2024

Calling all high schoolers! In our ever-changing world, Jesus is the answer to the longing of our hearts for meaning, fulfillment, security, and love. Join hundreds of Catholic teens at the Steubenville South Conference here in Alexandria, to be illuminated in the light of Christ.

All rising freshmen in high school through rising freshmen in college are invited to attend this retreat with their youth groups.

Learn more at www.steubenvillesouth.com, contact your parish youth minister, or email us at hello@steubenvillesouth.com for more information.

Church Today News Deadlines

April 22
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Apr. 11

May 27
Deadline for news:
Thursday, May 16



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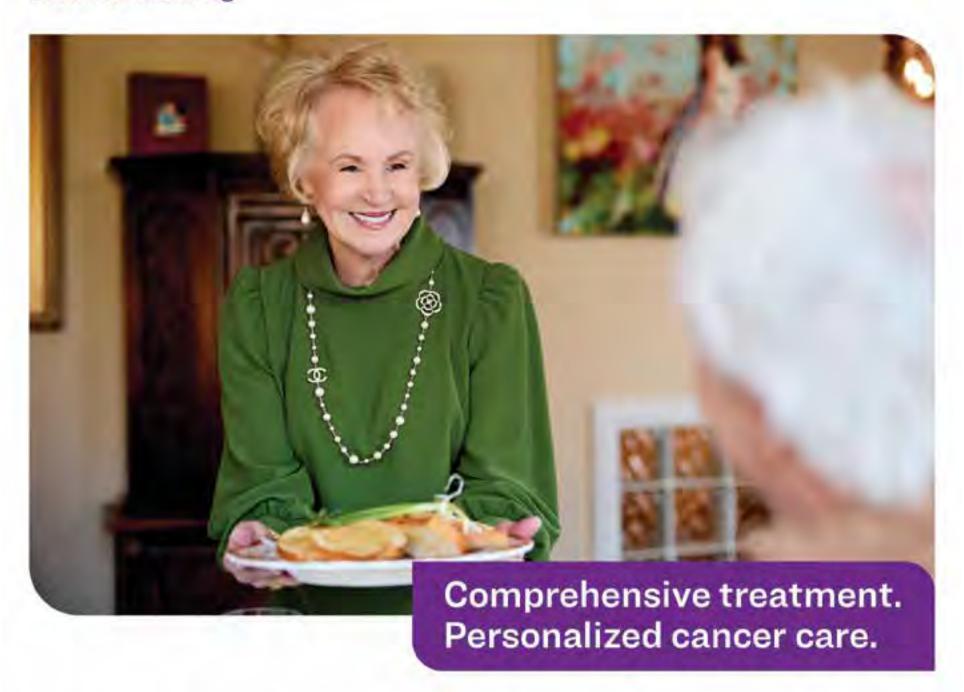
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April 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
магсн 25	Chrism Mass 11:00 a.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria	27	28	29	30	31
PRAY FOR DCN. C. THIBODEAUX APRIL	PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS	PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS	HOLY THURSDAY PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS	GOOD FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE	HOLY SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD	EASTER PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ
APRIL			Catholic Charities Volunteer Recruitment Breakfast 8:30 a.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria		Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Workshop 9:00 a.m. St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo	
PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	PRAY FOR DCN. L. WHITE	PRAY FOR DCN. J. WHITEHEAD	PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE	FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR DCN. M. YOUNG	PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH
4th Annual St. Rita Classic Golf Tournament 1:00 p.m. Oakwing Golf Course, Alexandria	VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches Lector Workshop 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria	10	11	4th Annual Adam Jeansonne Golf Tournament Links on the Bayou, Alexandria	Veritas Mission of Truth 7:00 p.m. Cajundome Convention Center, Lafayette	14
PRAY FOR FR. A. AELAVANTHARA	PRAY FOR DCN. W. ALDRIDGE	PRAY FOR DCN. F. ANDRADE	PRAY FOR FR. JOY ANTONY	PRAY FOR DCN. E.J. BARRE	PRAY FOR FR. S. BRANDOW	PRAY FOR FR. D. BRAQUET
13	VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Paul the Apostle Church, Mansura	1 7	10	13	Spiritual Warfare and Discernment of Spirits 9:30 a.m12:45 p.m. St. Agnes Church, Baton Rouge	4 I
PRAY FOR FR. J. BROCATO	PRAY FOR FR. J. BURCH	PRAY FOR MSGR. S. CHEMINO	PRAY FOR DCN. R. CHRISTOPHER	PRAY FOR FR. D. CORKERY	PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM	PRAY FOR FR. W. DECOSTE
22	VIRTUS Training 6:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria	24	25	26 2nd Annual Hole Lotta Fun Golf Tournament Tamahka Trails, Marksville	27	28
PRAY FOR FR. D. DEJESUS	PRAY FOR DCN. LG DELOACH	PRAY FOR FR. B. DESHAUTELLE	PRAY FOR FR. J. DESIMONE	"Seeking Grace" Won	nen's Silent Retreat Ma PRAY FOR DCN. D. DUBROC	ryhill Renewal Center PRAY FOR FR. D. DEREK DUCOTE

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