CHURCH TODAY

Volume LV, No. 10 www.diocesealex.org Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970 October 28, 2024

Remembering the faithful departed

Bishop Robert Marshall, along with the priests of the Diocese, blessed the graves at the Priests' Cemetery during their annual retreat at Maryhill Renewal Center. As a reminder, November 2 is All Souls' Day, a time dedicated to remembering and praying for the faithful departed.

INSIDE

St. Mary's School elementary reading program a great success

"The elementary reading program has been a resounding success..." See page 4 for more information on a reading program made possible through the Catholic Foundation.

How long does it take to study for Priesthood?

See page 9 for the answer plus a list of our diocesan seminarians. Please remember to keep these men in prayer as they continue their formation.

Annual Bishop's Golf Tournament held October 14

The Annual Bishop's Golf Tournament was held at Links on the Bayou in Alexandria on Monday, October 14. Thank you to all of our sponsors and everyone who participated this year. See pages 10-11 for more information.

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ANNUAL WHITE COAT MASS. On Friday, Oct. 18, the annual "White Coat" Mass honoring medical professionals and all health care workers was celebrated at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria. Organized by the Catholic Medical Association, many of the liturgical ministries were filled by doctors and others in the health care sector. The photo includes many of those who participated in the liturgy, concelebrants, deacons, and friends. Thank you to all who help to care for the vulnerable among us.

Listen to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on

KLIL 92.1 8 a.m. Sunday Mass

KZLG 95.9 7 a.m. Sunday Mass

EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE OF JERUSALEM. Sunday, Oct. 20, the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem observed the Feast of Our Lady, Queen of Palestine. This feast is a reminder that in the conflicts and violence of the Middle East are a Christian minority who are not combatants but who offer suffer with the other innocent victims. Please pray for peace throughout the world and especially in the Holy Land. Pictured with Bishop Robert Marshall are two brother Knights - Monsignor James Ferguson and Sir Tony Vets and Dame Roz Allemond.

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Only love will save humanity, Pope says in encyclical on Sacred Heart

By Carol Glatz
Our Sunday Visitor

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A world that has become "heartless" and indifferent to greed and war, and a Catholic Church in need of revitalizing its missionary joy need to open themselves up to Christ's infinite love, Pope Francis wrote.

By contemplating Jesus' Sacred Heart, the faithful can be filled with the "living water that can heal the hurt we have caused, strengthen our ability to love and serve others, and inspire us to journey together toward a just, solidary and fraternal world," the pope wrote in his encyclical, "'Dilexit nos' ('He loved us'): on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ."

The Vatican released the 28,000-word text Oct. 24.

While it is the pope's fourth encyclical, he wrote that it is meant to be understood in tandem with his previous two encyclicals, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home" and "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship."

"The present document can help us see that the teaching of the social encyclicals … is not unrelated to our encounter with the love of Jesus Christ," he wrote. "For it is by drinking of that same love that we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognizing the dignity of each human being, and of working together to care for our common home."

The pope had said in June, the month the church traditionally dedicates to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that he was going to release a document in the fall on the devotion to "illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal, but also to say something significant to a world that seems to have lost its heart."

The encyclical includes numerous reflections from the Bible, previous magisterial texts and the writings of saints and his fellow Jesuits, to re-propose to the whole church the centuries-old devotion. Since 1899, there have been four papal encyclicals and numerous papal texts dedicated to the Sacred Heart — a symbol of Jesus' infinite love, which moves the faithful to love one another.

"In the deepest fiber of our being, we were made to love and to be loved," the pope wrote.

However, he wrote, "when we witness the outbreak of new wars, with the complicity, tolerance or indifference of other countries, or petty power struggles over partisan interests, we may be tempted to conclude that our world is losing its heart."

"It is heartbreaking," he wrote, to see elderly women, who should be enjoying their golden years, experiencing the anguish, fear and outrage of war. "To see these elderly women weep, and not feel that this is something intolerable, is a sign of a world that has grown heartless."

"The most decisive question we can ask is, 'Do I have a heart?'" the pope wrote.

The human being is more than an instrument, a material body and a carrier of intelligence and reason, the pope wrote.

The human person also embodies spiritual, emotional, creative and affective dimensions that are often undervalued, neglected or squelched in today's world, he wrote. It is the heart that integrates all these dimensions that are so often fragmented or neglected.

The most precious treasures that animate and dwell in the human heart are often the simple and poignant moments in life: "How we first used a fork to seal the edges of the pies that we helped our mothers or grandmothers to make at home"; "a smile we elicited by telling a joke"; "the worms we collected in a shoebox"; and "a wish we made in plucking a daisy."

"All these little things, ordinary in themselves yet extraordinary for us, can never be captured by algorithms" and artificial intelligence, he wrote, and, in fact, "poetry and love are necessary to save our humanity," not just reason and technology.

At a Vatican news conference presenting the encyclical Oct. 24, Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti-Vasto, Italy, said the document is a "compendium" and the "key" to understanding Pope Francis' pontificate.

Some commentators criticize the pope for focusing too narrowly on "social" issues, the archbishop said. This encyclical explicitly presents the spiritual and theological foundation underlying the pope's message to the church and the world for the past 12 years — that everything "springs from Christ and his love for all humanity."

Many saints and religious congregations have a special devotion to the Sacred Heart, including St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus, the religious order the saint co-founded and to which Pope Francis belonged.

St. Ignatius' spiritual exercises encourage people to "enter into the heart of Christ" to "enlarge our own hearts" and train them to "sense and savor" the Gospel message and "converse about it with the Lord," the pope wrote.

Christ's heart is aflame with infinite love, and Christ desires to be loved and consoled in return, the pope said, especially by loving and serving one's neighbors and those who are most marginalized.

Jesus associated with "the lowest ranks of society," he wrote, introducing the "great novelty of recognizing the dignity of every person, especially those who were considered 'unworthy.'"

"In union with Christ, amid the ruins we have left in this world by our sins, we are called to build a new civilization of love," the pope wrote. "That is what it means to make reparation as the heart of Christ would have us do."

"Amid the devastation wrought by evil, the heart of Christ desires that we cooperate with him in restoring goodness and beauty to our world," Pope Francis wrote.

The encyclical was published as members of the Synod of Bishops were wrapping up a multiyear process focused on fostering "a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission."

In his encyclical, the pope emphasized how only a deep and abiding love in the Lord can inspire and fuel Catholics to share the Gospel and God's love with the world.

Mission requires missionaries who are "enthralled by Christ" and are "impatient when time is wasted discussing secondary questions or concentrating on truths and rules because their greatest concern is to share what they have experienced," he wrote.

"They want others to perceive the goodness and beauty of the Beloved through their efforts, however inadequate they may be," he wrote.

The heart of Christ also frees Catholics from the problem of communities and pastors who are "excessively caught up in external activities, structural reforms that have little to do with the Gospel, obsessive reorganization plans, worldly projects, secular ways of thinking and mandatory programs," he wrote.

"The result is often a Christianity stripped of the tender consolations of faith, the joy of serving others, the fervor of personal commitment to mission, the beauty of knowing Christ and the profound gratitude born of the friendship he offers and the ultimate meaning he gives to our lives," he added.

Pope Francis invited Catholics to rediscover or strengthen their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the practices connected with it, particularly Eucharistic adoration and receiving the Eucharist on the first Friday of each month.

This practice once served to remind the faithful that Communion was not a reward for the perfect, he wrote, but to renew people's confidence in the "merciful and ever-present love" of Christ in the Eucharist and his invitation "to union with him."

Today the First Fridays devotion, he wrote, can help counter "the frenetic pace of today's world and our obsession with free time, consumption and diversion, cell phones and social media (and) we forget to nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist."

St. Mary's School elementary reading program a great success

with grant from Hope Farrar Kramer Education Foundation through The Catholic Foundation

The Catholic Foundation of North Central Louisiana is a tax-exempt organization whose primary purpose is to accept charitable donations with specific, dedicated charitable objectives. The Foundation accepts donations and creates a contract with the Donor whereby the Foundation will Hold, Invest, and Manage the funds, then make disbursements of earnings and/or principal as directed by the Contract Terms of the agreement.

One of the Funds being held and managed by the Foundation is the Hope Farrar Kramer Education Trust, established in 2006 by Graham and Sarah Kramer. Since inception of the program, 75% of the earnings from the invested donation are accumulated and held until an opportunity is presented to the Kramers for investing in a Christian education initiative. Various local catholic schools and other Christian Programs have received benefits from this program over the years.

In July, 2023, under the direction of the Kramer Family, a grant of $10,000 was provided to St. Mary's Catholic School, Natchitoches, LA for the acquisition and implementation of an enhanced elementary reading program. A year later, in August, 2024, the Kramer family and Foundation received a "Program Report" on the effectiveness of the new reading program at St. Mary's School. The School Principal reports that the program was a huge success. His conclusion in the report is as follows:

READING PROGRAM A SUCCESS. A grant for $10,000 was presented to St. Mary's Catholic School in Natchitoches last year to assist in funding a program to increase reading skills in their lower elementary grades. Pictured are our Pre-K students participating in the program: [redacted]

"The elementary reading program has been a resounding success, with significant improvement in reading levels, comprehension, and student engagement. As with anything there are challenges, but by addressing the challenges and building on the program's strengths, the school can continue to foster a love for reading and ensure that all students achieve literacy proficiency. The positive results indicate a bright future for the continued development of literacy skills in our elementary students."

The Teachers also enjoy implementing the new program and appreciate the results. A few of the teacher comments are:

"This curriculum, in comparison to our previous, certainly hits the ground running and moves quickly in the direction of new reading skills."

"The new reading program was a phenomenal experience for both teachers and students."

"The program, overall, is engaging, interesting, motivating, modern, and leads to successful learning. We have selections that cover various categories of science, social studies, literature, the arts, and more. We cover topics of natural resources, natural disasters, geography, community service, poetry and more. The kids love it!"

This is just one of the great accomplishments that have been made by investments held and managed by the Catholic Foundation of North Central Louisiana. Many thanks to The Kramer Family for establishing this trust in our foundation. If you would like to know more about The Foundation, please review our website – www.catholicfoundationalexandria.org, and feel free to contact any board member listed on the site or our President, Curtis Meaux at 318-487-9222 or email to president@catholicfoundationalexandria.org.

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS
for November 2024

For anyone who has lost a child:

We pray that all parents who mourn the loss of a son or daughter find support in their community and receive peace and consolation from the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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(318)717-1995

ST. JULIANA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. On Sunday, Sept. 8, St. Juliana Catholic Church hosted St. Peter Claver Day for the councils and courts of the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver in the Louisiana District. Participants came from across the state including Monroe, Shreveport and Baton Rouge.

DIOCESE HOSTS CATECHETICAL FORMATION ENRICHMENT DAY. On Saturday, Sept. 28, Catechists and Youth Ministers gathered at LSUA. Themed "Come & See! Geaux & Tell! 2024 Adult Rally" it began with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and a greeting and opening prayer from Bishop Robert Marshall. Paul George and David Calavitta lead those in attendance to a refreshed sense of ministry. Topics covered were the mission and call of a Catechist and the Vision of Catechesis. Those in attendance were also able to see some of the newest selections of textbooks from vendors along with other tried and true textbooks. It was definitely a day of enrichment and community.

PRAYER FOR PROTECTION THIS HURRICANE SEASON

O God, Master of this passing world,
hear the humble voices of your children.
The Sea of Galilee obeyed Your order and returned to its former quietude.
You are still the Master of land and sea.
We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control;
the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant,
can awake from its seeming lethargy,
overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land,
and spread chaos and disaster.
During this hurricane season, we turn to You, O loving Father.
Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid,
and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with the passing of time.

O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our beloved Mother,
we ask you to plead with your Son of our behalf
so that spared from the calamities common to this area
and animated with a true spirit of gratitude,
we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son
to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where a stormless eternity awaits us.
Amen.

Composed by Most Rev. Maurice Schexnayder (1985 - 1981)
Second Bishop of Lafayette (1956 - 1973),
following Hurricane Audrey in 1957

I love you, Lord, my strength.

Psalm 18: 2
Responsorial Psalm for November 3
Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

ACTS

Upcoming Retreats:

November 21-24, 2024
Women's ACTS Retreat
hosted by
Sacred Heart of Jesus Church
(318) 445-2497

January 2-4, 2025
TEEN ACTS Retreat
hosted by
St. Mary's Assumption Church

All retreats are held at Maryhill Renewal Center.

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ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, MARKSVILLE. Fr. Wade deCoste recently celebrated Holy Mass for all St. Joseph Church CCD students. It was a great blessing to start off the new CCD year with 155 students and teachers. We pray that the students will keep the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts and be open to His words and teachings.

OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL FALL FEST. Saturday, Oct. 5, Bishop Robert Marshall visited the annual Fall Festival on the campus of (and benefitting) Our Lady of Prompt Succor School. Parents, grandparents, teachers, and administrators were working hard to make the day fun for all the children. Fr. Rusty Rabalais, Fr. Thomas Kennedy, and Mrs. Meredith Rhoads were busy greeting families. Some of the sports teams of Holy Savior Menard Central High School were volunteering their services as well. A great festival without rain!

See the latest news from around the Diocese at www.diocesealex.org

(above and below) ST. FRANCIS DE SALES CHURCH, ECHO. On Saturday, Sept. 28, Bishop Robert Marshall travelled to Echo for the annual Church Fair of St. Francis de Sales Church and shared these photos: (top) Bingo Night players settled in at tables in the front yard of the parish. (bottom) Pastor, Fr. Dwight de Jesus, assisting with a batch of cracklins.

ST. RITA CHURCH VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR. On Sunday, Sept. 29, St. Rita Church celebrated all of their volunteers with a luncheon. Congratulations to Wanda Hinton for receiving the volunteer of the year award presented by pastor, Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj. Thank you Wanda for your many years of service to St. Rita parish.

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FAMILY DAY AT MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS CHURCH, WOODWORTH. On Saturday September 21st, Mary Mother of Jesus Church in Woodworth held a family retreat day. From the gracious grant received from Catholic Extension, the parish held a full day of events for the entire family. With almost 200 people registered for the event, the parish offered talks to adults and various youth age groups throughout the day about "Truth & Love". The day was also filled with food and fun. After the Saturday Vigil Mass, all those in attendance ended the day with an outdoor concert featuring Josh Blakesley. Following up from the day, the church will offer follow up presentations, coming up will be Theology of the Body for Beginners held in late October. I think Jessa said it best "I was very pleased with how engaged our children were throughout the day; you know you're onto something special when your teenager wants to stay for the rest of the speakers' session instead of going to a scheduled school club workday! I would love for the retreat to be a 2-day event so speakers would have more time to further discuss topics, but overall — it was a wonderful experience for our family!"

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Praise the Lord, my soul!

Psalm 146: 1b
Responsorial Psalm
for November 10
Thirty-second Sunday
in Ordinary Time

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

2024 Seminarians

How long does it take to study for Priesthood? Answer: Six to nine years!

Rome has recently made some changes to the seminary formation process.

No matter the age of the seminarian, his first year is call a **propaedeutic year** (preliminary year) which is a year focusing on the basics of seminary life, prayer life, service, human maturity, and a few general education classes. After the propaedeutic year, the seminarian will begin his studies in philosophy.

If a seminarian does not a have a college Bachelor's Degree, he will attend a College Seminary where he will obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree with 36 hours of study in **Philosophy** after completing his propaedeutic year. However, if a seminarian already has a bachelor's degree from an accredited college, he will begin **Pre-Theological** Studies after his propaedeutic year.

If he continues in responding to his call to priesthood, he will go forward for 3.5 years of theological studies and obtain a **Masters of Divinity** or a **Masters of Theology** (depending upon the seminary).

Upon completion of studies, he is eligible to be **ordained a deacon** and will serve as a transitional deacon in a parish in our diocese for 6 months. After this deacon internship, the transitional deacon will become eligible to be **ordained a priest**. In his first 3-5 years of priesthood, he will serve as a parochial vicar or associate pastor in a parish!

Matthew Bonner
Notre Dame Seminary
Home parish: Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville

Jacob Cass
Notre Dame Seminary
Home parish: St. Joseph Church, Marksville

Gabe Dowden
Notre Dame Seminary
Home parish: MB of the Immaculate Conception, Natchitoches

Blaine Phillips
Notre Dame Seminary
Home parish: St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria

Graham Descant
Notre Dame Seminary
Home parish: St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport

Matthew Kramer
St. Benedict Seminary
Home parish: St. Mary Church, Winnsboro

Blake Bernard
St. Benedict Seminary
Home parish: St. Mary's Assumption, Cottonport

(right) BISHOP ROBERT MARSHALL VISITS NOTRE DAME SEMINARY. Bishop Robert Marshall traveled to New Orleans for the semi-annual meetings of the Boards of Trustees of St. Joseph Seminary College and Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology. While there, he got a look at the beautifully renovated Chapel of the Immaculate Conception at Notre Dame and also caught up with Alexandria seminarians Gabe Dowden (left) and Matthew Bonner (right).

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REMINDER:
Political activity

This election season, pastors and principals are reminded that any parish, school, or other Church-owned facility is NOT TO BE USED for any activity related to the support of or opposition to any candidate for political office, nor as places for partisan debate. The pulpit, especially, is NEVER to be used by candidates or incumbents to advance their political views ortheir positions. Moreover, the pulpit is NOT TO BE USED as a forum by any individual -- even a priest or deacon -- to support or oppose a candidate, public official, or political position.

For a full explanation of diocesan policy regarding political activity, please refer to Article 1400 on page 13 of the Diocesan Policy Manual, located on the Diocesan website.

If you have any further questions, please contact David Brook at 318-445-6424, ext. 215.

Discover Catholic Schools Week: November 17 - 23

This week is dedicated to help schools connect with prospective families, donors, educators, and other community members. We want to help showcase what makes Catholic schools the best when families are looking to find the right school for them. Visit https://www.ncea.org/csw/CSW/About_CSW/Discover_Catholic_Schools_Week.aspx.

2024 Bishop's Invitational Golf Tournament

Winners of the tournament

FIRST PLACE 1ST FLIGHT. Tarver Land Development: Pictured with Bishop Robert Marshall are Robby Tarver, Jarred Tarver, Derek Cantu, Gentry Mangun.

SECOND PLACE 1ST FLIGHT. Kramer Funeral Home: Pictured with Bishop Robert Marshall are Frank Brame, Corky Yates, Charlie Weems and Brannon Hagen.

FIRST PLACE 2ND FLIGHT. Deacon Divots: Pictured with Bishop Robert Marshall are Deacon Richard Mitchell, Deacon Jason Lavergne, Bart Jones and Deacon Les Glankler.

SECOND PLACE 2ND FLIGHT. St. Michael the Archangel Church, Leesville: Pictured with Bishop Marshall are Jerry Spoor, Deacon Bill Endris, Tim McFae and Ray Ortiz.

Not pictured: Winner of the Putting Contest, Walt Brown. Winner of the Driver Raffle, John Migliore.

Special thanks to:

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see you next year!

The Annual Bishop's Invitational Golf Tournament was held at Links on the Bayou in Alexandria on Monday, October 14. Thank you to all of our sponsors and everyone who participated this year. All proceeds benefit the Seminarian Education Fund.

BISHOP'S GOLF TOURNAMENT. Bishop Robert Marshall and the seminarians, left to right, Matthew Kramer, Blaine Phillips, Blake Bernard, Graham Descant, Matthew Bonner, Jacob Cass, Bishop Marshall and Gabe Dowden.

Special thanks to our Bishop's Invitational Golf Tournament Platinum Sponsor:

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Catholic Charities of Central LA news roundup

Catholic Charities is ready to kick off our Christmas Cheer Program after completing a few big fundraising projects this summer. In July, we held a Christmas in July raffle. We are thankful to everyone who supported this raffle, helping us to raise nearly $5,000. This will go a long way to helping families in our community.

We also held a fundraiser Estate Sale. We had a family that donated their entire household to Catholic Charities! With the help of volunteers, we were able to host the estate sale and raise more funds for our programs. All leftovers were donated to the Homeless Coalition, who were in the process of housing a veteran, and to the ARC. We were happy to be able to help other organizations in the process of completing our fundraiser.

All of these funds are going to help us with our upcoming Christmas Cheer Program as well as our many other projects.

As we head toward the Season of Giving, we wanted to take a moment to remind you about Giving Tuesday on December 3, 2024. Please remember Catholic Charities on this day.

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH, MANSURA held a Rosary Rally on October 12 at St. Paul's Church in Mansura, participants pictured with Fr. Blake Deshautelle, pastor.

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(above and below) HSM LIVING ROSARY. Holy Savior Menard held a Living Rosary on Oct. 4 to honor the Month of the Rosary. Students gathered on the football field to pray the Rosary as a school, bringing a rose to Mary for every Hail Mary prayed.

Services Offered by Catholic Charities of Central LA

Visit cccenla.org to access a variety of services. Appointments are required and can be made online.

- **Mental Health Counseling**
- **Christian Life Coaching**
- **Christian Support Groups:**
  Grief/Loss B.R.E.A.T.H.E.
  Peace in the Mds of Crisis Divorce Support
- **Vaping/Tobacco Cessation (Youth and Adult)**
- **Disaster Preparedness Resources**
- **Financial Literacy Budget Class**
  - in partnership with Red River Bank and OFMS
- ***Assist.Educate.Elevate.***
  Emergency Basic Needs Assistance
  (For those at risk of utility disconnect and eviction, victims of house fires, and information and referral)
- **SNAP Enrollment Assistance**

To support our work, thank you for your donation of time, talent, or treasure!
- **Volunteer** - cccenla.org/volunteer
- **Donate** - cccenla.org/hero-of-hope

Questions? Email info@cccenla.org

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OLPS 4-H VISITS RAPIDES PARISH FAIR. The Our Lady of Prompt Succor School 4-H club had the fantastic opportunity to visit the Rapides Parish Fair and explore all the exciting exhibits. This included the livestock barn, exhibition hall, and the Barnyard (baby animals). The fair also featured various interactive stations set up by different organizations. Students also attended a Q&A presentation on dairy cows, learning that they have a unique side-facing vision that allows them to see without looking directly in front of them. The highlight was getting to milk a "simulation cow" that closely resembled the real thing. The best part of the trip was getting up close and personal with the animals. Students could pet cows, sheep, goats, chickens, a pony, and a donkey, creating unforgettable memories.

(above and below) ANNUAL SCHOOL FAIR AT ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL IN PLAUCHEVILLE. SJS is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year and Bishop Robert Marshall drove out to Plaucheville to celebrate and enjoy a wonderful dinner of fried catfish prepared by the Knights of Columbus for the fair. He visited with Father Martin Laird, Pastor and Mrs. Rhiannon Moreau, Principal. As a native of Memphis, one of the barbecue capitals of the world, Bishop was especially interested to see the preparation for a "Cochon de Lait" feast. He was surprised to see that the pigs were being cooked vertically, not horizontally.

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You are my inheritance, O Lord!

Psalm 16: 1
Responsorial Psalm
for November 17
Thirty-third Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Holy Matrimony

As we prepare to gather around the table with family and friends for the holidays, many of us will reflect on the lives of our families. How the kids have grown up so fast or, maybe it's the grandkids that are growing faster than you would like! Or maybe it's a reflection on the family that is no longer with us since the last holiday season.

This time of visiting and reflection may also make you think of your wedding day, when you and your spouse began your lives together which included the extension of a larger family unit with in-laws.

On Oct. 12, the Diocese of Alexandria held a Pre-Cana day of reflection for couples preparing to enter into the Sacrament of Marriage. Ten couples attended the one day workshop and heard from various presenters on topics such as finance, communication, prayer and others. Each presenter with their own unique gifts and experiences, shared with couples real life scenarios so couples could engage in personal dialogue about these topics.

Pre-Cana workshops will continue at the Diocese on a quarterly basis with the next workshop set for Saturday, Feb. 8. More information, including registration, can be found on the Diocese website.

https://www.diocesealex.org/pre-cana-marriage-prep-workshop/

Also, on the Diocese website under the "Our Faith" tab, one can find more information about the Sacrament of Marriage. There you will find a video from the USCCB on what to expect at a Catholic Wedding, other marriage preparation resources, marriage enrichment resources along with information on Natural Family Planning.

You can also find a printable brochure containing an overview of the 8 steps for preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage.

For more information on the Pre-Cana workshops or the marriage guidelines for the Diocese, please contact Deacon Jason Lavergne @ dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org or at (318) 445-6424 ext. 207.

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PRE-CANA MARRIAGE WORKSHOP. Engaged couples from around the Diocese gathered for a day of reflection in preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The workshop is designed to help engaged couples discuss significant issues involved in married life such as finances, sexuality, communication, prayer and the raising of children.

Prayer to Our Lady

O morning star, O dove of light,
Come to our aid during this flight.
Give us the grace we need each day
To fight the world, for this we pray.

As a suckling babe in a mother's arms,
Protect us from evil and all that harms;
Lead us to your Son Most High.
Thus, when all is done,
We can say with a sigh:
All praise and honor to God on high.

by Marcus Descant, Leesville, Louisiana

lizdescant@gmail.com
Advertisement paid for by Marcus Descant

Upcoming VIRTUS Sessions

Wednesday, Nov. 6, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center,
4400 Coliseum Blvd.
ALEXANDRIA

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 6:00 p.m.
St. Joseph Catholic Center,
4400 Coliseum Blvd.
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.

Women's Worship Workshop December 7

St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph, LA will be hosting a women's workshop Saturday, Dec. 7 starting at 9:00 a.m. on Lake Bruin. The speaker will be Grammy nominated singer Laura Huval, who will offer talks, music, worship and more for any woman needing a refresher in the Lord. This event is provided FREE by St. Joseph Church. Brunch will be included and the day will end with Mass on the lake. For more information and to reserve your place, please email stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com.

The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.

Psalm 93: 1a
Responsorial Psalm
for November 24
The Solemnity of
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe

Remembering St. Francis of Assisi

Each year on or around his memorial on October 4th Catholic parishes remember St. Francis of Assisi by having both their young and old parishioners bring their animals to be blessed. The practice has even spread to churches that are not Catholic. Some churches have special restrictions and rules regarding the animals for their safety and the safety of people attending the event.

St. Francis expressed his devotion to God through his love for God's creation and everything in it, both the humans and the animals. There are several stories told about his interaction with God's wildlife. He was known to have preached not only to humans but also to the birds and animals. He convinced a wolf that was terrorizing the people in the village of Gubbio to stop and in return the people would take care of it. At the hour of St. Francis' death, larks came and sang their song to him. The unique thing about this is that larks prefer light and dislike twilight and night. They gathered even though night was falling.

St. Francis was not only known for his relationship with the animals but also for his life and the way he lived. He chose to live the Gospel life that Jesus had taught. There were those that claimed his chosen lifestyle was too hard to follow and tried to dissuade him, but he was undeterred. St. Francis asked the Lord for two graces before he died. The first was to suffer the same pain and suffering that Jesus experienced during his Passion. The second was to feel in his heart the love for us sinners that led him to his Passion. The first led to him receiving the stigmata and the second was shown in his love for all of God's creations.

After reflecting on these two graces, I have added my own request in my daily prayer life. "Lord, let me love others the way you did when you walked this Earth". It's one thing to love others from a distance but to love them up close and personal is another thing. Jesus loved all people regardless of how they felt about him. He saw the look on their faces and the hate and anger in the eyes of those who rejected him and wanted to kill him. He saw the confusion expressed by those who were not sure about him or who he was. He saw the love that came from those who followed him. And he saw the faces and felt the pain from those who caused him to suffer his Passion. And yet in all these circumstances he faced he always loved them.

How many of us can love like that? Better yet, how many of us want to love like that? It may only be a simple prayer away.

ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. Mass for the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi celebrated by Bishop Robert Marshall with our annual Blessing of the Pets. Pictured: Father Chad Partain blesses a parishioner's pet cat.

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ST. RITA CHURCH BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS in honor of the Feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, took place on Sunday, Oct. 6 in the St. Rita Prayer Garden.

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All Saints Day
(Holy Day of Obligation)
Friday, Nov. 1

All Souls Day
Saturday, Nov. 2

SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE 4-H OFFICERS: [redacted]

4TH ANNUAL BISHOP'S BOWL. Friday, Sept. 20, Bishop Robert Marshall travelled to Turpin Stadium on the campus of Northwestern State University in Natchitoches for the 4th annual "Bishop's Bowl," when the Tigers of St. Mary's Catholic School, Natchitoches, take on the Eagles of Holy Savior Menard Central High School, Alexandria. It was a hard fought contest with lots of stops and starts, but in the end the St. Mary's Tigers prevailed 17-12. The Tigers retain the trophy for another year.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL VIRTUE OF THE MONTH: The Virtue of the Month for September was Charity. Students from St. Mary's Catholic School that displayed this virtue [redacted] Congratulations to these students!

ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL, PLAUCHEVILLE. Student Athletes who have played at least two consecutive years in a sport received their letter jackets recently. [redacted]

SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. Friday, Sept. 27 Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass for the Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul at Sacred Heart Church in Moreauville. The Sacred Heart School community joined and provided the choir, altar servers, and lectors for the liturgy. Afterwards, Bishop Marshall was able to visit students in some of the classrooms. Thank you to Father Brian Seiler, pastor, and Sister Sandra Norsworthy, OLS, principal, for their welcome and their continued commitment to Catholic education.

ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. Friday, Oct. 4, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass for the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi at Cabrini Church with the students, faculty, staff, and administrators of the parish school. After Mass, he visited the school campus and classrooms.

(above and below) ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL, BUNKIE. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass for the Memorial of the Holy Guardian Angels with the community of St. Anthony School in Bunkie. After Mass, Bishop toured classrooms. Thank you to Monsignor Scott Chemino, Pastor, Mrs. Sadie LaPoint, Principal, and all of the faculty, staff and students for their welcome and enthusiasm.

ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass for the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi as well as Mass for St. Therese of Lisieux "the Little Flower." The annual procession of the roses and the Blessing of the Pets followed.

THE ST. PETER AND ST. MICHAEL CCD STUDENTS, BORDELONVILLE, recently volunteered their time and effort to do a Cemetery Clean Up. They were joined by parents, community members, and teachers to prepare the cemetery for Blessing of the Graves on All Souls Day. Kudos to all for performing this great service!

LSUA MASS. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass on the campus of Louisiana State University of Alexandria on Wednesday, Oct. 23. Bishop thanks the administration of LSUA for the invitation, and Amelia Bordelon who is the Catholic campus minister for the Diocese, and to the students, faculty and staff who came to the liturgy and who support the LSUA Catholic Student Organization.

First Sunday in Advent Sunday, Dec. 1

Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference: Dec. 7

All students in grades 6 – 8 are invited to attend this retreat with their parish youth group. Learn more soon at steubenvillesouth.com, or follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

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Campus Ministry:

LSU of Alexandria:
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Follow us on Facebook or Instagram @lsuacatholics

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

Spiritual Freedom Silent Retreat - Nov. 7-10

In a retreat surrounded by the quiet of nature, you will be encouraged to listen in prayer to the voice of God speaking to your heart. Come to Maryhill Renewal Center for a weekend of silent reflection and prayer, each retreatant is provided a private room and an individual Spiritual Director who will guide the weekend reflections using the Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. This is a directed silent retreat. Cost is $275. For more information, contact Ingrid at inewell@yahoo.com or 318-792-3331; Joan at jdobard@gmail.com or 318-490-1385; Nicki at forevercatholic820@gmail.com or 318-447-6383.

35th Annual Blue Mass - Nov. 8

Bishop Robert Marshall will celebrate the Blue Mass on Friday, Nov. 8 at 12:05 p.m. at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria. The Blue Mass honors fire fighters, EMTs, paramedics and law enforcement, those currently serving and those who have died in the past year.

Come & See Weekend - Nov. 8-10

St. Joseph Abbey Seminary College in Covington is scheduled to have its Fall Come and See weekend from November 8-10. This is a great opportunity for any male 16 years old or older to come and see the seminary campus and what seminary life is like. For more information, please contact the Director of Vocations, Fr. Luke LaFleur at frllafleur@diocesealex.org.

Discalced Carmelites Monthly Meeting - Nov. 9

The Order of the Discalced Carmelites holds its monthly meeting at 9:00 a.m. every second Saturday, at Maryhill Renewal Center. Anyone is invited to attend morning prayer followed by Mass and then the meeting. If you are interested in Carmelite spiritual studies, please contact Mary Jo McCoy at 318-346-6860 or 318-481-9638. **If you plan to attend.....Please call Mary Jo McCoy at the numbers listed above OR Deacon Bill Travis at 318 640-2827 or 318 664-7069 and someone will meet you at the Maryhill gate.

Open House, St. Mary's School, Natchitoches - Nov. 19

Come see for yourself the great benefits of a Catholic school education! St. Mary's Catholic School will host an Open House for the community on Tuesday, Nov. 19 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Prospective students and their families are invited to meet teachers and students, discover our classrooms and learn more about the family-like atmosphere that St. Mary's is known for. Guests can tour the school campus and receive enrollment and tuition assistance information for students in preschool through twelfth grade. Admissions and business office representatives will be available to help guide you through the process and answer any questions! Contact Debbie Norman at 352-8394 or dnorman@smstigers.org to reserve your spot today. A ministry of the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, St. Mary's is a coed college-prep school that forms the whole student: mind, body and spirit.

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Native American Mass - Nov. 22

Please join us on Friday, Nov. 22 as Bishop Robert Marshall celebrates the Native American Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission Church in Forest Hill at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Cookies to Casseroles and In-Between - Nov. 23

Sponsored by St. Frances Cabrini Church's Sanctuary Society. A great way to last minute shop before the Thanksgiving holiday! The event will be held in the Activities Building on Saturday, Nov. 23 before and after the 4:30 Mass (between 3:30 and 6:00 p.m.) and on Sunday, Nov. 24 before and after all the Masses (9:00 and 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.)

Come by and shop for your favorite casserole, sweets, and other choice items to add to your Thanksgiving table. LAST BUT DEFINITELY NOT LEAST: Hot Tamales will be available again this year; price is one dozen for $15.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Workshops - Nov. 25

The next workshop for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will be held on Nov. 25 from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. at Sts. Francis and Anne Church, Kolin. There is no need to register and no charge to attend. When the session is completed you will receive a certificate. We will be happy to have you! For more information, contact Dcn. Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext. 207 or by email at dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org.

The Light Is On for You: Advent Day of Reconciliation - Dec. 5

In addition to Advent penance services, the Diocese of Alexandria will offer an Advent day for confession on Dec. 5 when most churches within the Diocese will offer a time in the evening to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Some churches may offer this on Dec. 4 or Dec. 6 due to previously scheduled events. Please check www.diocesealex.org for times that will be posted soon.

Sacred Heart Pineville Christmas Extravaganza - Dec. 7

Mark your calendars for Saturday, Dec 7, for a full day of activities, games for the children, pictures with Santa, Gumbo Cook-off, vendors, concessions, and much more in the Activities Building of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville. TICKETS available in church office and at each Mass times on 9/28-29, 10/5-6, 10/19-20, 11/2-3, and 11/16-17

- Breakfast with Santa IS FREE 8:00-9:30 a.m. and includes pancakes, sausage, juice. Everyone can bring a canned good for Santa to take to feed the less fortunate at the North Pole.
- Raffle drawings - $5.00 for one ticket or $20.00 for 5 tickets
- Gumbo and sides dinner - Tickets $10.00.

We are still accepting Vendors. Donations to the Sweet Shop are appreciated and needed by Dec. 6. For more information about tickets or to participate you can call the Church Office: 318-445-2497 or Wade Trahant at 318-308-0406.

Women's Worship Workshop - Dec. 7

St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph, LA will be hosting a women's workshop Saturday, Dec. 7 starting at 9:00 a.m. on Lake Bruin. The speaker will be Grammy nominated singer Laura Huval, who will offer talks, music, worship and more for any woman needing a refresher in the Lord. This event is provided FREE by St. Joseph Church. Brunch will be included and the day will end with Mass on the lake. For more information and to reserve your place, please email stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com .

Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference - Dec. 7

Join us at Beyond the Limits, Jr. High Conference on Saturday, Dec. 7, to be illuminated in the light of Christ. All students in grades 6 - 8 are invited to attend this retreat with their parish youth group. Learn more at steubenvillesouth.com or follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

Church Today News Deadlines

November 25
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Nov. 14

December 23
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Dec. 12

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November 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
OCTOBER 28 PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR	29 PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA	30 **The Preternatural World Series** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA	31 HALLOWEEN PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPPARAMBIL	NOVEMBER 1 ALL SAINTS DAY (Holy Day of Obligation) FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	2 **Cabrini Fest** 10:00 a.m. St. Frances Cabrini School, Alexandria **MINI FAIR -- ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, CLOUTIERVILLE** ALL SOULS DAY FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH	3 **24-hour Adoration St. Joseph Church, St. Joseph, LA** PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE
4 **NATIONAL VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK** PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	5 ELECTION DAY PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL	6 **VIRTUS Training** 6:00-9:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria **The Preternatural World Series** 6:30-7:30 p.m. OLPS Church, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. C. PELTO	7 **SPIRITUAL FREEDOM SILENT RETREAT -- MARYHILL RENEWAL CENTER** PRAY FOR DCN. K. PRIMEAUX	8 **Blue Mass** 12:05 p.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria **COME & SEE WEEKEND -- COVINGTON** PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS	9 **Discalced Carmelite meeting** 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY	10 PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS
11 VETERANS DAY PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX	12 PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ	13 **The Preternatural World Series** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES	14 **Jubilee Year Mission Series** 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH	15 PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT	16 PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER	17 PRAY FOR FR. R. SHOURY
18 **NATIONAL DISCOVER CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK** PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR	19 **VIRTUS Training** 6:00-9:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria **Open House** 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m. St. Mary's Catholic School, Natchitoches PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN	20 **The Preternatural World Series** 6:30-7:30 p.m. Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. P. SUNDERHAUS	21 **Jubilee Year Mission Series** 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen **WOMEN'S ACTS RETREAT -- MARYHILL RENEWAL CENTER** PRAY FOR DCN. C. THIBODEAUX	22 **Native American Mass** 6:00 p.m. Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission Church, Forest Hill PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS	23 **Cookies to Casseroles and In-Between** 3:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. St. Frances Cabrini Church, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS	24 PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS
25 **EMHC Workshop** 6:00-9:00 p.m. Sts. Francis and Anne Church, Kolin PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE	26 PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD	27 PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ	28 **Jubilee Year Mission Series** 6:00 p.m. Church of the Little Flower, Evergreen THANKSGIVING PRAY FOR DCN. L. WHITE	29 PRAY FOR DCN. J. WHITEHEAD	30 PRAY FOR FR. J. WILTSE	DECEMBER 1 **First Sunday of Advent** PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER

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