

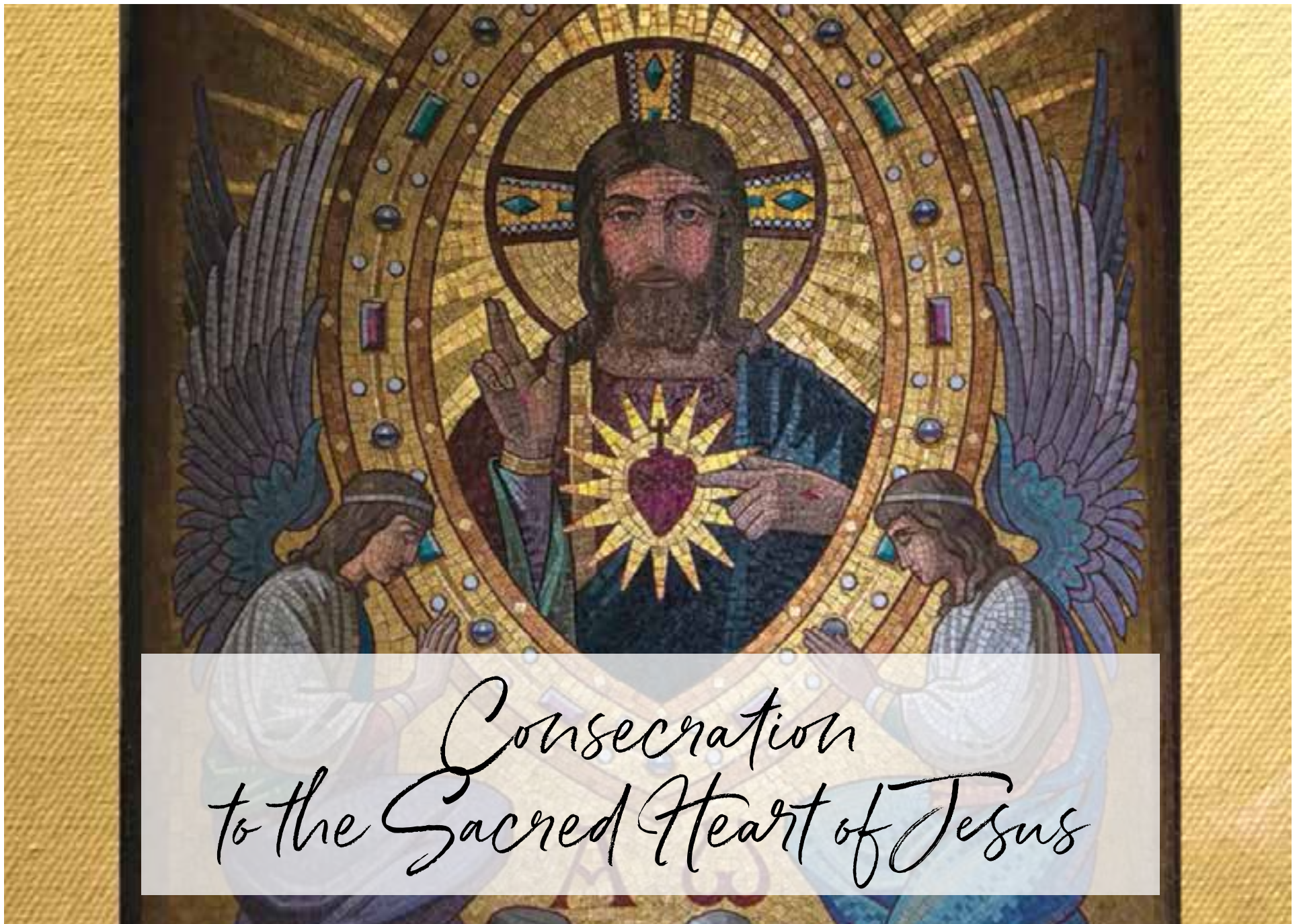
CHURCH TODAY

Volume LVII, No. 6

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

June 22, 2026



Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

INSIDE

U.S. Bishops consecrate U.S. to Sacred Heart of Jesus

During the Spring Plenary session in Orlando, FL, bishops gathered in the Basilica of Mary Queen of the Universe to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. See story on page 3.

Internet safety: protecting your child online

In today's digital world, keeping your child safe online is very important. The internet offers many opportunities, but it also has risks. See page 4 for a simple guide to help you protect your child from threats online.

St. Joseph School renews push for faith, academics and growth

St. Joseph School in Plaquemine is entering a new chapter with a renewed focus on faith, academics, teacher recruitment, alumni involvement and long-term campus improvements. See page 16 for the story.

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Last September, I travelled to Chicago to attend the Mission Bishops Conference sponsored by the Catholic Extension Society. On the final day of the conference, many of us went on an optional excursion to the town of Dolton, Illinois, one of the municipalities on the south side of Chicago. We visited the former site of Saint Mary of the Assumption parish. Established in 1886, a combined school and church building was erected in 1917. Eventually, a separate church building was completed in 1957. The parish and school served the parishioners who resided in many small homes that surrounded the campus. As far back as the 1980s, the neighborhood had begun to change – fewer homes and fewer residents, more businesses and industries. The parish school closed in 1989 after years of declining enrollment. In 2011, Saint Mary of the Assumption parish was merged into a neighboring parish and the Assumption campus was sold. Though the buildings have been abandoned and are in disrepair, they still give witness to the faith that was planted and nurtured on the campus for 125 years.

If you look only at the campus, at the decaying buildings and overgrown weeds, the history of Saint Mary of the Assumption parish would seem to be a sad and depressing one. But the true legacy of Assumption parish cannot be measured by the former beauty of the church or the size of the abandoned classrooms. The true legacy of Assumption parish can be found in their sacramental registers – evidence of the many people baptized and confirmed, the children who received First Communion, the many sick people who were comforted in the Sacrament of the Sick, the many souls commended to the Lord in funeral rites, the couples who were married, and the religious vocations nurtured on that campus.

If you opened the Saint Mary of the Assumption baptismal register for 1955, for example, you would find the record of the baptism of Robert Francis, the third son of Louis Marius Prevost and Mildred Agnes Martinez. That same record might also record his First Communion, his



Live, Jesus, in our Hearts Forever

By Bishop Robert W. Marshall, Jr.

The Church is the People of God



SAINT MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH, DOLTON, ILLINOIS. This was the parish church and school of Robert Francis Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV. The parish was merged with a neighboring parish in 2011 and the campus remains abandoned.

Confirmation, and – eventually – his ordination as a deacon and a priest of the Augustinian order. If the register was still being meticulously kept, it might have also recorded that he was ordained a bishop in 2014, three years after his home parish had been closed. Today, I suspect, that record has certainly been amended to include a notation of the election on May 8, 2025, of Robert Francis Prevost as Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Christ who assumed the name of Leo XIV.

Sisters and brothers, like

many other dioceses in our country and throughout the world, the changing times have forced us to reconsider whether many of our parishes and missions are sustainable. We are closing some locations – churches and chapels that hold blessed memories for those whose names are recorded in their sacramental registers. While some of these sacred spaces may remain available for an occasional liturgical celebration, some – like Saint Mary of the Assumption parish in Dolton, Illinois – will be permanently closed. My baptism,

for example, was recorded at Holy Names of Jesus and Mary Church in Memphis, Tennessee. That church is now closed and its buildings have been abandoned. Yes, my home parish might be gone, but the faith that was nurtured, the grace that I received in the sacrament of Baptism at that location remains present and active in my life. We honor and respect the many and varied parishes and missions that have nurtured the faith in the thirteen civil parishes of the Diocese of Alexandria. We are grateful for the sacrifices that built those locations and that sustained their ministries over the years. Most of all, we rejoice that the generations of faith that were nurtured in those sites now undoubtedly include many who dwell with the heavenly host, and others of us who are still striving to serve the Lord whether close to home or throughout the world.

In 2024, we began a Pastoral Planning process entitled “Together as One Church: Embracing a Future of Hope.” We are indeed invited to come together as one Catholic Church – in union with that boy baptized in a now-closed parish who was recently elected the Supreme Pontiff. We are asked to embrace a future of hope – expressed in charity and in evangelization, walking together in mission.

“... like living
stones, let
yourselves be
built into a
spiritual house...”

1 Peter 2:5



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As the United States of America commemorates the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, the bishops of the United States consecrate the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

All Catholics are encouraged to join the bishops in praying for the unity and healing of our country.

In conjunction with the USCCB initiative, the Diocese of Alexandria will be promoting 250 Hours of Adoration throughout the diocese during the month of July. More information will be forthcoming on the Diocese of Alexandria website

(www.diocesealex.org) and on the Diocese of Alexandria Facebook page. If you'd like to be

informed, please send an email to

swest@diocesealex.org to get on the email list.

Please include your full name, mailing address, phone number and any other email addresses you'd like added in your name.

Join the email list!

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*

U.S. Bishops consecrate the U.S. to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

by Jean Gonzalez
editor with Florida Catholic Media

ORLANDO, Fla. (OSV News) — A sea of white robes and zucchetos of pink and magenta in the pews. A statue of Jesus welcoming the faithful with his exposed Sacred Heart upon the foot of the altar.

A setting fit for a June 11 Mass that united U.S. bishops gathered for their spring plenary June 10-12. After concluding the second of two days of public sessions, they left the Omni Resort in ChampionsGate for a half-hour drive up Interstate 4 for the spiritual refuge that is the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe in Orlando.

And the Mass was a momentous one as it served to formally consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

More than 200 bishops were present, along with about 150 observers, mostly benefactors and staff of the Diocese of Orlando. The monstrance used ahead of Mass for Eucharistic adoration was from the Servants of the Pierced Hearts, a Miami-based religious institute.

The relics of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque — the French Visitation sister who experienced visions of Jesus revealing his Sacred Heart — were also present at the Mass, on loan for the consecration from the Knights of Columbus.

In his homily, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore described the Sacred Heart of Jesus not as an “abstract devotion,” but as a “visible sign of love.”

He explained why the Church consecrates. He described it as an act of faith and acknowledgment of the need for God’s mercy, wisdom and guidance. It is also an act of hope. It is “a heart that has known joy and sorrow, friendship and betrayal, suffering and sacrifice,” he said.

The act of consecration



CONSECRATION OF THE U.S. TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, concelebrates Mass as bishops consecrate the country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at the Basilica of Mary Queen of the Universe in Orlando, Fla., June 11, 2026, during their spring plenary assembly. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)

is an act of faith and hope, the archbishop said, but it is also an acknowledgment of God’s faithful work and love in the world and how we as people and as a Church have not always “clearly reflected that love.”

Consecration is acceptance of Christ’s invitation to remain in His love

“Indeed, it is sometimes obscured almost beyond recognition,” the archbishop added. “To be sure, there have been moments of extraordinary witness and holiness. But there have also been moments of failure, division and sin. Consecration requires the humility to acknowledge both.”

And why the Sacred Heart? Because it reveals a savior who “desires not merely our obedience, but our friendship; not simply our service, but our communion with Him,” he said.

“To consecrate ourselves to the Sacred Heart is ultimately to accept Christ’s invitation to remain in His love and to allow that love to shape every aspect of our lives, public and private,” Archbishop Lori said. “It is a declaration that the future does not belong merely to political movements, economic forces, or human plans. The future belongs to God.”

The act of consecration does not just happen among the

shepherds, but also the sheep. In speaking to the laity both in the pews at the shrine and watching on the livestream, Archbishop Lori said the act of consecration is one the faithful and leaders do together.

“This consecration is not something the bishops do for you. It is something we do together,” he said. “The renewal of the Church and our nation will not come through declarations alone.

Transforming hardened hearts

Renewal will come through disciples who remain in Christ’s love and bear the good fruit of holiness in families, parishes, communities and in their daily lives.”

The Sacred Heart reconciles divisions and transforms hardened hearts, the archbishop said.

“It means building communities — ecclesial and civil — where truth is proclaimed clearly and charity is practiced generously. It means resisting the temptation to define ourselves by division, ideology or resentment,” Archbishop Lori said. “We consecrate our nation, not because it is perfect, but because it is beloved by God. We entrust to the Heart of Christ our achievements and failures, our hopes and anxiety, our present challenges and our future aspirations.”

In today's digital world, keeping your child safe online is very important. The internet offers many opportunities, but it also has risks. Here's a simple guide to help you protect your child from threats online.

• **Basic Safety Rules**

- **Know Your Child's Online Presence:** Be aware of your child's usernames, passwords, and gaming profiles to keep an eye on their activities.

- **Set Time Limits:** Create reasonable limits on screen time to encourage a healthy balance.

- **Restrict Nighttime Access:** Keep devices out of bedrooms at night to promote better sleep.

- **Disable Webcams:** Turn off webcams when not in use and consider disabling chat features in games.

- **Social Media Guidelines:** Wait until your child is old enough before allowing them to use social media.

- **Use Parental Control Apps:** Consider apps like Bark for



From the Office of Safe Environment

By Kecia Coco, Director of Safe Environment

Internet Safety: Protecting Your Child Online

effective monitoring.

- **Check Browsing History:** Regularly review your child's browsing history to understand what they are doing online.

- **Protect Personal Information:** Teach your child never to share personal details online, like their name or address.

• **Open Communication**

- **Encourage Conversations:** Talk to your child about their online experiences and activities. Spend time with them online to stay informed.

- **Discuss Safety Rules:**

Warn them against meeting online friends in person and encourage them to tell a trusted adult about any inappropriate requests.

- **Set Boundaries:** Help them recognize unacceptable behavior and the signs of manipulation or grooming.

• **Understanding Tween and Teen Behavior**

- **Acknowledge Online Curiosity:** It's normal for tweens and teens to connect with strangers online, but they should be aware

of potential dangers.

- **Watch for Warning Signs:** Teach your child to notice concerning behaviors, like requests to switch to private chats or to share personal photos.

- **Use Privacy Settings:** Encourage them to use privacy settings and avoid sharing full names or locations in profiles.

• **Handling Online Threats**

- **Responding to Sextortion:** If your child faces threats about exposing inappropriate images, act quickly!

- **Do Not Comply:** Never pay or follow demands.

- **Document Everything:** Keep records of messages and profiles for reporting.

- **Report:** Notify the platform, local authorities, and organizations like the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)

1 - 800 - THE - LOST (1-800-843-5678).

- **Change Passwords Regularly:** Ensure your child updates their passwords often for better security.

By following these steps and maintaining open communication, you can significantly reduce your child's risk of online dangers. Understanding the digital world is key to ensuring their online experiences are safe and positive.

Kecia Coco

Director of Safe Environment
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or kcoco@diocesealex.org

Deacon Assignments

The Most Reverend Robert W. Marshall, Jr., Bishop of Alexandria, has made the following diaconal appointments, to be effective on July 1, 2026.

Deacon LG Deloach, named Pastoral Administrator of St. James Memorial Church, Alexandria.

Deacon Darrel Dubroc, assigned to Our Lady of Lourdes, Fifth Ward.

Deacon Reggie Ducote, assigned to Christ the King Church, Simmesport; St. Peter Church, Bordelonville; and St. Michael Church, Rexmere.

Deacon Lee Moreau, assigned to St. Mary Church, Jena; St. Edward Mission Church, Fishville; Steubenville Liturgy Chairman.

Deacon Kenneth Primeaux, assigned to St. Genevieve Church, Brouillette and Holy



Dcn. LG Deloach



Dcn. Darrel Dubroc



Dcn. Reggie Ducote



Dcn. Lee Moreau

Ghost Church in addition to St. Joseph Church in Marksville.

Deacon Chad Thibodeaux, assigned to St. Augustine Church, Isle Brevelle.

Deacon Michael Young, assigned to Our Lady of Prompt Succor School, Alexandria.

All other deacons will remain in their current assignments. All deacon assignments remain in effect until June 30, 2027.



Dcn. Kenneth Primeaux



Dcn. Chad Thibodeaux



Dcn. Michael Young

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of Cupertino
for prayers answered.

Thank you St. Jude.

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Why invoke God in the Declaration of Independence?

By Dr. Christopher Kaczor
Word on Fire Blog

According to the Declaration of Independence, human beings are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” This claim raises the question: Does God do any real work in the Declaration? Is the Creator language decorative or load-bearing? Arguably, the Declaration’s appeal to God clarifies human status and limits human authority, which should not be concentrated in the hands of a single person.

The invocation of God shapes how human beings understand their own nature. We are “created equal.” This phrase serves as an implicit reminder of what a human person is not. Humans cannot create themselves. We cannot create the conditions necessary for human existence. We can refashion created things, but we do not create ex nihilo. So what kind of created nature do we have?

Historian and political philosopher Harry Jaffa writes, “In short, as men are neither beasts nor gods, they ought not to play God to other men, nor ought they to treat other men as beasts. Here is the elementary ground, not only of political but of moral obligation.” Since we are not divine, we need political restraint. Since we are not beasts, we have the responsibility to shape our futures together. We have powers of reflection that enable political deliberation,



orchestral composition, and philosophical refutation. This recognition of our created nature leads to further insight into our basic moral status vis-à-vis one another. Someone who places himself in absolute power over other human beings usurps God’s place and implicitly denies his own humanity. Human beings may not justly consider themselves divine in relation to other human beings.

For this reason, the consent of the governed is relevant for just government. Harry Jaffa holds that consent is needed because “men

are not unequal, as are man and God, or man and beast, nature by itself does not decide the question of who is to rule.” Consent comes to light in the Declaration as an alternative to rule by nature, as a source of the just powers of government. God rules by nature, but no human being is God over another.

The Declaration invokes God not as a mere decorative sentiment but as an underlying supposition of the American experiment.

The three branches of American government—legislative, judicial, and executive—not only ensure that federal power is not all in one person’s hands but also reflects the three ways God is invoked in the Declaration. First, the

Declaration invokes God as legislator in speaking of “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God.” Second, the signers invoke God as judge in “appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world.” Third, the Declaration invokes God as executive in speaking of “a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence.” The framers invoke the legislative, judicial, and executive power of the divinity.

In God is found perfect justice, wisdom, and goodness. Since we do not share the divine nature, we lack this perfection. Jaffa draws out the political implications of this insight: “It is an absolutely necessary condition of the rule of law that the three powers of government never be united in the same human hands.

For them to be so united, whether in a singular or a collective body, is the very definition of tyranny, as the Founding Fathers never ceased to repeat. For the equality of mankind is an equality of defect, as well as an equality of rights.” A perfect tyranny would be absolute power without absolute wisdom, justice, and love. Since no human being has absolute wisdom, justice, and love, no human being rightfully exercises absolute power over any other.

Thus, the inclusion of the divine in the Declaration underscores human equality as neither divine nor beastly, as well as underscores the proper limits on human authority based on the reality of our being created equal. If we remove the Creator from the Declaration, it is not simply that our basic human rights become merely governmental gifts. What Caesar gives, Caesar can take away. If the Creator is the ultimate legislator, judge, and executive, then no single human being should hold ultimate legislative, judicial, and executive power over all others. This division of powers supports human liberty. The Declaration invokes God not as a mere decorative sentiment but as an underlying supposition of the American experiment.

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

The “Heart of Saint Kateri” Circle meets:
2nd Thursday of each month 6:00 p.m.
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For more information, call (318) 471-2044 or (318) 308-6886

*I will praise you
your name for
ever, my
king and
my God.*

Psalm 145: 1
Responsorial Psalm
for July 5
Fourteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HONOR MSGR. FERGUSON. The Knights of Columbus Council #3200 of St. Francis Xavier Cathedral honored Msgr. James Ferguson for the many years he served as their chaplain. Msgr. Ferguson will be retiring from active ministry. Pictured with Msgr. Ferguson are Robbie Gueringer, Recorder, and Craig Campo, Deputy Grand Knight.



CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS COURT BISHOP DESMOND #1459 FROM ST. RITA CHURCH IN ALEXANDRIA donated to the Diocesan Seminarians Education Fund. Presenting the check: Lori Paul, Treasurer; Marilyn Price; is the Regent; Bishop Robert Marshall.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY JUBILEE CELEBRATION. A Jubilee Celebration was held at St. Maria Goretti Church in New Orleans on Saturday, June 13, recognizing those reaching a major anniversary. Pictured top: Sister Elizabeth Ann Holmes, SSF, celebrated 50 years as a nun! Some of those from the Diocese of Alexandria attending the event included Fr. Bill Gearheard, pastor of St. Augustine Church, pictured with Sr. Elizabeth Ann and Sister Gloria Louis; Sister Nina Vincent, OLS, principal of St. Frances Cabrini School, pictured with Sister Stephanie Langston; and right: Sister Geneva Jones. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Sylvia Davis also attended the event.



July 30-Aug. 2
Teen ACTS Retreat
hosted by Cenla ACTS
Alexandria

Aug. 27-30
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by St. Joseph ACTS
Marksville

Sept. 3-6
Men's ACTS Retreat
hosted by St. Alphonsus
Hessmer

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TRANSITIONAL DEACON ORDINATION. Transitional Deacons, Blaine Phillips and Gabriel Dowden were ordained on Saturday, May 23 at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria. Pictured: Fr. Luke LaFleur, director of Vocations; Deacon Blaine Phillips; Bishop Robert Marshall; Deacon Gabriel Dowden and Fr. Joshua Rodrigue, STL, Rector and President of Notre Dame Seminary Graduate School of Theology in New Orleans. On Saturday, June 20, 10:00 a.m. at the Cathedral, Deacon Matthew Bonner will be ordained a priest for the diocese.



KELLEY & SCOTT SCHOLARSHIP. On Wednesday, May 27, Graham Descant, a seminarian currently enrolled in the Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, La., and one of the winners of the 2026 Kelley & Scott College Scholarships, received a \$1,500 check from Genevieve Kelley, who represented the Kelley and Scott families. Those in attendance were Bishop Robert Marshall, Fr. Luke LaFleur, Director of Vocations for the Diocese and Donna Andries, President of The Catholic Foundation of North-Central Louisiana.

Seminarian Burses

May 2026 Donations

Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Monsignor James Ferguson Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Wade DeCoste Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Daniel O'Connor Burse	
Mr. Vince Aymond	\$50.00
Father Rusty Rabalais Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Marion French	\$100.00
Father Gus Voltz Burse	
Mr. Dwight Beridon	\$150.00
Monsignor John Timmermans Burse	
Mr. Dwight Beridon	\$150.00
Harold and Lillie Beridon Burse	
Total	\$600.00

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:

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--- Very Reverend M. Craig Scott, Chairman

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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.

Who is supporting those who serve?

Every parish has them.

The catechist who arrives early to set up for religious education. The youth minister answering texts late at night from a struggling teen. The volunteer who faithfully leads a Bible study. The deacon preparing for a funeral. The priest carrying the joys and burdens of an entire parish community.

Most of us see the fruits of their work. What we do not always see is the weight they carry.

Ministry has never been easy, but in recent years many leaders have found themselves navigating increasing challenges. Young people are searching for meaning in a culture filled with noise and distraction. Families are stretched thin. Volunteers are balancing ministry responsibilities with careers, marriages, and caregiving. Priests and parish leaders are often called upon to address situations that previous generations rarely encountered.

At the same time, many ministry leaders are serving in environments where resources are limited. A volunteer may be responsible for an entire religious education program. A youth minister may be serving multiple parishes. A pastor may be trying to shepherd several communities while also caring for the day-to-day needs of parish life.

The reality is that ministry can sometimes feel lonely.

Many leaders spend their time encouraging others but have few opportunities to be encouraged themselves. They help others encounter Christ while quietly wondering if they are doing enough. They celebrate victories, carry disappointments, and often move quickly from one responsibility to the next without pausing to reflect on where God is working.

Yet despite these realities, countless men and women continue to answer God's call with generosity and faithfulness.

That is why ongoing formation matters.

The Church has always understood that those who serve others must also be supported themselves. Even Jesus invited His disciples away from the crowds to rest, pray, and be renewed. Ministry leaders need opportunities not only to learn new skills, but also to reconnect with



the Lord and remember why they first said "yes."

This conviction is at the heart of Steubenville South's annual Rally Day, taking place August 1 at Maryhill Retreat Center.

While the day includes practical workshops and ministry training, its deeper purpose is encouragement. Participants will gather with fellow ministers from across the Diocese of Alexandria to pray together, celebrate Mass, share ideas, and remember that they are not serving alone.

The workshops themselves are intentionally practical. Participants will explore topics such as leading effective small groups, supporting teens in crisis, building intercessory prayer teams, developing healthier ministry rhythms, and creating pathways for young people to remain engaged in parish life

after graduation. The goal is not simply to fill notebooks with ideas, but to help ministry leaders leave with tools they can begin using immediately in their own communities.

This year's keynote speaker, Mark Hart, brings decades of experience in evangelization and discipleship. Known for his engaging storytelling, humor, and deep love for Scripture, Hart has spent years helping Catholics encounter the living God through His Word. His sessions will challenge participants to remember who God is, reclaim who they are in Christ, and re-engage their ministries with renewed purpose.

The theme for this year's Rally is drawn from 1 Samuel 17:47: "The battle is the Lord's."

Those words serve as an important reminder for anyone involved in ministry. We are

called to be faithful, but we are not called to carry every burden ourselves. God remains at work in the lives of those we serve, often in ways we cannot see.

As another ministry year approaches, perhaps this is the reminder all of us need.

Whether you serve as a priest, deacon, catechist, youth minister, volunteer, campus minister, or parish leader, your work matters. The hours you invest, the prayers you offer, the conversations you have, and the quiet acts of service that no one notices all contribute to the mission of the Church.

Please continue praying for all those who serve throughout our diocese. And if you are one of them, know that the Church is grateful for your faithful "yes." We hope you will join us on August 1 as we gather to learn, pray, encourage one another, and take the next faithful step forward together.



A Voice from the Heart

by Marcus Descant

Oh heart of love, oh heart divine,
what can I do to make you mine?
I look to the left, I look to the right,
to get help from Him to fight the good fight.
Many times I'm down and all looks dim,
but I know I can make it when I look at Him.
He gives me strength through His gentle love,
and I will follow it through until I am with Him above.
My ups and downs are such a strife,
but I know He is the only way to eternal life.

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CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION, ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, ST. JOSEPH, LA. On Sunday June 7, Fr. Taylor Reynolds held a Corpus Christi procession from St. Joseph Church to Tensas Academy School.



ST. MARGARET CHURCH, BOYCE. On Sunday, June 14, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated Mass at St. Margaret (of Cotona) Church in Boyce. The celebration included the congregations of their mission churches - St. Margaret Mary in Gorum and St. Cyril Church in Flatwoods - as the legacy of all three churches was honored. St. Margaret in Boyce will soon be served by the pastor of St. Rita Church in Alexandria. A lunch followed the Mass. As a welcome to their new partnership, the Bishop Greco Council of the Knights of Columbus, who meet at St. Rita, cooked the main course (barbecued chicken) for the event in Boyce. Thank you to Father Peter Faulk and the parishioners of the three churches for their welcome.



CHRISTIAN PARENTING AND CAREGIVING INITIATIVE

“FORMATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION” GRANT. St. Joseph in Marksville (right) and St. Mary’s Assumption in Cottonport (left), were each awarded up to \$15,000 from Catholic Extension to support the education and formation of families in their parishes. Director of Mission Programs, Odette Barrientos, and Catholic Extension Facilitator, Alicia Rodarte, facilitated a listening session at each parish to gather parents/caregivers, parish leaders and catechetical leaders, in order to help develop a plan of action on how to implement the awarded funds.



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The seed that falls on good ground will yield a fruitful harvest.

Luke 8:8
Responsorial Psalm for July 12
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



CONFIRMATION ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CATHEDRAL, ALEXANDRIA. On this Pentecost Sunday, Bishop Robert Marshall celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Seven young disciples were confirmed from the Cathedral parish, St. Juliana Church in Alexandria, and St Peter Church in Elmer. Thank you to the parents, sponsors, catechists, and all who prayerfully supported these Confirmandi.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, ST MARTIN CHURCH, LECOMPTE. First Communion was held on Sunday, May 3.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES CCD CLASSES. End of catechism classes for the summer break was celebrated with an outdoor fun day at OLL, Winfield.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH, WINFIELD. Pictured with the First Communicants is Deacon Lee Moreau and pastor, Father Louis Sklar.



MAY CROWNING, OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH, WINFIELD. Children of OLL parish celebrated May Crowning.



CHILDREN OF MARY, ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH, BUNKIE. The Children of Mary congregation of St. Anthony in Bunkie, participated in preparing and distributing spaghetti plate dinners for the Catholic Daughters, Court Saint Anthony #968 of Bunkie.



(above and right) CONSECRATION OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Parishioners at Saint Anthony Parish in Bunkie are shown gathered around the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In keeping with Catholics throughout the nation, the congregation prayed the Consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus at all Masses on the weekend of June 13-14. The statue is the oldest in the parish, having been purchased for the first Catholic chapel built in Bunkie shortly after 1900.



(left) BISHOP SHARES PHOTOS FROM HIS TIME IN ORLANDO ATTENDING BISHOPS MEETING. "Inside the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe, anticipating Exhibition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament prior to the Mass of Consecration of the United States of America to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus."



(right) SACRED HEART OF JESUS (PINEVILLE) THRIFT STORE RANKED IN THE TOP 3 IN RAPIDES PARISH. The volunteer staff of the St. Nicholas Thrift store of Sacred Heart Church, Pineville, celebrated a Top 3 of 2026 Rapides Parish Award in BusinessRate's Thrift Store category. Rankings are determined by customer Google Reviews, verified and certified by BusinessRate. Pictured are: Becky Burton, Edna Smith, Vivian Myers, Robert Lachney, Lelia Whitehead, Pat Paul. Recognized for their dedicated work by the customers they serve. Congratulations!



MAY CROWNING, ST. ANTHONY SCHOOL AND CHURCH, BUNKIE. On May 13, the student body of St. Anthony School in Bunkie processed to the Church. All of the students held flowers for Mary.



Missionary Mom: The craziest vocation I have ever loved

By Sarah Granger
Family Missions Company

All mothers and babies pictured in this article are babies that have recently been born or will be soon! This does not account for the hundreds of other missionary kids that make up the rest of our FMC family. In this article alone, born and unborn, there are 21 represented! What a tremendous blessing! Since publication, other pregnancies have been announced, and we know the numbers will grow.

Many of my earliest memories are of being around my mom in mission. I remember playing on the tile floor of our living room in Mexico while Mom led a Bible Study with local women, while nursing my little sister; walking down the dirt road in the Philippines to visit a sick neighbor, myself hand in hand with my sisters while Mom carried my baby brother; working with Mom in our rustic kitchen to prepare food for a Lord's Day dinner with families who were building Catholic community. Watching my mom balance motherhood of seven children with preaching the Gospel in Mexico, Colombia, New Zealand, Australia, and the Philippines felt normal and even fun.

I am certain that my mom's witness had everything to do with my ability to say yes to missions



when I found myself a newly single mom with three small children, discerning a call to serve with FMC in General Cepeda, Mexico. On the surface, it wasn't a logical idea. Motherhood is hard enough without living it in the challenging environment of a developing country with foreign language and foreign customs. It increasingly seemed like the craziest idea in the world, as I prepared to leave my wonderful support system to serve the poor in rural Mexico. I frequently had to remind myself that "the

wisdom of this world is folly with God" (1 Cor. 3:19) and "His ways are not our ways" (Is. 55:8). These reminders were especially helpful when I settled into life in Mexico, and found myself tutoring my kids in Spanish so that they could keep up in school, or warming their uniforms in the oven because it was below freezing, or fretting over another illness and a slew of medicines I didn't understand. The vocation of motherhood in mission, as joyful as my mom had made it seem, is not for the faint of heart.

And yet there were many other moments: times when my sweet two-year-old's hugs would bring a grin to an elderly lady who rarely smiled, when my ten-year-old would pack her Bible and textbook and walk across the plaza to teach catechism to preschoolers, when my seven-year-old would bravely testify to a small chapel full of people that St. Anthony answered her prayer

to find her beloved butterfly purse. In those moments, I realized that the sacrifices I made were more than worth it. Watching my children reach hearts in ways that I never could; share Jesus with those who might never warm to an adult; open doors into relationships in school, in town, with neighbors of all ages through their innocent joy and friendliness—these helped me to love the vocation of being a missionary mom.

Now, 23 years later, I have had the opportunity to serve the Lord in 16 countries with my amazing husband, Kevin, and our seven children (now mostly traveling with the youngest five). Those trips have primarily been short-term, two months or less, and have allowed me to rub shoulders with so many saintly missionary moms.

Moms like Karen, who drove hours over the worst roads to help at Mass and conduct communion services in rural Peru, sitting in sweltering chapels for hours to bring Jesus to dozens of eager but neglected Catholics. In the midst of much discomfort, I witnessed the pride on her face as her teenage son donned an alb,

continued on next page

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Continued from previous page

smiling and sweating profusely, and served joyfully at the altar.

Or Tami, who, after a full day of preparing food from scratch for her family in challenging conditions, walked across town with all eight of her children to kneel beside a suffering elderly woman and tenderly listen to her story of sickness and pain, then gather her children to pray, little hands held out to the Lord in faith, hope, and solidarity.

I think of Jessie, pushing her stroller uphill on dusty gravel roads, she and her six-year-old carrying heavy bags of groceries; bringing food and comfort to those who are alone, elderly, and infirm; she and her children filling homes with their beautiful voices as they praise the Lord together.

I think of Kree, her home, wherever she is in the world, brimming with board games and laughter. Her smiling children inviting countless youth to their game nights, being a mother not only to her own eight children but to the many who are learning from her what a joyful Christian home and family look like.

Or another Karen, whose tall, uncomplaining teenage sons took turns sitting on her lap on a crowded seven-hour car ride into the mountains, to serve the Lord alongside heroic nuns who are bringing Jesus to people in rural Asia who have never heard of Him before. I think of her and her sons smiling, laughing, and

eating porcupine late into the evening.

I think of Brooke, walking into an Asian slum with her six boys. Seeing the boys' faces light up as they distribute food supplies, and watching them sit with the community as though they were at home.

I watched even the youngest give hugs and listen to stories with love and compassion. I heard their shouts of joy and laughter as a game of soccer developed among kids whom they consider friends.

I remember my own children, spending the night in freezing weather in the Himalayas after a 10-hour bus ride, waking up with smiles, eating unfamiliar food, and riding in the back of a dump truck to accompany a priest to Mass, warmly welcoming all who attended, giggling with local children, and participating joyfully in a foreign language after a long and exhausting day.

There are too many stories to tell: the faces that light up when Penny and her girls stop by to pray with a shut-in friend, the laughter at the children's center when Teresa and her kids are leading worship, and Mari's children making space at the table for a hungry neighbor.

I am blessed to be given vocations that I treasure: wife, mother, missionary. Being a missionary mom is a gift within a gift. Not only do I encounter Jesus in the poor, speak His Name to the lost, walk with

others into fullness of life in Him, but I have the incredible privilege of watching my kids embrace this

life too. Being a missionary mom is the craziest call I have ever loved, and I am eternally grateful

to be surrounded by so many holy missionary moms at Family Missions Company.



To the Nations

In the years since Family Mission Company's foundation, our missionaries have served in 27 countries throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

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Supported by a life of prayer, we seek to bring the love of Jesus to all those we encounter.

Want to be part of this mission of taking the Gospel to the end of the earth? Learn more about becoming a missionary, going on a mission trip, or partnering financially at familymissionscompany.com/about.

Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Psalm 86: 5 | Responsorial Psalm for July 19 | Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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How to have a spiritually fruitful summer when your kids are home from school

By Susana Starbuck
Blessed is She

School is out! You can say goodbye to packing lunches, long pick-up lines, homework, and early morning outfit battles. But now what? You have over two months without your kids in school. How do you keep them busy? There are so many options for keeping your kids engaged in over the summer it can be a bit overwhelming. Camps, swim team, story time, and VBS (just to name a few). What is the best way to nurture their faith life over the summer?

Within the next couple months, my family and I are gearing up for a big family wedding as well as preparing to welcome a new baby into our home. We are going to be very busy, to say the least. While I stared into the months of June and July (carefully color-coded to coordinate with life events), I felt like we were missing something.

I realized that in the chaos of life (even during the school year) it is easy to let our faith life within the family take a back seat.

How to Have a Spiritually Fruitful Summer

Over the last month or so, I've been making a simple and realistic list of things I'd like to do with my children to help



them grow in God's love over the summer. Below you will find ideas I've put together for my family. I also tried to include things for older children/teens as well (it's helpful to be married to a youth minister!).

I've broken it into three categories that I hope you will find helpful.

Prayer

Start saying the Angelus everyday at 12. No matter where you are or what you're doing, everyone in the family drops what they're doing to say it together.

A family Rosary each evening is always a good idea. But I think summer time is a great period to form the habit. Set a time in the evening when everyone gathers together to pray the Rosary. When you have little ones, even a decade in the evening can make a huge impact. If you know you won't be home at that time on a given evening, see if it's possible to reschedule it

for earlier or maybe say it in the car.

Get together as a family and talk about some prayer intentions that you have. Maybe you have a big move coming up or perhaps someone in your family is very ill. Pick a novena to pray as a family for that specific intention.

Summer is also a great time to make a family consecration to Mary. You can use the evenings to discuss the readings for the day and recite the prayers out loud together as a family.

Study

Coloring pages! The kids and I have been loving the coloring pages put out by Catholic artists. They have been wonderful for our liturgical living! You can find some here and here.

A few years back I discovered *Catholic Icing* and *26 Letters to Heaven*. Both are great resources for early religious education as well encouraging creativity and curiosity.

Blessed is She just released a study for kids called *Rise Up!* If your children are younger (like mine) you'll want to work through this together. My plan is to read a little bit each morning out loud to the kids before we get our day rolling. If you have older kids (ages 9 and up), they could work through this independently.

Choose a Saint of the week. Have your older kids put their internet time to good use! Have your preteens/teens research a different Saint for each week of summer and have them share with the family. It doesn't have to be fancy at all! Encourage them to find 5-6 interesting facts about the Saint and then let them share at the dinner table.

Blow the dust off that Bible! Designate a morning with your teens to work on a short Bible study. So let's say every Wednesday morning, you grab coffee or bagels (or take advantage of nap times from younger siblings) and work your way through one of the books of the Bible. It might feel a little forced at first, but keep going! Teens love being challenged and they also love some special time with you (even if they deny it vehemently).

Action

Add in daily Mass to your summer routine. It does not need to be everyday! But picking one day of the week to roll out of bed a bit early and attend Mass together will be such a gift to your family. You can also start a tradition/add the incentive of doing something fun yet simple afterwards, like grabbing breakfast, spending time at the park, or maybe taking a library trip.

Go to Adoration. Research the parishes around you to find out when and where Eucharistic Adoration is offered. Set a time during the week where you all go to Adoration together. Even if it's simply sitting in front of the Blessed Sacrament for five minutes once a week, it's showing your children what's really important amidst the crazy summer schedule.

Let's not forget about good old Vacation Bible School! Find a VBS program at your parish (or one nearby) and see if it's

something you want your kids involved in. VBS is usually half a day for an entire week. It's a great opportunity for your kids to jump in and have fun with their Faith! Also, the performances at the end of the week are always so stinkin' cute. VBS is also a great opportunity for your older children to volunteer.

Summer is an excellent time to go through clothes and toys. Let your kids help! Explain what they are donating and give them some ownership over it. Now, this could backfire (it has for me) if you have a child who suddenly decides that they do, in fact, play with every single toy they own. If that happens, still take the time to explain the importance of giving and then thin things out over nap time.

Service, service, service! Get your teens off their phones by setting them up with a service project. This will require a little research, but I'm sure your parish can also let you know of places looking for volunteers. Get those teenagers into soup kitchens and shelters. Serving those in need can offer your kids some great perspective they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to.

Did someone say chastity talks, praise and worship, late night pizza deliveries, and ultimate frisbee?! Sign your teens up for youth programs this summer. Many parishes have various opportunities for your kids to attend really solid conferences or camps this coming summer. Spending time with their peers within a Catholic context is a great way for your teen to see that they're not alone on this journey to heaven.

Stay Spiritually Sane and Spiritually Fruitful

Please, by no means feel that you have to do it all. This is simply a list of ideas. If one or two speaks to you, then go for it. I find that one of the most effective ways to enrich my children's faith is to simply spend time together as a family, something that is ridiculously difficult to do during the school year when everyone is running in five different directions.

Here's wishing you all a blessed summer.

if you want
to change
the world,
go home
and love
your family.

mother
teresa

Sts. Francis and Anne Church in Kolin invites everyone to participate in the Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi

Pope Leo has declared the year of 2026 as the Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi. The Pope is granting a plenary indulgence to all who visit a church dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi (under the usual conditions of Confession and receiving Holy Communion and praying for the Pope's intentions). Sts. Francis and Anne Church in Kolin is inviting any faithful that wishes to come and visit our church and receive this plenary indulgence. We have a table set up displaying a statue and picture of St. Francis. We have holy cards

available to take with you also. The faithful may pray the Creed, Our Father and Hail Mary invoking the heavenly intercession of St. Francis. Those who wish to say a St. Francis Novena, booklets will be available to use. In the month of July we will have a relic of St. Francis of Assisi available to venerate. Please sign your name in the visitors' book. The Church will be open Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Wednesday through Fridays 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Saturdays 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., and Sundays 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



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RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION AND ORDER OF CATECHUMENS.
 On Trinity Sunday, May 31, we welcomed participants in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. We celebrated the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens for those who have never been baptized and the Rite of Welcome as Candidates for those already baptized. These Catechumens and Candidates come from throughout the diocese, not just from the Cathedral parish. Thank you to Deacon Jason Lavergne who is coordinating these "out-of-schedule" OCIA sessions.

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St. Joseph School begins renewed push for faith, academics and growth

St. Joseph School in Plaquemine is entering a new chapter with a renewed focus on faith, academics, teacher recruitment, alumni involvement and long-term campus improvements.

The school is working to strengthen what has long made it special while also making changes aimed at improving academic success and expanding opportunities for students.

According to St. Joseph School President Blaine Dausat, the goal is to build on the school's Catholic foundation while raising the quality of education offered to families across Avoyelles Parish.

"We're taking something that was already special and making it better," Dausat said.

One of the school's most immediate goals is increasing the number of certified teachers on campus. In January, Dausat said the school had only one certified teacher. By next school year, about half of the faculty is expected to be made up of certified, highly qualified teachers. Dausat said certification alone does not determine whether someone is a good teacher, but it does show that a teacher has completed professional training and committed to the craft. The school also plans to add an instructional coach next year to better support teachers in the classroom.

"The most important indicator of a child's academic success is the teacher in front of them," Dausat said.

The renewed effort is not only focused on academics. St. Joseph leaders want students to feel safe, loved and surrounded by faith each day. Dausat said



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL, PLOUCHEVILLE. 2026 Graduating Seniors pose for a group photo prior to graduation ceremonies held on May 15.

the school's responsibility is to provide a "Godly, Catholic environment while offering outstanding academics." Students attend Mass weekly, pray before athletic, academic and extracurricular events, and are encouraged to build strong moral character.

The school teaches students that strong moral character means doing the right thing, even when no one is watching. Faith remains central to the school's mission. Dausat said academic improvement cannot come at the expense of the school's religious foundation.

"If something may help us improve academically but would take away from our religious beliefs or obligations, we need to find a different solution," he said.

School leaders also gathered input from parents, students, faculty and staff while looking at the school's future. Dausat said many responses were similar

and helped identify the school's biggest needs. Families, he said, are looking for a safe place for their children, consistent teaching and learning, and, for many, a school where their children can grow in Christ.

St. Joseph is also working to reconnect with alumni. Dausat said former students remain part of the St. Joseph community, no matter where they live now. The school hopes more alumni will visit, reconnect and become involved in the school's future.

"This is a community effort," Dausat said. "But not in the traditional sense of a community. This is the St. Joseph community."

So far, the school has raised about \$75,000 toward a first-year fundraising goal of \$100,000. Long-term goals include facility improvements, replacing some temporary buildings, improving bathrooms, upgrading locker rooms and weight room space, and possibly adding a multi-

purpose building with a second basketball court.

The school also hopes to grow enrollment from its current 264 students to between 325 and 350 students. Student opportunities are also expected to expand. St. Joseph plans to add golf next year and would like to add more sports and clubs in the future.

Dausat described the current feeling around the school as "cautious optimism." He said the plan has been met with some skepticism, but many faculty and staff members see that the school is working toward something stronger. The school's message to current families is one of gratitude and commitment.

"Thank you for entrusting us with the most precious thing

you have, your children," Dausat said. "But also trust us that we won't rest on the past."

The larger goal is for more families across Avoyelles Parish to see St. Joseph as a strong option for education, not only because it is Catholic, but because it offers quality academics in a safe, faith-filled environment.

"We're already offering a safe, Catholic environment," Dausat said. "Now we're going to provide the highest quality of education also." Dausat said the hope is that readers understand St. Joseph School is growing, improving and looking toward the future.

"St. Joseph is on the rise," he said. "This is the place to be."

*Lord, I love
your commands.*

Psalm 119: 97 | Responsorial Psalm for July 26
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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As thousands gather, we ask for your prayers

In just a few days, nearly 3,000 teenagers, adult chaperones, priests, religious, and volunteers will arrive in Alexandria for the 30th annual Steubenville South Youth Conference.

For one weekend, the Coliseum and Event Center will become something much more than a venue. It will become a place of encounter.

Young people from across Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, and beyond will gather to worship, receive the Sacraments, hear the Gospel proclaimed, and discover—or rediscover—the truth that they are deeply loved by God.

This year's theme, Worthy, is drawn from 1 Samuel 17:47:

“For the battle is the Lord’s.”

At first glance, the story of David and Goliath appears to be about courage, strength, or overcoming impossible odds. But Scripture reminds us that victory belongs to the Lord. David's confidence did not come from his own abilities. It came from knowing who God is.

That same message remains desperately needed today.

Many of the young people arriving at Steubenville South carry burdens that cannot be seen from the outside. Some are struggling with anxiety,



loneliness, grief, family challenges, questions about their identity, or uncertainty about their future. Others may arrive feeling distant from God or unsure whether faith has any place in their daily lives.

Yet year after year, we witness the Lord meet them exactly where they are. We see teens encounter Christ in Eucharistic Adoration for the first time. We see long lines for Confession. We see friendships formed, vocations awakened, and hearts

transformed. We see young people discover that they are not alone—and that the Church is alive.

This summer's conference will feature nationally known Catholic speakers, dynamic worship, small group discussion, opportunities for prayer, and the celebration of Mass throughout the weekend. More than 200 volunteers and dozens of priests will help make the conference possible.

As we celebrate three decades of Steubenville South, we are filled with gratitude for the countless individuals who have invested their time, talent, prayers, and resources into this ministry. Generations of young people have encountered Christ through these conferences, and the fruit continues to unfold in parishes, families, seminaries, religious communities, and ministries across our region.

While not everyone will be physically present at the conference, the entire diocesan community has a role to play.

As June 26–28 approaches, we invite you to pray for every teenager who will walk through the doors. Pray for open hearts. Pray for safety in travel. Pray for the priests hearing confessions, the volunteers serving behind the scenes, the speakers proclaiming the Gospel, and the group leaders accompanying

their young people.

Most of all, pray that no one leaves unchanged.

The Lord has been preparing graces for this weekend long before any of us began making plans. We ask you to join us in praying that every person who attends Steubenville South encounters the generosity, mercy, and love of Jesus Christ in a profound way.

For such a time as this, may we trust that the battle is the Lord's.

Unable to attend the conference? You can still be part of what God is doing through your prayers and financial support.

Gifts help provide scholarships, worship experiences, and conference resources for thousands of young people each year.

Learn more or make a donation at www.steubenvillesouth.com/donate.

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 Org: “Wildcat Catholics” 318-447-2956. Follow us on Instagram @wildcatcatholics

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Father Pedro Sierra celebrates 50 years as a priest! - June 29

St. Martin Church in Lecompte invites everyone to attend a special Mass on Monday, June 29 at 6:00 p.m. to commemorate 50 years of dedication to the priesthood by Father Pedro. The church is located at 1815 St. Martin St., Lecompte, LA 71346.

Vacation Bible School!

- July 6-9: St. Anthony of Padua Church, Bunkie

St. Anthony in Bunkie is looking forward to its annual Vacation Bible School. This year the fun and excitement will take place July 6-9. This year's theme is "The Mass Comes Alive." For ages 5 Kindergarten to 11 going into the 6th Grade. No charge.

- July 6-10: Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pineville

Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Pineville will have their Vacation Bible School on July 6-10 from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in the Activities Building. This year's theme will be "Rome - Paul and the Underground Church."

- July 12-16: Sacred Heart, Moreauville

6:00-8:00 p.m. "Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God" for kids PK-3 to 5th Grade. Supper will be provided. Registration opens June 6. Adult, teen and pre-teen volunteers needed. No cost to attend. Donations accepted. To register or for more information, call 318-985-2774.

- July 13-17: St. John the Baptist, Deville

6:00 pm to 8:30 p.m. in the parish hall. The theme is "Let Your Light Shine." There is no cost and a meal will be provided to the children each night.

Discalced Carmelite meeting - July 11

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.

National Family Planning Awareness Week - July 19-25

This year's theme is Natural Family Planning, Designed by God, Guided by Love, Open to Life. The

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

Catholic Church supports the methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP) because they respect God's design for married love. In fact, NFP represents the only authentic approach to family planning available to husbands and wives because these methods can be used to both attempt or avoid pregnancy. To learn more about NFP, visit <https://www.usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning>

Steubenville South Rally day for Ministry Leaders - August 1

Steubenville South invites all priests, deacons, catechists, youth ministers, volunteers, and adults involved in ministry to Rally day on Saturday, August 1, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., at Maryhill Retreat Center. Featuring keynote speaker Mark Hart, practical workshops, Mass, and fellowship. Ministry leaders are invited to attend free, but pre-registration is required. Visit steubenvillesouth.com/register to register, or email hello@steubenvillesouth.com for more information.

Men's Silent Retreat - August 7-9

Join us for "The Fourth Watch Watch of the Night", a Men's Silent retreat presented by Deacon Micheal Parker of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Retreat will be held at Maryhill Renewal Center. Registration is \$250. \$100 non-refundable deposit due at registration and \$150 due at retreat check-in. To register, visit <https://freedonationkiosk.com:9011/doa/events/3>

Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion Workshop - August 11

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 dcnlavergne@diocesealex.org.

Tuesday, August 11, 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!

Lector Workshop - August 18

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 dcnlavergne@diocesealex.org.

Tuesday, August 18 – 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!

SAVE THE DATE! Catechist Enrichment Day - August 29

If your role involves sharing the faith with others, please join us this day of relational ministry enrichment. Speakers and location will be announced soon. For more information, contact Deacon Jason Lavergne at dcnlavergne@diocesealex.org

Pre-Cana Marriage Prep Workshop - September 12

These one-day workshops will be at the St. Joseph Catholic Center located at 4400 Coliseum Blvd, Alexandria, LA. Beginning at 8:00 a.m., the day will include presentations on various topics that are vital to a couple's lifelong marriage. The workshop will end at approximately 3:00 p.m. and lunch will be included. Space will be limited, so please register for a workshop as soon as possible.

Registration for the Sept. 12, 2026 workshop is now open.

There is a fee of \$60 per couple. To register, please visit: <https://www.diocesealex.org/pre-cana-marriage-prep-workshop/>

After submitting the registration form, you will see a link to pay online.

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:

February 27, 2027

May 22, 2027

Sept. 11, 2027

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

Church Today News Deadlines

July 27

**Deadline for news:
Thursday, July 16**

August 24

**Deadline for news:
Thursday, August 13**



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July 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>JUNE 29</p> <p>Mass honoring Fr. Pedro 6:00 p.m. St. Martin Church, Lecompte</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. MICHALCHUK</p>	<p>30</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. K. MICHIELS</p>	<p>JULY 1</p> <p>250 Hours Adoration 250 Works of Mercy July 1-July 31 Visit www.diocesealex.org</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p>2</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. R. MITCHELL</p>	<p>3</p> <p>FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. C. MORGAN</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Happy 250th Birthday USA!</p> <p>INDEPENDENCE DAY FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR DCN. D. MOREAU</p>	<p>5</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. L. MOREAU</p>
<p>6</p> <p>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL -- ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH, BUNKIE</p> <p>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. -- SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHURCH, PINEVILLE</p> <p>MATH CAMP 8:00-11:00 A.M. -- HOLY SAVIOR MENARD HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. T. MOULARD</p>	<p>7</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. MULLOTH</p>	<p>8</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. S. NEWBURY</p>	<p>9</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. M. NOEL</p>	<p>10</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. K. OBIKWE</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Discalced Carmelites Monthly Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. O'BRIEN</p>	<p>12</p> <p>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 6:00 - 8:00 P.M. -- SACRED HEART CHURCH, MOREAUVILLE</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. D. O'CONNOR</p>
<p>13</p> <p>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 6:00 - 8:00 P.M. -- SACRED HEART CHURCH, MOREAUVILLE</p> <p>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 6:00 - 8:30 P.M. -- ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, DEVILLE</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. OGBONNA</p>	<p>14</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. A. PALAKKATTUCHIRA</p>	<p>15</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. PALLIPARAMBIL</p>	<p>16</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PALLIPURATH</p>	<p>17</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. J. PARDUE</p>	<p>18</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. PARTAIN</p>	<p>19</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. PAUL</p>
<p>20</p> <p>NATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING AWARENESS WEEK</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. C. PELTO</p>	<p>21</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. PRIMEAUX</p>	<p>22</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. R. RABALAIS</p>	<p>23</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. RAY</p>	<p>24</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. T. REYNOLDS</p>	<p>25</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. T. ROBICHAUX</p>	<p>26</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. E. RODRIGUEZ-HERNANDEZ</p>
<p>27</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES</p>	<p>28</p> <p>PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH</p>	<p>29</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT</p>	<p>30</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER</p>	<p>31</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. PEDRO SIERRA-POSADA</p>	<p>AUGUST 1</p> <p>Steubenville South Rally Day for Youth Ministry Leaders 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Maryhill Renewal Center</p> <p>PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL</p>	<p>2</p> <p>PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR</p>



HOLY SAVIOR MENARD JUNIOR HIGH 8th Grade posed for an end of school group photo.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA. During the last few days of the school year, Cabrini 3rd Graders celebrated Louisiana Day! Not only did they portray their festivals in costume, but they also shared Louisiana cuisine with the class.



ST. FRANCES CABRINI SCHOOL gathered for a farewell to pastor Father Chad Partain.



LAST DAYS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR. Cabrini School's PreK class entertained parents, grandparents and staff with songs about ants, bumble bees, butterflies, ladybugs, etc. in their "Bugland" Play held on May 14. Sr. Kalen and Sr. Anahi did a wonderful job bringing out the personalities of these precious students.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES CELEBRATED SENIOR SUNDAY on May 17. Honored seniors who received engraved Bibles were Daniel Guerrero, Elizabeth Page, Alejandro Rodríguez, Alonzo Rodríguez, Gustavo Vargas, and Savannah Vargas. Youth director, Leah Rustom, presented the Bibles with the assistance of Reverend Louis Sklar and Deacon Lee Moreau.



DARE GRADUATION. St. Frances Cabrini School's D.A.R.E. Graduation was held on May 11 for 5th grade students.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR SCHOOL'S 6TH GRADE FAREWELL. The students in 6A and 6B at OLPS said farewell to elementary school and are ready to move on to junior high school next year.