

CHURCH TODAY

Volume LVII, No. 3

www.diocesealex.org

Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

March 23, 2026

Confirmation Retreat

The second annual diocesan Confirmation Retreat was held on February 28 at St. Rita's Holy Family Center. The retreat originally had two date options to attend but the first one, scheduled for January 24, was cancelled due to an ice storm. About 175 attended. Confirmation season is now underway. See pages 8-9 for photos.



INSIDE

Jubilee of St. Francis

Marking 800 years since his death, the Church celebrates a Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi, inviting pilgrims to rediscover peace, simplicity, and renewal. See page 4 for more.

A growing church awakens

A surge of new Catholics is sweeping the globe - and the Diocese of Alexandria is part of the story, with record numbers entering the Church this Easter. As the Holy Spirit moves, all are called to respond in faith. See page 12 for the full article.

A weekend that changes lives

Each summer, Steubenville South gathers thousands for a powerful encounter with Christ - where joy, prayer, and transformation meet. Volunteers make it all possible, creating space for life-changing moments. See page 17 to join the mission this June 26-28.

INDEX

News/events 2
 National / World 3
 Feature 4
 Vocations and Burses 7
 Features and Local News ...9
 Picture Spread..... 10
 Social Ministries 12
 Features..... 14
 Schools / Youth..... 16
 Diocesan Briefs 18
 Calendar 19

Season of Service



DIOCESE OFFICE STAFF OFFERS LENTEN PRAYER TREE DURING SEASON OF SERVICE. God's Golden Girls of the St. Joseph Catholic Center (the offices of the Diocese of Alexandria) prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3:00 p.m. daily, in the Bishop Greco Chapel. Prayer intentions were written on the purple "leaves" of the tree and placed in the basket below. Every day they lifted up the intentions in prayer throughout the Lenten season.



SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH, PINEVILLE. The Sacred Heart Church Family team took on the task of cleaning the Activities Building where they pressure washed the chairs and tables, pressure washed the outside, cleaned the bathrooms and windows. They also cleaned and organized the youth building and all the classroom tables and chairs.

SEASON OF SERVICE WITH THE ALTAR SOCIETY OF ST. JOSEPH IN MARKSVILLE. (below) The St. Joseph Church Altar Society spent time at Hessmer Nursing Home reciting a rosary with residents. (right) The group did a much needed clean out and organization of the church decoration work shed.



CHURCH TODAY



Volume LVII, No. 3
 March 23, 2026

P. O. Box 7417
 Alexandria, LA 71303
 318-445-6424

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

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

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

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



Diocese of Alexandria Website
 www.diocesealex.org



Diocese of Alexandria Facebook
 facebook.com/DioceseofAlexandria



Diocese of Alexandria Instagram
 @dioceseofalexandria

Guarding the heart and home: Raising holy families in a screen-saturated world

by Sister Hosea Ropprecht
Our Sunday Visitor

Parents today raise children in a world unlike any previous generation. Video games, social media, streaming platforms, AI chatbots and instant information transform daily life.

The tools of the digital world offer many remarkable opportunities for learning, creativity and enjoyment. Media messages educate and form audiences through ideas, values and worldviews. When used well they can expand the minds and hearts of children and enrich their imaginations.

Along with the benefits of technology, risks are also a reality. Harmful content can adversely affect a child's emotional and spiritual health. Without guidance, kids can, intentionally or not, find themselves in dangerous digital spaces where the content may undermine their faith and well-being.

Because of this, parents are called to monitor technology use and help children become critical engagers of media. This responsibility is not only practical — it is profoundly spiritual.

Use technology — don't let it use you

Technology itself is not the enemy. Human ingenuity



RAISING HOLY FAMILIES. A family is pictured in a file photo praying during Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. (OSV News photo/Gregory A. Shemitz)

created social media apps, video games and artificial intelligence. However, like any tool, they can be used for good or for harm.

Pope Leo XIV emphasizes that technology must serve the human person rather than replace human wisdom or relationships. Parents, rooted in faith, are the ones who form and guide children toward the beautiful, true and good.

Youngsters cannot always distinguish helpful from harmful content online because they lack

the maturity to apply discernment to the messages they encounter in the media. Yet these are the messages that shape their young minds and hearts. Therefore, parenting should include spiritual guidance in the digital world.

Shape your child's digital character

Being a responsible parent when it comes to media does not simply mean setting limits for screen time, although that is necessary. It also involves playing and viewing together as a family. Being present to one another and engaging media together allows for the chance to enter into conversations about media content. This helps children interpret what they see and hear through the lens of faith. Talking with children about their digital experience helps them develop discernment skills, which are essential as they grow into adulthood.

Parents should aim to form their children's consciences, not

just enforce the rules. Encourage children to ask questions of the media, such as: How does this story make me feel? Does it reflect goodness? Does it draw me closer to God?

By forming children in digital discernment, this equips children to safeguard their interior lives and grow in their relationship with God.

Defend your family through prayer

Helping strengthen their spiritual core provides the most effective way to protect children in the digital age. When families pray together, they invite Christ into their home, making him the center of their relationships and activities.

Prayer strengthens children interiorly and helps to form their consciences. Prayer reminds them that they are God's beloved children. When a family prays the rosary or grace before meals together or brings their intentions

about their online experiences to God, God's grace bonds the family together. These moments teach children that God is present in every aspect of life — including their digital lives.

Perhaps the most important factor in forming children is the example of the parents. Children see what their parents do and imitate them. When devices constantly distract parents, children internalize that behavior, but when parents pray together and lead the family in prayer, the children learn the value and beauty of faith.

Transform your tech into a path to holiness

Technology does not have to weaken faith. Families can support their faith by using technology intentionally. Families can watch inspiring content together and discuss what they see, listen together to a recording of Scripture, learn about the saints, and use digital tools to deepen their spiritual life.

It is a challenge to parent in the digital age, but by setting boundaries, keeping bedrooms screen-free, establishing tech-free times and encouraging other activities including prayer, parents can help bring balance and peace to their homes.

For further tips and ideas of how to form digitally safe and holy kids, watch the Digital Age Family Safety series by Family Theater Productions and Pauline Media Studies at DigitalFamilySafety.org or on its YouTube channel.

These short videos are designed to help busy Catholic parents navigate the digital culture for their kids with practical tools and fun ideas. The downloadable guides make the series' content accessible and lasting.

Parents aim to raise children who do not fear technology, but instead demonstrate maturity and integration — who know how to use digital tools without being controlled by them. When families pray together, discern together and live intentionally with their media, the home becomes a sacred space where faith is lived, hearts are formed and Christ reigns at the center. In such homes, holiness can flourish.



Brigitte Kelso
Owner/Agent
2918 S. MacArthur Dr.
Alexandria, La. 71301

Phone: 318.448.2226
Fax: 318.448.2280
bkelso@kelsoinsurance.com

Auto, Home, Recreational Vehicles, Collector Cars, Commercial

Petrus

FEED & SEED

2914 N. Bolton Ave. • Alexandria, LA

442-2325

Listen to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on

KLIL 92.1
KZLG 95.9

8 a.m. Sunday Mass
7 a.m. Sunday Mass

Pope names 2026 as Jubilee year of St. Francis

by *Father Taylor Reynolds*

St. Francis of Assisi (born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone; c. 1181-1226) is one of the most venerated figures in Christian history. He was an Italian mystic, poet, and Catholic friar who founded the Franciscan Order.

Francis is perhaps most famous for his unique relationship with nature. He believed that all creatures were his spiritual “brothers” and “sisters” because they shared the same Creator. Stories abound of him preaching to birds, taming a wild wolf in the city of Gubbio, and saving lambs from slaughter. This is why he is often depicted with animals.

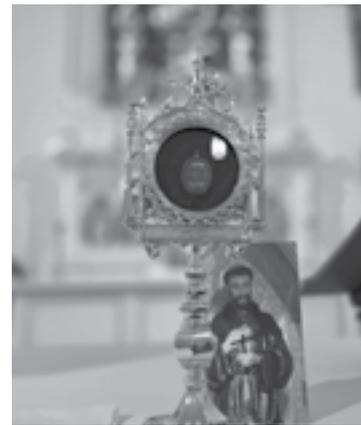
800 years ago, he died in 1226 at the age of 44, suffering from poor health and near-blindness. He was canonized as a saint just two years later. Today, his feast day is celebrated on October 4th.

On the anniversary of his passing, Pope Leo XIV has named this year the Jubilee of St. Francis, running from January 10, 2026 until January 10, 2027. The Pope calls all Catholics in this society inundated with sensory overload and technological advances, to meditation on St. Francis’ detachment and how to built up the church, not by buying, bargaining or sensory bombardment, but rather by actually building it up; seeing that the church is constantly in need of rebuilding and reinforcing, making its likeness ever new like the master. The Pope also states that ‘in this era, marked by so many seemingly endless wars, by internal and social divisions that create distrust and fear, he continues to speak. Not because he offers technical solutions, but because his life points to the authentic source of peace.’

As always, the Pope wants to offer guidelines and assistances in our journey. To facilitate that, the Holy Father has granted Plenary Indulgences (under usual conditions of confession 8 days before or after, communion, and prayers for the Pope’s intentions) to all the faithful who, with a heart detached from sin, participate in the Year of Saint

Francis by visiting, in the form of a pilgrimage, any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship anywhere in the world dedicated to Saint Francis or connected to him for any reason, and there devoutly follow the Jubilee rites or spend at least a reasonable period of time in pious meditation and prayers concluding with the Our Father, the Creed and invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Clare and all the Saints of the Franciscan Family.

Any parish church dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi is technically a pilgrimage site. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Waterproof is extending a special invite and encouragement to all the members of our diocese. The church of St. Francis has graciously received a second-class relic, a piece of St. Francis’ hairshirt which he wore from the moment he surrendered his garments to his father and took on the Franciscan habit, until his death. All pilgrims to the church in Waterproof, LA are able to sign



Relic of St. Francis of Assisi

the pilgrim book and receive a blessed Holy Card of St. Francis, which they may venerate into a third-class relic in the church!

The church celebrates Mass on Sundays at 8:00 a.m., but in order to make the church accessible to all who come on this special pilgrimage, can set up a time by emailing stjosephinstjoe@gmail.com or calling 318-766-3565.

May all people find in the example and intercession of St. Francis a companion during this season of our lives.

Public Notice – Action Required

Sexual Abuse Claims in the Diocese of Alexandria Bankruptcy

Regardless of how old you are today or when the sexual abuse occurred, you need to file your claim so that it is received by June 8, 2026.

The Diocese of Alexandria (“Diocese” or “Debtor”) has filed bankruptcy to restructure its nonprofit organization and pay Putative Abuse Survivors. Please read this notice carefully as it may impact your rights against the Diocese and provides information about the case, *In re: Diocese of Alexandria*, Case No. 25-31257 (Bankr. W.D. La.). This notice is a short summary. For more detail, go to <https://cases.stretto.com/diocesefalexandria> or call (855) 655-5795.

Who Should File a Putative Abuse Survivor Claim?

Anyone who alleges they were abused and believes the Diocese, or persons affiliated with the Diocese, may be responsible for the abuse must file a claim. This includes abuse in connection with any entity or activity associated with the Diocese, including schools, orphanages, parishes, or Catholic Charities. A list of such entities associated with the Diocese is available on the website or by calling the toll-free number listed below. If you have an abuse claim against any entity on that list, you may have a claim against the Diocese. Only the Diocese is in bankruptcy. If you have a claim against any entity on that list, you must take additional legal action to preserve and pursue your rights.

When and How Should I File a Putative Abuse Survivor Claim?

You should file a claim using the Putative Abuse Survivor Proof of Claim so that it is received by June 8, 2026. If you do not file a timely Putative Abuse Survivor Claim, you may lose rights against the Diocese, including any right to compensation.

Your information will be kept private. You can download and file a claim at the website or call the toll-free number listed below for help on how to file a claim by mail.

Your information will be kept private

<https://cases.stretto.com/diocesefalexandria> and (855) 655-5795

**The Feast Day of
St. Francis of Assisi
is celebrated October 4**

Holy ground and lasting memories

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

Isn't it interesting how certain experiences in life leave a lasting impression? There are events so significant that even decades later we can recall exactly where we were when we heard the news. Many of us can remember where we were on September 11, 2001. Others of a certain generation can do the same with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Thankfully, life also gives us joyful memories. If you are married and shared a "first dance" at your wedding reception, you likely remember the song that was playing. (Ladies, please be patient if your husband does not recall it quite as clearly!) When that song comes on the radio years later, it transports you back to that special moment.

Some memories bring tears. Others bring a smile. When I was a child, my grandparents cared for me during the summer months while my mother worked. They faithfully watched their soap operas—something that seemed like pure torture to me at the time! Yet to this day, whenever I see an hourglass, I cannot help but smile as I think of them and say to myself:

"Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives."

How true that line from the



daytime television show *Days of our Lives* is for our journey of faith. Time moves quickly, and what remains are the moments that shape us.

For many throughout the Diocese of Alexandria—and even beyond—Maryhill Renewal Center is one of those places where lasting, joyful memories were made. Some recall summer camps decades ago, complete with the large ship on the lake. Others remember more recent

Since its founding in the 1940s, Maryhill has been the setting for countless moments of conversion, healing, discernment, and renewal.

experiences: ACTS retreats, confirmation retreats, spiritually directed retreats, youth gatherings, or parish renewal days.

Since its founding in the 1940s, Maryhill has been the setting for countless moments of conversion, healing, discernment, and renewal. I continue to hear stories of lives changed there. It is often referred to as "holy ground"—and based on what I have witnessed and heard, that

description is well deserved.

Yet maintaining holy ground requires commitment. The cost of operating and preserving Maryhill's facilities and beautiful grounds exceeds what is collected through retreat fees alone. This is where your support of the Annual Diocesan Appeal becomes essential. A portion of the Appeal funds helps offset the operational costs of Maryhill and ensures it remains a place of encounter with Christ for generations to come.

As a reminder, gifts to the Annual Diocesan Appeal are restricted and may only be used for:

- Seminarian education and religious vocations awareness
- Health care and retirement benefits for our priests
- Lifelong faith formation and religious education
- Spiritual renewal through the work of Maryhill Renewal Center
- Youth, young adult, campus, and Hispanic ministries

A donation of any amount is sincerely appreciated. Your generosity helps ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to experience life-changing moments on "holy ground."

"Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives." Let us make those days count—by investing in the faith, the formation, and the future of our Church.

Flu Shots & Vaccinations

Many gifts including large selection of religious items:

- My Saint My Hero religious jewelry
- Holy Medals
- Jesus Calling & other inspirational books
- Rosaries
- ACTS bracelets
- First Communion, Confirmation & Baptism gifts

Follow us on Facebook @ Cottonportcornerdrug.giftboutique

(318) 876-3665
 Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm
 206 Choupique Lane • Cottonport, LA 71327
Kim & Stewart Wixson, Owners

COMPARE QUALITY - TASTE - QUANTITY - PRICE

WE DELIVER!

WITHIN LIMITED AREA • CHECKS ACCEPTABLE

Everything from cheese to our "Full House"

#1 ALEXANDRIA 902 VERSAILLES BLVD. 448-4104	#2 BALL 6301 MONROE HWY 640-2983	#3 PINEVILLE HWY 28E AT STILLEY RD 445-9249
---	--	---

VALUABLE COUPON

Two Medium Pizzas \$22.99
 Single Topping only

Additional Toppings Extra • Not valid with any other coupon
 All prices subject to change

Expires 4/27/26

This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Psalm 118: 24
 Responsorial Psalm
 for April 5
 Easter Sunday

Jubilee Year of Hope Cross finds a permanent home at Maryhill



On Dec. 29, 2024, during the Rite of the Opening of the Jubilee Year 2025, the center section of the Jubilee Year of Hope Cross was used in the procession (see right) and then placed back into the main body of the Cross once the procession was inside the Cathedral. The Cross remained on display in the Cathedral throughout 2025 (see top left). It was hand made by a local artisan, of woods that are native to Central Louisiana and include: Black Walnut, Red Oak, Ash and Cypress.

When it was time to close the Jubilee Year of Hope at the

end of 2025, discussions began about what to do with the Cross. It couldn't stay in the Cathedral.

We are pleased to share that the Jubilee Year of Hope Cross has found its new forever home. It now serves as the Maryhill Main Chapel Crucifix behind the altar.

If you've attended a retreat at Maryhill, you most likely will remember the previous Main Chapel crucifix (see bottom left).

The previous crucifix was dismantled and the Corpus was affixed to the Jubilee Year of Hope Cross. It happens to be a perfect fit!



St. Rita Church Spanish Community's Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrims

The Hispanic community of St. Rita commemorated their journey together in the Diocesan Jubilee year pilgrimage, with a presentation of their certificates and passports at the St. Rita Spanish mass. The community came together to celebrate their accomplishment in fulfilling the pilgrimage together. This journey was an inspiring invitation to walk in our faith together as one church, hand in hand. A special thank you to Father Luke LaFleur for presenting the certificates to the community along with his support and service to the Hispanic community.

La comunidad hispana de Santa Rita conmemoró su viaje conjunto en la peregrinación diocesana del año jubilar con la entrega de certificados y pasaportes en la misa en español de Santa Rita. La comunidad se reunió para celebrar el logro de haber completado juntos la peregrinación. Este viaje fue una invitación inspiradora a caminar juntos en nuestra fe como una sola iglesia, de la mano. Un agradecimiento especial al Padre Luke LaFleur por entregar los certificados a la comunidad, así como por su apoyo y servicio a la comunidad hispana.





BROTHERHOOD FRATERNITY. Fr. Dwight de Jesus was delighted to host the priests of the Avoyelles Deanery "Brotherhood Fraternity" for an evening of fellowship at St. Francis de Sales Church in Echo. They enjoyed a meaningful time of community and mutual support over a delicious meal prepared especially for them. Parish representatives said, "We are deeply grateful for these men's dedicated service to the Diocese of Alexandria and were blessed to host this gathering in our parish hall."



NEBLETT, BEARD & ARSENAULT
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

SERVING LOUISIANA FOR CAR, TRUCK, OFFSHORE ACCIDENTS AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION

INJURED?

CALL 318-561-2500



DECADES OF EXPERIENCE READY TO HANDLE ALL TYPES OF INJURY AND DEATH CASES

WWW.NBALAWFIRM.COM
RICHARD J. ARSENAULT ALEXANDRIA, LA LA-25-18559

Seminarian Burses

February 2026 Donations

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$15.00
Gus Voltz Jr. Burse	
Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Father Blake Deshautelle Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$25.00
Fr. Rusty Rabalais Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$25.00
Fr. Gus Voltz Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$25.00
Fr. Bernard Zagst Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$40.00
Msgr. Gerald Ducote Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$50.00
Fr. Luke LaFleur Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$50.00
Gerald Flynn Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Daniel O'Connor Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Wade DeCoste Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Rusty Rabalais Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$75.00
Fr. Martin Laird Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$80.00
Deacon Kenny Sayes Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$100.00
Msgr. James Ferguson Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$110.00
Fr. August Thompson Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$120.00
Fr. Jose Robles-Sanchez Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$125.00
Kathleen Poole Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$130.00
Msgr. Julius G. Walle Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$130.00
Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, MSFS Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$150.00
Yvonne Moore Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick C. Moore	\$250.00
E.V. "Tiny" Moore Burse	
Total	\$1,700.00

A Seminary Burse is an invested sum of money, the interest of which is used in perpetuity to help fund the education of men to the priesthood. A Seminary Burse may be names of anyone - bishop, priests, religious, or lay person - chosen by the original donor, and may be added to and allowed to grow. A burse is completed when it reaches \$15,000.00 but another burse of the same name can be started. Contributions to any of the burses or to establish a new burse should be sent to:

**Chancery Office,
Post Office Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306-0417**

Thank you for your generosity!
--- 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.



April 16-19
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by St. Mary's
Assumption Church
Cottonport

May 14-17
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by St. Augustine
Church
Isle Brevelle

All retreats are held at
Maryhill Renewal Center.

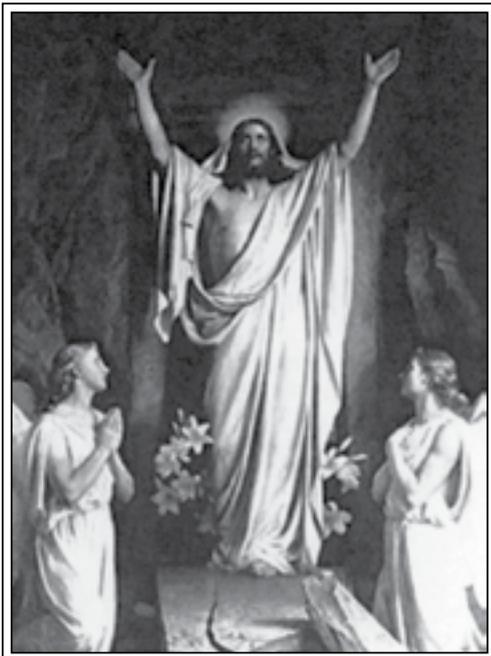


Confirmation season kicks off

On Saturday, Feb. 28, the Diocesan Office of Religious Education and Faith Formation sponsored a Confirmation Retreat for those who are preparing to be confirmed over the next few months. Originally, two retreats were scheduled at Maryhill but

the winter weather of January forced us to combine both groups in one retreat. Dustin Bernard, a speaker from Abbeville, led the retreat. Thank you to St. Rita Parish in Alexandria for hosting the day, to Deacon Jason Lavergne and Sandy West for

their work in organizing the day, to the chaperones and catechists who accompanied the candidates, and to all of our young disciples for their participation. Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at the close of the retreat.



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.

lizdescant@gmail.com
Advertisement paid for by Marcus Descant

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

Psalm 118: 1
Responsorial Psalm
for April 12
Divine Mercy Sunday

YOU GET IT ALL AT



WWW.SAYESOFFICE.COM

Alexandria: 318.448.4225 • Ville Platte: 337.363.6322 • Toll Free: 800.766.4819

OFFICE SUPPLIES • OFFICE FURNITURE • OFFICE MACHINES
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS • BREAKROOM & FOOD SERVICE SUPPLIES
JANITORIAL SUPPLIES • JANITORIAL EQUIPMENT • PRINTING



CONFIRMATION, ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH, BUNKIE. On Sunday, Mar. 1, Confirmation Season 2026 began! Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Second Sunday of Lent and the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Bunkie. Thank you to Monsignor Scott Chemino, the catechists, parents and sponsors who helped guide these 11 young disciples in their religious formation.



CONFIRMATION, ST. ALPHONSUS CHURCH, HESSMER. On Wednesday, Mar. 4, Bishop Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Alphonsus Church in Hessmer. There were a total of 14 confirmands - 11 high school students and three adults. Thank you to Father Kenneth Michiels, the catechists, sponsors, family members, and the parishioners for their support of these Confirmandi.



CONFIRMATION, OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH, FIFTH WARD. On Sunday, Mar. 8, Bishop Marshall celebrated the Third Sunday of Lent and the Sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Fifth Ward. Eight young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Fr. Kenneth Obiekwe, Dcn. Daryl Dubroc, Dcn. Richard Mitchell, and the catechists, sponsors, and parents who supported the Confirmandi. Receive the living water and be great disciples!



CONFIRMATION, ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH, LEESVILLE. On Thursday, Mar. 12, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Michael the Archangel parish in Leesville. Four young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Father Adam Travis, Deacon Stephen Gramigna, Deacon Richard Mitchell, and the parents, catechists, sponsors, and parishioners for their support of the Confirmandi.



CONFIRMATION, ST. GENEVIEVE CHURCH, BROUILLETTE. On Saturday, Mar. 14, Bishop Marshall celebrated a Confirmation Mass at St. Genevieve Church in Brouillette to celebrate Laetare Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Lent) and the Sacrament of Confirmation. Four young disciples were confirmed. Thank you to Father Abraham Palakkattuchira, CMI, the catechists, parents, sponsors and parishioners who prepared and supported these Confirmandi.



CONFIRMATION, MOREAUVILLE AND BORDELONVILLE. On Sunday, Mar. 15, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation and Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Lent at Sacred Heart Church, Moreauville. Eleven young disciples from Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Sorrows, Moreauville, and St. Peter Church, Bordelonville, were confirmed. Thank you to Father Brian Seiler, Father Joshua Burch, and Father Paul Kunnumpuram, MSFS, who concelebrated the Mass. Thanks also to the catechists, sponsors, parents, and the parishioners of all three parishes for their support of the Confirmandi.



BLESSING OF THE FIELDS. On Sunday, Mar. 1, Fr. Taylor Reynolds, pastor of St. Joseph Church in St. Joseph, LA, blessed the fields for the farmers of his rural parish. Twenty attended this Blessing of the Fields Mass.



ASH WEDNESDAY AT SACRED HEART SCHOOL, MOREAUVILLE. On Ash Wednesday during religion class, Mrs. Kristi Armand's PK-4A made hats representing the Ashes for Ash Wednesday. They then wore the hats to Mass where they received ashes. Pictured back row: Everette [redacted], Rhett [redacted], Sterling [redacted], Sawyer [redacted], Logan [redacted]. Front row: Giamma [redacted], Rudi [redacted], Dawson [redacted], Greyson [redacted], Emile [redacted], Harper [redacted], Avery [redacted], Nolin [redacted].



ST. JULIANA CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA. (above right) On Sunday, Feb. 22, the Knights of Peter Claver Ladies Auxiliary participated in a special Black History Month presentation at St. Juliana. (below) The Ladies awarded Paul Desselle as Parishioner of the Year in recognition for his 50 years of commitment to the St. Juliana Love Choir. (above) Additionally, two high school teens were awarded for their presentations on black American Catholics that are currently in the process of canonization.



WORTHY
WORTHY
WORTHY
WORTHY
WORTHY

Celebrate our 30th Steubenville South Conference with us, June 26-28, 2026, back at the Laborde-Earles Coliseum!

steubenvillesouth.com



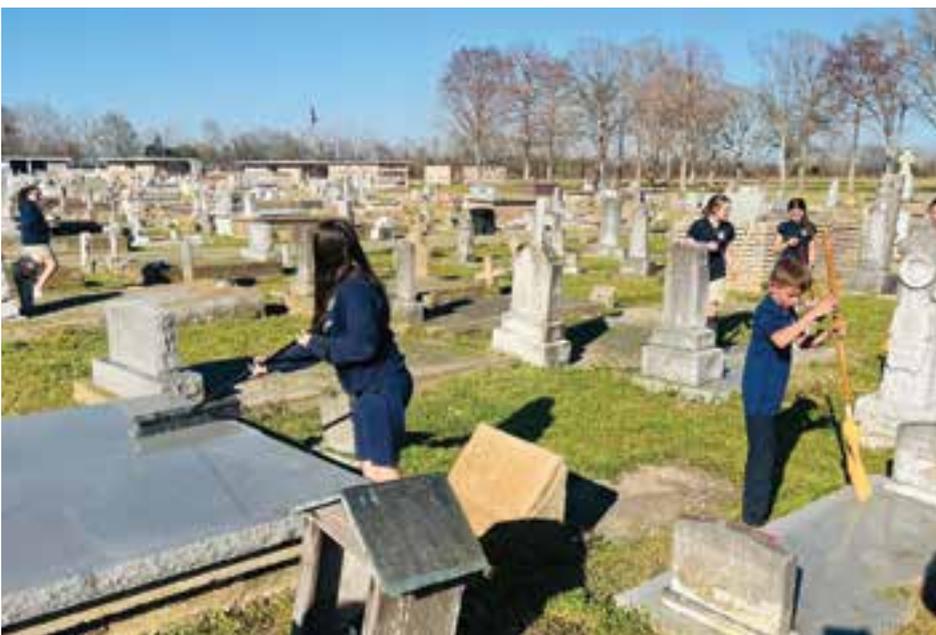
(right) BIBLE STUDY AT ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL. The first session of a 4-part Lenten bible study series took place at the Cathedral on Wednesday, Feb. 25. Sixty-five were in attendance and the first session's topic was "How did we get the Bible?" Each session in the series covered a different topic.



(above and below) THE YOUTH GROUP FROM OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE spent a fun-filled day rollerblading and enjoying delicious ice cream with Father Marc and his team (Kimberly Mojica, Margarita Cázares, and Maritza Felix). All of this was done with the aim of strengthening the pastoral bonds they are fostering in their community. Thank you, Father Marc, for your guidance, blessing, and support. They are excited to continue growing their faith together and to keep expanding

their youth group! El grupo juvenil de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe tomó un día lleno de diversión patinando y disfrutando de unas ricas nieves con Padre Marco y su equipo (Kimberly Mojica, Margarita Cázares, y Maritza Felix). Todo esto con el propósito de fortalecer la amistad pastoral que están cultivando en su comunidad. Gracias Padre Marco por su dirección, bendición, y apoyo. ¡Están entusiasmados de seguir cultivando su fe en unión y seguir creciendo su grupo juvenil!

MATER DOLOROSA'S YOUTH GROUP AND ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL STUDENTS. (above and below) On March 2nd, St. Joseph School students and the AHFI Youth Group of Mater Dolorosa Church in Plaquemine, spent the afternoon cleaning the local cemetery as part of their March Mercy Mondays acts of service during this lenten season.



A record number of people are entering the Catholic Church

by Steve Gauthier
with contributions
from Deacon Jason Lavergne

Have you seen the headlines?
A record number of people are entering the Catholic Church!

In France, over ten thousand people were baptized in 2025, the highest in twenty years. In London, a record number of adults are due to be received into the Catholic Church this Easter. In the United States, the number of people entering the Church in the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Diocese of Camden New Jersey is the highest number in two decades. Closer to home, Saint Mary's Catholic Center at Texas A&M presently has over 420 people in their OCIA program.

Here in the Diocese of Alexandria, we're setting records as well with over 130 projected to be received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church this Easter! That's an increase from 93 last year, 105 in 2024, and 108 in 2023. In the years prior to 2023, the totals were 49, 61, 61, and 84. In a recent article in The Catholic World Report, of the 175 Latin-Rite Dioceses in the U.S., Alexandria ranks 9th (1 per 142 Catholics) in the nation in non-infant baptisms and 100th (1 per 118 Catholics) in infant baptisms. So, what's going on?

Just as a reminder, OCIA stands for the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. There's also a program for children called OCIC. It's the process by which unbaptized and baptized people from other faith traditions come into full communion with the Catholic Church. Each parish who offers OCIA, usually starts their formation classes in late August or September and ends during the Easter season the following year. And I say "usually." This year there has been great interest in people wanting to join the Catholic faith outside of this normal cycle and the Diocese of Alexandria is responding. This year, the Diocese will host OCIA/OCIC formation on Sundays beginning on April 14 and ending late August for those who showed interest after the start of the normal cycle.

There are many people and organizations trying to figure out why people all over the world have a renewed interest in joining the Catholic Church. Many people

in the Diocese of Alexandria have said that the impact of the ACTS ministry was part of their reason they are coming into the church. But that doesn't explain the worldwide phenomenon. The Catholic Missionary Disciples organization wrote an article entitled "Why is OCIA Growing in the USA?" They list nine reasons for this phenomenon including a backlash against the rotten fruit of our modern culture, bountiful fruit from the National Eucharistic Revival, the fact that we live in the Golden Age of Catholic Resources, and that a greater number of Catholics are sharing their faith openly. There will be much effort put forth in years to come to isolate the key causes and to strive to keep this trend going. For whatever reason, people are opening their hearts, and the Holy Spirit is working. In that, we can rejoice!

But there's another side to the story that's not so encouraging. In 2007, 24% of U.S. adults described themselves as Catholics. In 2025 that number was 20%. For every person joining the Catholic Church there are around 8 who leave. Why do I bring this up? Because we are not meant to be spectators in this drama, we are meant to be participants!

St. John Henry Cardinal Newman, the newly named Doctor of the Church said "God has created me to do Him some definite service: He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have a Mission!" For each of us to participate in reversing this troubling trend we have a unique mission to evangelize our family, friends, and neighbors. Those are the people that God put in our circle of influence. And it's easier than you might think.

We are all called by our Baptism to be heralds of the Good News! Imagine if each one of you reading this article would bring back one fallen away Catholic or brought one of our brother and sister from another faith into full Communion with the Catholic Church. What an impact that would have on our individual churches, community, Diocese and the world.

Many of us think that we do not know our faith well enough to evangelize or that it's the role of the priest and deacon. It is



RITE OF ELECTION. (above) On Sunday, Feb. 22 we celebrated the Rite of Election with those adults and children of catechetical age who are preparing for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. Above are the former Catechumens - now Elect - from many parishes and missions of our diocese. Welcome and thank you for your witness of faith! (below) In addition to the Rite of Election, the liturgy also included the Call to Continuing Conversion welcoming those baptized Christians who seek to join the full communion of the Catholic Church and/or to complete their initiation by receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. How wonderful that we had so many candidates that we had to take this photo from the Choir loft! Thank you for your witness of faith!



our shared responsibility in this age to utilize the overwhelming resources available to help people learn about God and lead them to a personal encounter with Him.

The Holy Spirit is moving in our Diocese and in the world. Are you willing to participate as a witness of the Gospel message?

I'll end with an appropriate

quote from Mother Angelica...
"God wants you to be in the world, but so different from the world that you will change it. Get cracking."

Telephone 318-445-1446
Fax 318-445-1449

Certified Gemologists
Registered Jewelers

Under the clocktower
Schnack's
FINE JEWELRY
Established 1865
1438 Dorchester Drive
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301-3408
www.schnacks.com



**HONOR MARY
PRAY
THE ROSARY**

Paid for by a member of
The Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary

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

Second Blessings Thrift Store 4409-A Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria

Located between the Chevron Station and Heart of Cenla Credit Union at Windermere Blvd
Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 4 pm

Visit our website for details about donations, large furniture pickup requests, and volunteering
<https://cccenla.org/second-blessings-thrift-store>

Questions? Email info@cccenla.org

Catholic Foundation of North Central LA names new president

The Board of Directors of the Catholic Foundation of North Central Louisiana is pleased to announce the election of Mrs. Donna Andries as the Foundation's new President.

Mrs. Andries, a lifelong resident of Central Louisiana, brings a wealth of professional expertise and deep-rooted faith to her new role. A licensed Certified Public Accountant, Donna recently retired after a distinguished 25-year career as the Rapides Parish Tax Administrator. In addition to her professional achievements, Donna is an active parishioner of St. Rita Catholic Church, where she serves as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, a Lector and serves on the Parish Finance Council. Donna is married to Dale Andries and has a son, Hunter Andries (Lindsey).

We are blessed to have Donna lead the Foundation into its next chapter "Her financial background and commitment to



**Donna Andries, President,
Catholic Foundation of North
Central Louisiana**

our Catholic community make her an ideal choice to continue our mission of stewardship.

This appointment follows the loss of our former President Mr. Curtis Meaux who passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Curtis was a beloved leader and a man of great character who left an indelible mark on the Foundation and all who worked with him. He will be deeply missed.

LEGLUE NISSAN INC.

**NEW & USED CARS •
SALES • SERVICE • PARTS**

**6400 COLISEUM BLVD.
WWW.LEGLUENISSAN.COM
318-767-3300**



Jeansonne's Millworks & Cabinet Shop

- * Architectural Millwork
- * Custom Cabinets & Moulding

Phone 445-5665 * FAX 445-5276

GUY JEANSONNE
Owner

1843 Sterkx Road
Alexandria, LA 71301

FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY JUDGE

PETER J. LEMOINE

Social Security Disability Law

*Recipient of Social Security Disability Leadership Award:
National Top 100 Social Security Disability Law Firms*

MEMBER: Louisiana State Bar Association, Lafayette Bar Association, Avoyelles Parish Bar Association, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives

PUBLISHED ARTICLES: "The Worn-Out Worker Rule Revisited", "Significant Work-Related Limitations of Function under SS 12.05C", "Questionable Retirement and the Small Business Owner", "Crisis of Confidence: The Inadequacies of Vocational Evidence Presented at Social Security Hearings", "An Unsolved Mess: Analyzing the Social Security Administration's Methodology for Identifying Occupations and Job Numbers".

(318)717-1995

*Lord,
you will
show us
the path
of life.*

Psalm 16: 11
Responsorial Psalm
for April 19
Third Sunday of Easter

Spiritual dryness: How every day is an invitation to intimacy with God

by Leana Bowler
Blessed is She

There was a large painted mural of the Saints behind the altar. It stretched from floor to ceiling. The holy martyrs, priests, sisters, and lay people who had been crowned with glory gazed up at the Resurrected Jesus. But as I knelt with my rosary beads in hand, I noticed some of them gazing outwardly. In the corner of the mural was Saint Mother Teresa, her deep, dark eyes painted beautifully.

As I looked intently at Saint Mother Teresa, I reflected on an ache in my soul that began at the start of the new year. It was a good ache though. A longing for a deeper relationship with Jesus. A desire that burned within me to live out my faith in a more radical way. I felt the gentle whisper of the Lord calling me to enter into something new. The words of the prophet Isaiah rang joyfully in my ears: "Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18-19)

In that prayerful moment, I felt a new and great piercing in

my heart. Interiorly, it was as if I heard Saint Mother Teresa say, "Be a missionary of love. This is your call within a call."

Simple Acts of Prayer

That powerful encounter in Mass that day brought forth a zeal I had never felt before. Over the years, during my prayer, Jesus would bring me to a vast garden overgrown with weeds. We worked, pruning and cutting away. Healing. Restoring. Growing. Sometimes the soil looked parched and cracked, but Jesus was still there, drops of water flowing from His wounded hands and side. The work was spiritually tiring, and at times I wanted to go somewhere else. But the Lord would smile lovingly and invite me to continue.

That day at Mass we stepped out of the garden into a new place. A vineyard.

As we drove home from Mass that day, while my eight children loudly sang, talked, and argued in the back of our old van, I wondered how to live this out. Many grand ideas came to mind. Ministries? Outreach? Where should we start, Lord? The answer that came was much simpler: Brushing your teeth is a prayer. At first, I didn't understand what that meant, and I was reminded of the

disciples' pure and utter confusion at times when Jesus instructed them. Brushing my teeth, Lord? How could such a mundane task make me a missionary of love? And the answer that came within my heart was quite beautiful: In order to love deeply, everything must become prayer, even the simplest act.

Intimacy is Offering Everything

Each night while my children and I brushed our teeth, crowded around our bathroom sink, the smaller children squeezed out too much toothpaste, while toddlers squirmed as I tried to help them do a thorough job. Nothing changed in the physical aspects of the task at hand, but slowly a rushed bedtime routine transformed to a time of profound prayer. It was still as chaotic and messy as ever. But we learned to be recollected to Jesus within it. It was a movement of our hearts. Between mouthfuls of toothpaste, our little ones would pray, "Jesus, may I bless others with my words." Sometimes as I brushed their teeth or my own, I would pray to never gossip, pray to praise the Lord in all things,

See EVERY DAY, page 16

Heart of Saint Kateri Circle

Do you have a devotion to Saint Kateri Tekakwitha?

Do you have a desire to learn and become more involved with this vital ministry to and with our indigenous brothers and sisters?

Are you looking for new opportunities to pray, serve and grow alongside believers right in your own community?

You are invited to **COME & SEE** what we're all about!

- Tribal affiliation, though welcome, is not a requirement •

The "Heart of Saint Kateri" Circle meets:

2nd Thursday of each month 6:00 p.m.

St. Margaret's Church Hall

402 Ryan Street • Boyce, LA 71409

For more information, call (318) 471-2044 or (318) 308-6886

GIFTS FOR
FIRST HOLY COMMUNION
CONFIRMATION • OCIA



DEVOTIONALS • BIBLES • CRUCIFIXES



Catholic Art & Gifts

6184 Florida Blvd. Baton Rouge

(225) 926 - 1216 • www.zieglers.com

Hours: M-F 9am-5pm; Sat. 9:30am-4:30pm



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

Psalm 23: 1
Responsorial Psalm
for April 26
Fourth Sunday
of Easter

FLYING
WOK
BUFFET

2401 S. MacArthur Dr. • Alexandria, LA

Ph: (318) 416-9901

Dine in or Take out... order from our extensive menu
or enjoy our all-you-can-eat buffet.

CLOSED TUESDAYS

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

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

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

John Kramer & Son Funeral Home
has proudly served central Louisiana for

150
years

We are deeply grateful to the community
for trusting the Kramer family and our
dedicated staff for five generations.



EQUESTRIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER OF JERUSALEM. Saturday, Mar. 7, several members of the Knights and Dames of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem gathered at the Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Natchitoches to pray the rosary and participate in Mass at which Bishop Robert Marshall was the celebrant. The Order has a special commitment to preserving the Christian presence and sacred sites in the Holy Land, so special prayers were offered for peace in the area and throughout the world.

B.K. ROOFING, LLC

Call the Pros!
Residential Roofing Experts

www.bkroofingllc.com

Brian Maddox, Owner
13 years experience
Licensed & insured • References available

"It doesn't cost any more to get it done right!"

Free estimates!
Most estimates in 2 days

Experienced in dealing with Insurance Companies
Let us handle the details!

318-201-9065
17 Glade St. • Pineville, LA 71460

Emergency service available

DIOCESE OF ALEXANDRIA

Women's Preached Silent Retreat

Hope Lives in Our Real Life

April 23-26, 2026
Maryhill Renewal Center

"This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, which reaches into the interior behind the veil." Hebrews 6:19

Come and journey with Becky Eldredge, our retreat facilitator, as she invites you to embrace the gift of hope and learn practical tools to anchor into the promise of hope in our real lives. \$295 registration fee. \$95 non-refundable deposit/\$200 due at check-in.
To register, scan the code.

Lenten Regulations

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

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

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



SACRED HEART SCHOOL CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH. Miss Christel Voorhies' 3rd grade class made beautiful and informative Black History month projects. Some of the historical figures included: Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, and former President Barack Obama. The students learned so much about these people from our history.

EVERY DAY

Continued from pg. 14

pray to speak truth, pray to the Holy Spirit that the same tongue of fire that fell upon the Apostles would fall upon our family.

Brushing teeth seems insignificant. How could something so regular matter in the spiritual life? But it does. It all matters. These little things are gifts from the Lord. He desires our hearts in all we do. Whether we are scrubbing our fridge, washing our face, taking a walk, or sipping a glass of water, we are invited into something greater. Growing

in intimacy with the Lord is fostered by the simplest acts. Each moment of the day, each task of the day, everything we do can be sanctified. This is good news for times when we feel spiritually dry because we can be assured that Christ is with us.

All for the Kingdom

When we are in a time of spiritual dryness and exhaustion, we may feel alone but we are not. We may understand this on an intellectual level, but we do not allow the truth of it to truly penetrate our hearts. In these moments of spiritual dryness, our everyday acts are invitations

to love. Think of all the things you do in a day, and contemplate how the Lord is speaking to you in those moments. They don't have to be grand, my dear sister. They are in fact already greater than you can imagine when we do them for the Kingdom. They are part of what will make us Saints. May the eyes of our hearts see His presence, everywhere, always. May the love of Christ pierce our hearts in these everyday moments, as He accompanies us throughout the day.



(above and below) **ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA.** On Thursday, Feb. 12, Cabrini School invited parents of its 2nd graders for lunch!



N|B|A NEBLETT, BEARD & ARSENAULT ATTORNEYS AT LAW

SERVING LOUISIANA FOR CAR, TRUCK, OFFSHORE ACCIDENTS AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION

INJURED?
CALL 318-561-2500

DECADES OF EXPERIENCE READY TO HANDLE ALL TYPES OF INJURY AND DEATH CASES

RICHARD J. ARSENAULT ALEXANDRIA, LA WWW.NBALAWFIRM.COM LA-25-18559

Lacombe Floor Finishing
310 N. Briarwood, Bunkie, LA 71322
Specializing in installation

- Floor Finishing
- Ceramic Tile Floors
- Hardwood Floors
- Reseal Tile Floors

Ph: (318) 481-0950
Morgan Newton, Owner

PEST AID CO.

We Sell Do-It-Yourself Pest Control Supplies

Termites • Ants
Flies • Roaches
Mice • Fleas

COMPLETE TERMITE & PEST CONTROL.
Home Owned & Operated • Raymond J. Constantino, Sr.

473-0228
pestaide@bellsouth.net
www.pestaideola.com
2828 Jackson St. • Alexandria, LA

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.

For such a time as this: An invitation to serve at Steubenville South 2026

There's something that happens every summer in Alexandria that's hard to explain if you've never been in the room.

It's loud and reverent. Joyful and deeply personal. Thousands of teenagers, youth ministers, priests, and volunteers gather under one roof—and somewhere between the music, the sacraments, and the quiet moments of prayer, hearts begin to change.

We've seen it year after year.

A teen who walked in unsure leaves with a renewed sense of identity in Christ.

A group leader finds encouragement to keep going in a ministry that can feel heavy.

A volunteer realizes they received far more than they gave.

Steubenville South isn't just an event—it's a movement of encounter.

And in 2026, we're preparing for another full, Spirit-filled weekend: June 26–28 at the Laborde-Earles Coliseum and Event Center.

But here's the honest truth: we can't do it alone.

We Need You

Behind every powerful moment at the conference is a team of ordinary people who simply said "yes."

Yes to greeting groups as they arrive.

Yes to helping teens find



INVITATION TO SERVE. Bishop Marshall celebrates the Sunday Closing Mass at the 2025 Steubenville South.

their seats.

Yes to creating a space where someone can encounter Jesus without distraction.

Our volunteers are the steady, behind-the-scenes presence that makes everything else possible.

And maybe this is your year to step into that role.

If you've ever been curious about Steubenville South—but thought, "I've never been... I wouldn't know what to do..."—this is actually the perfect way to

begin.

You don't have to have all the answers.

You don't have to be a youth minister.

You don't even have to know what to expect.

You just have to be willing.

We'll guide you. We'll place you where your gifts are needed. And you'll be part of something that is quietly, powerfully changing lives.

What Volunteering Looks Like

There are a variety of roles available depending on your availability and comfort level:

Hospitality and check-in teams

Prayer teams and chapel support

Logistics and behind-the-scenes coordination

Assistance for priests and ministry areas

Some roles are highly visible. Others are intentionally hidden. All of them matter.

And while the weekend is full, it's also deeply meaningful. Many of our volunteers return year after year—not out of obligation, but because they've experienced firsthand the fruit of being part of this mission.

If You've Been Waiting for a Sign...

This might be it.

In a world that often feels noisy and divided, Steubenville South is a place where truth is spoken clearly, joy is lived authentically, and young people are reminded of who they are and whose they are.

And it takes a community to make that happen.

If you've ever wanted to do something that matters—something rooted in faith, service, and real impact—this is

your invitation.

A Growing Mission (And a Small Team)

As Steubenville South continues to grow—serving thousands of teens each year across multiple events—we're also expanding the team behind the scenes.

We are currently hiring a part-time Administrative Assistant to help support the systems, communication, and organization that allow this mission to thrive.

If you (or someone you know) have a gift for organization, communication, and keeping things moving forward, we would love to connect.

Whether you volunteer for a few hours, serve the entire weekend, or step into a more ongoing role—your "yes" matters.

Because for one teen, one moment, one encounter...

...it could change everything.

To learn more about volunteering or the open position, please visit steubenvillesouth.com or reach out to our team directly at hello@steubenvillesouth.com.

We'd love to have you with us this summer!

Campus Ministry:

LSU of Alexandria:

LSUA Catholic Student Organization, 318-447-2956.

Follow us on Facebook or Instagram @lsuacatholics

Northwestern State University:

NSU Catholic Student Organization FOCUS Ministries.

Contact Holy Cross Church: (318) 352-2615

Louisiana Christian University:

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

Follow us on Instagram @wildcatcatholics



For the battle belongs to the Lord.

1 SAMUEL 17:47

STEUBENVILLE SOUTH | June 26-28, 2026

P.O. Box 5624
Alexandria, LA 71307

3306 Giamanco Street

Phone: (318) 473-8751
Fax: (318) 473-4045
EMail: DonaldJBaker@aol.com



Donald J. Baker, ACF/RF/CF
CONSULTING FORESTER
Licensed Urban Tree Consultant

Information Session: Adult Tobacco & Vaping Cessation - April 2-June 25

Are you thinking about quitting smoking or vaping? Have you tried by yourself but it is too difficult? Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is holding weekly information sessions so you can learn what a personalized quit plan looks like. During this information session you can explore individual one-on-one plans or group options. You can ask questions in a relaxed, supportive setting. You only need to attend one information session but if you have more questions, feel free to drop by again!

Find out how you can finally succeed in quitting. No appointment is needed, just drop by any time between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on any Thursday from April 2 to June 25 at the Catholic Charities Budget Classroom at 4409-C Coliseum Blvd. in Alexandria (door is to the left side of the Catholic Charities trailer in the Second Blessings Thrift Store parking lot). Your quit journey starts here! These information sessions are led by nationally credentialed tobacco treatment specialists and funded by a grant from The Rapides Foundation.

Disalced Carmelite monthly meeting - April 11

The Order of the Disalced Carmelites holds its monthly meeting at 9:00 a.m. every second Saturday, at Maryhill Renewal Center. Anyone is invited to attend morning prayer followed by Mass and then the meeting. 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.

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Workshop - April 14

The workshop lasts about three hours so please plan accordingly. For more information, contact Dcn. Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext 207 or by email at dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org.

Tuesday, April 14, 6:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria

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!

Women's Silent Retreat - April 23-26

"This we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and firm, which reaches into the interior behind the veil." – Hebrews

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

6:19

Come and journey with Becky Eldredge, our retreat facilitator, as she invites you to embrace the gift of hope and learn practical tools to anchor into the promise of hope in our real lives. Location: Maryhill Renewal Center. Cost of the retreat is \$295. A non-refundable deposit of \$95 is due now at registration and \$200 is due when you check-in for the retreat. To register please visit: <https://freedonationkiosk.com:9011/doa/events/3/168660>

Cabrini Annual Crawfish Boil - April 24

It's time for our Annual Crawfish Boil Fundraiser for St. Frances Cabrini School! We'll also be celebrating Fr. Chad Partain's 50th Birthday! Location: Activities Building from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Cost is \$60 for all-you-can-eat dine-in; \$30 for 5lbs take-out. Come join us for a fun night of crawfish, music, door prizes and fellowship.

Lector Workshop - April 28

The Diocese of Alexandria is offering Lector Formation workshops for those individuals who are interested in serving or who currently may serve as a Lector in their parish. To serve in this role, one must be of good standing with their Catholic faith and need the approval of their pastor. All training workshops will present the same material and will last no longer than two and a half hours. If you would like to sign up for the next workshop, please contact Dcn Jason Lavergne at (318) 445-6424 ext 207 or email dcnjlavergne@diocesealex.org.

Tuesday, April 28 – 6:00 p.m. – St. Joseph Catholic Center, 4400 Coliseum Blvd., Alexandria

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!

Transitional Deacon Ordinations - May 23

You are cordially invited to attend the Transitional Deacon Ordinations of Blaine Phillips and Gabe Dowden on Saturday, May 23 at 10:00 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria.

Pre-Cana Marriage Prep - May 30

The day will include presentations on various topics that are vital to a couple's lifelong marriage. Lunch will be included. Space will be limited, so please register for a

workshop as soon as possible.

Registration for the May 30, 2026 workshop is now open. There is a fee of \$60 per couple. You may pay online after submitting the registration form.

You can also pay the day of the workshop via check, money order or cash. Or you can prepay by mailing your check or money order (payable to Diocese of Alexandria) and mail to: Office of Religious Education and Faith Formation, P.O. Box 7417, Alexandria, LA 71306-0417.

Other future workshop dates: Sept. 12, 2026

If you have any questions, please contact Deacon Jason Lavergne in the Office of Religious Education and Faith Formation at (318) 445-6424 ext. 207

Priestly Ordination - June 20

You are cordially invited to the priestly ordination of Rev. Mr. Matthew Bonner on Saturday, June 20, St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, 10:00 a.m. with Bishop Robert Marshall presiding.

Steubenville South Youth Conference - June 26-28

Steubenville South is a dynamic Catholic youth conference for teens entering grades 9-12, offering a powerful weekend of faith, fellowship, and encounter with Christ. Through engaging speakers, uplifting music, daily Mass, confession, and prayer, teens are invited to deepen their relationship with God and discover the joy of living out their Catholic faith. This life-changing conference draws parishes from across the South and is designed to support teens in a pivotal season of their spiritual lives - helping them grow in confidence, courage, and faith-filled friendships. Registration is now open! Visit steubenvillesouth.com for more information. Contact your youth minister or church office to register or learn more.

Now Hiring: Part-Time Administrative Assistant - Steubenville South Office

Steubenville South is seeking a part-time Operations & Administrative Assistant (15 hours/week) to support our ministry, including the Steubenville South Conference, Beyond the Limits Jr. High Conference, and Rally.

We are looking for someone who is organized, dependable, and a strong communicator, with a heart for serving the Church through behind-the-scenes work. Comfort with (or willingness to learn) digital tools is important.

Applicants should be located in or near Cenla.

Apply by April 3: hello@steubenvillesouth.com

Know someone who might be a great fit? Please share!

Church Today News Deadlines

April 27
Deadline for news:
Thursday, April 16

May 25
Deadline for news:
Thursday, May 14



Anne M. Oestriecher, CPA, CFP®
Chris Daigrepoint
Will Whisenant

Oestriecher Financial Management Services

Let us help your family pursue your financial goals.

4641 Windermere Place, Alexandria, LA 71303

(318) 448-3556

www.o-fms.com

Securities and advisory services offered through LPL Financial, a Registered Investment Advisor, Member FINRA/SIPC



April 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
MARCH 23 Breathing Through Grief Support Group 5:30 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK	24 PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS	25 PRAY FOR DCN. R. MITCHELL	26 PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN	27 PRAY FOR DCN. D. MOREAU	28 PRAY FOR DCN. L. MOREAU	29 SIXTH SUNDAY OF LENT PRAY FOR DCN. T. MOULARD
				Beginning Experience Retreat -- Maryhill Renewal Center		
				Come and See Weekend -- St. Joseph Seminary, Covington		
				Men's ACTS Retreat hosted by Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, Pineville -- Maryhill		
30 PRAY FOR FR. A. MULLOTH	31 Chrism Mass 11:00 a.m. St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. S. NEWBURY	APRIL 1 PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	2 Information Session: Tobacco and Vaping Cessation 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Catholic Charities Budget Classroom, 4409-C Coliseum Blvd. Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. JOSE PALLIPURATH	3 PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE	4 PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	5 PALM SUNDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR
HOLY WEEK -- SEE SCHEDULES AT WWW.DIOCESEALEX.ORG						
			HOLY THURSDAY PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL	GOOD FRIDAY FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIEKWE	FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN	EASTER SUNDAY PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR
6 EASTER MONDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA	7 PRAY FOR FR. A. PALLATTUCHIRA	8 PRAY FOR FR. BINO JACOB	9 Information Session: Tobacco and Vaping Cessation 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Catholic Charities Budget Classroom, 4409-C Coliseum Blvd. Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. JOSE PALLIPURATH	10 PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE	11 Discaled Carmelites Monthly Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN	12 SUNDAY of DIVINE MERCY PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL
13 PRAY FOR DCN. CLIFF PELTO	14 EMHC Workshop 6:00-9:00 p.m. St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. K. PRIMEAUX	15 PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS	16 Information Session: Tobacco and Vaping Cessation 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Catholic Charities Budget Classroom, 4409-C Coliseum Blvd. Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY	17 PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS	18 PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX	19 PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ
				Men's ACTS Retreat hosted by St. Mary's Assumption Church, Cottonport -- Maryhill		
20 PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES	21 PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH	22 PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT	23 Information Session: Tobacco and Vaping Cessation 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Catholic Charities Budget Classroom, 4409-C Coliseum Blvd. Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER	24 Cabrini Crawfish Boil 5:30-8:30 p.m. St. Frances Cabrini Church and School, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. P. SIERRA-POSADA	25 PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR	26 PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN
				Women's Silent Retreat with Becky Eldredge -- Maryhill Renewal Center		



SACRED HEART SCHOOL LENTEN PROJECT. Mrs. Jenni Smith's 5th grade class chose as one of their Lenten Projects, to clean the Sacred Heart Church's cemetery adjacent to the school. They were amazed to see how much debris is accumulated in a cemetery. Pictured front, kneeling left to right: Adeline [redacted], Taliah [redacted], Taylie [redacted], Makinsley [redacted], Khloe [redacted], Elizabeth [redacted]. Middle row left to right: Bryan [redacted], Bentlee [redacted], Jude [redacted], Riley [redacted], Chari [redacted], Kallie [redacted], Crimson [redacted]. Back row: Hudson [redacted], Jase [redacted], Hudson [redacted], Baylor [redacted], Kash [redacted], Nathan [redacted], Hyder [redacted], Hunter [redacted] Fitzgerald. Kneeling in the back: Landry [redacted], Jaxon [redacted].



ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL FITNESS TEAM. On Wednesday, Mar. 11, St. Frances Cabrini Fitness Team competed in the Rapides Parish Fitness Meet at Alexandria Senior High School. 5th grader Marley [redacted] placed 3rd in the 50-yard dash and 1st place in standing long jump. Pictured are Maci [redacted], 5th grade; Marley [redacted], 5th grade; Mia [redacted], 3rd grade; Landry [redacted], 3rd grade; Tray [redacted], 3 grade; Luke [redacted], 3rd grade.

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

SACRED HEART SCHOOL PRE-K CELEBRATES DR. SUESS' BIRTHDAY. Mrs. Melissa Brouillette's PK-3B class celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by making hats and eating green eggs and ham! Pictured: John [redacted], Owen [redacted], Ivy [redacted], Aziynn [redacted], Ammalaine [redacted], Sutton [redacted], McKenzie [redacted], Emmett [redacted], Reece [redacted], Anniston [redacted], Vivian [redacted], Miles [redacted], Ruth [redacted].

CONGRATULATIONS HSM LADY EAGLES BASKETBALL, 2026 LA STATE RUNNER UP! The Holy Savior Menard High School Lady Eagles Varsity Basketball team played Rosepine in the championship game held in the UC at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond on Friday, Mar. 6. The final score was 42-34 in overtime. Congratulations to the Lady Eagles of Menard!

