

CHURCH TODAY

Volume LVII, No. 7

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Serving the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana Since 1970

July 27, 2026



Avoyelles Flood

On June 18, 2026, 20-30 inches of rain fell within a 12 hour timespan in Avoyelles parish, causing catastrophic flooding. Immaculate Conception Church in Dupont was heavily damaged. Flood relief efforts are continuing throughout the region.

INSIDE

Avoyelles Flood relief efforts still underway

Churches and individuals donated and delivered supplies and food to those recovering from June's flood. A volunteer group from California, Kentucky and Tennessee served meals in Simmesport. See more photos on pages 4-5.

Fr. Matthew Bonner ordained to priesthood

On Saturday, June 20, we celebrated the priestly ordination of Father Matthew Bonner at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Father Bonner's first assignment is Parochial Vicar for St. Joseph Church, Marksville. See photos on page 6.

Steubenville South rocks the Coliseum

Steubenville South Catholic Youth Conference was back at the Coliseum this year for its 30th Anniversary. Over 2800 attended over the June 26-28 weekend. See photos on pages 10-11.

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One of the earliest surviving descriptions of Christian worship comes from the First Apology of St. Justin Martyr. It was written in approximately 155 A.D. and was addressed to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius. You can find a large portion of the text in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, ¶1345. His description begins: "On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place." He continues with a description of a liturgical service that we would easily recognize as Mass. From the earliest days of the Church, Christian communities came together on Sunday to hear and reflect upon the word of God and to share in the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – bread and wine over which the leader of the assembly gives thanks "for a considerable time." St. Justin uses the Greek word for giving thanks – eucharistian – to describe this prayer. St. Justin's words are notable – not only as a historical record of Christian worship – but as evidence of the unity to be found in the early Church – "all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place."

To this day, Catholic Christians gather for Mass each Sunday, not in the same place though. Instead, we gather in numerous locations in cities and towns – some Catholic churches are even within walking distance of each another. We also gather in small groups three or four or more times during each Sunday – not because we cannot all

fit in the worship space at the same time, but because we have come to expect worship that is convenient to our schedule or our personal preferences. Rather than the single celebration that characterized the early Church, we are divided into small groups that may not fill even one-fourth of the building's seating capacity at each celebration. Too often parishioners in the same church do not know each other; they only know those who sit near them at "their" Mass.

This situation developed when vocations to the priesthood were plentiful. Each priest was required to celebrate one Mass on Sunday. Indeed, they were limited to celebrating only one Mass on Sunday except with the permission of the diocesan bishop. Most bishops permitted priests to celebrate two Sunday Masses. Parish schedules were established with this in mind. If a parish had three priests, for example, they could have six Masses. When all Sunday Masses could only be

Live, Jesus, in our Hearts Forever

By Bishop Robert W. Marshall, Jr.

Gathered as One: Rethinking Our Sunday Mass Schedule

celebrated in the morning, that often meant a crowded schedule. In the early 1960s, for example, my home parish, St. Michael Church in Memphis, had three priests and our Mass schedule was 6:00am, 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am and 12 noon. That schedule was necessary as our church was small – it would eventually be repurposed as the school gym. In 1963, a new, larger church was dedicated. The seating capacity of the new church was approximately 1,000 whereas the old church accommodated only about 200. And yet, eight years after we moved into the new church, our Mass schedule still included the same five Masses, even though we had only two priests. Except on Christmas and Easter Sunday morning, we were never even close to filling the new church. Why did the parish not take advantage of the new, larger church and reduce the number of Masses? Because many of our parishioners were inflexible. The 6:00am crowd were steadfastly opposed to going to a later Mass,

while the Noon crowd could not imagine getting up any earlier.

When Saturday anticipatory Masses became permissible, some of the earlier Masses lost their appeal, but the one-hour Communion fast brought pressure to add Sunday afternoon and evening Masses. And yet, as Masses were added, ordinations to the priesthood were dropping. Bishops were forced to grant permission to priests to celebrate three or four or more Masses each Sunday just to meet the demands of their congregations. Is there any wonder why we often scramble to find a priest to celebrate Mass when one of our priests gets sick?

Sisters and brothers, when we go to a wedding feast, we either adjust our schedule to be at the wedding and the reception on time or we send our regrets. We do not expect the bride or groom to repeat their vows several times on their wedding day in order

see MASS on page 8

Legacy Sunday set for Sept. 19-20

Legacy Sunday is a weekend dedicated to bringing awareness to parishioners about the opportunity to leave a gift to their church parish in their will through the Catholic Foundation of North Central Louisiana. This initiative will be piloted at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Our Lady of Prompt Succor and St. Rita Church, Alexandria; St. Joseph Church, Marksville; Minor Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in

Natchitoches and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Vidalia. Its effectiveness will be assessed before broader implementation across the diocese.

In Scripture, we are reminded of the ultimate example of legacy that God has given us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Through His life, death, and resurrection, He has gifted us the promise of salvation. But Jesus did not stop there; He entrusted us with His

legacy through the sacred gift of the Eucharist, a testament to His love and sacrifice.

We are all called to leave a legacy. Legacy Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on the spiritual and material impacts we create in the lives of our loved ones, within our church, and throughout our community. It is

a time for each of us to consider how our actions, our faith, and our love can resonate for generations to come.

Though the initiative will begin in these parishes first, anyone already interested is invited to participate. Contact Dcn. Richard Mitchell for more information at dcnrmitchell@diocesealex.org



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Five times to pray on-the-go

by Colleen Pressprich
Our Sunday Visitor

As Catholics, we are meant to be constantly turning our hearts to the Lord. As parents, we are meant to be teaching our children how. That can feel impossible, especially in the summer.

I know for us, it is even busier than the school year. Between camps, sports and swim team, we are constantly on the go, and we rarely keep the same schedule week to week.

It can make it hard to find a rhythm, especially for prayer time.

But it's possible, and easier than you think, to cultivate a habit of prayer in the busiest of seasons, for yourself and for your children.

Here are five times to slide prayer into your family's day this summer that will deepen your prayer lives and be easy to keep up when school rolls back around. In fact, you'll notice that these are all "on-the-go" moments. This comes with a bonus: Prayer in the car means fewer distractions. Car time opens up opportunities for meaningful conversations, for our kids to ask us questions, and for us to understand their hearts more fully.

As you think about sprinkling these prayerful moments throughout your day, keep in



mind the words of St. Paul VI, who wrote, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers."

What does this have to do with family prayer? It means you will likely have to step out of your comfort zone a little. I know I did. Praying aloud doesn't often feel natural to us, but it's the best way to teach your kids. It might feel uncomfortable at first, but I promise it will bear fruit.

Prayer when passing a

Catholic Church

Each and every time our family drives or walks past a Catholic Church, we make the sign of the cross and say this short prayer: "Jesus, I love you."

Acknowledging Christ truly present in the tabernacle reinforces for our children that the Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith, and it helps them understand the importance and centrality of our belief in the Eucharist. Though it might

sound simple, this practice has opened up many conversations with our children. It's given us the chance to explain Eucharistic theology, the differences between different denominations and even the importance of a reverent sign of the cross, a powerful prayer in itself.

Prayer upon hearing sirens

Anytime our family hears a siren, we pause whatever we're doing and say, "Dear Jesus, please help the paramedics, the

police officers, the firefighters and everyone they are going to help."

Short and succinct, this prayer models for our kids the importance of looking beyond themselves, of seeing the needs of others and lifting them up in prayer. Over the years, we've found that our kids notice others in need and ask us to join them in prayer. I am often amazed at what their eyes see that I may have overlooked. Intercession has become a habit.

Prayer when we see a homeless person

Our family has the habit of praying for the homeless we see along our drives. If it's safe, we'll stop and ask for their name so that we can pray for them specifically.

As Catholics, we believe in the inherent dignity and worth of every person. Pausing long enough to really see the people on the margins of society, taking the time to recognize them as individuals, and offering up a prayer for them gives our children a powerful witness and shapes how they treat others. We have had wonderful conversations with our kids about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy and Catholic social doctrine, and we have watched our children grow in love and respect for all they

see **PRAY** on page 17



250 HOURS OF ADORATION. Our Men's ACTS Wednesday night prayer group has been meeting for over 11 years in the Upper Room on Parliament Drive to pray for our world and each other. The faces have changed over the years, but our dedication hasn't. In lieu of our regular meeting, we met at St. Rita, Pope Pius X Adoration Chapel for a Rosary and quiet reflection during this month of 250 Hours of Adoration.

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*

Avoyelles Flood Relief



(above) ST. RITA CHURCH KNIGHTS. St. Rita Knights of Columbus, pictured: Fr. Anthony Dharmaraj, pastor of St. Rita Church; Fr. Martin Laird, pastor of Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine. (above right) A truck being loaded full of water, cleaning supplies and non-perishable foods, all donated by the parishioners of St. Rita Church over the course of one weekend.



GENEROUS DONATIONS. Fr. Dharmaraj hands over a donation check from parishioners of St. Rita to Fr. Abraham Varghese, pastor of Immaculate Conception at the time of the Avoyelles flood.

(below) PLAUCHEVILLE RELIEF EFFORTS. Bishop Robert Marshall visited a volunteer crew at St. Joseph School, Plaquemine the day after the flooding. They were accepting donated food and supplies which were all given away to those in need.



(above) ST. FRANCIS DE SALES COMMUNITY. When disaster strikes, our community steps up. Volunteers from St. Francis de Sales, Echo and Our Lady of Lourdes, Fifth Ward and others teamed up to prepare meals for Avoyelles residents displaced by Tropical Storm Arthur. Thank you to everyone who lent a helping hand!



(right) KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 9294 has truly lived out the mission of the Knights by mobilizing to feed a community devastated by flooding. We deeply appreciate your hard work, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to helping those in need.



(left) FLOOD DAMAGED IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH. This photo shows the water level in the church. Since this photo was taken, the floors and pews have been taken up and will be repaired. It is a slow process but recovery efforts continue. Please pray for everyone impacted by the flooding.

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Faith Above the Flood: St. Joseph School endures 1927 and 2026 floods

Nearly a century apart, two historic floods tested the people of Plaquemine and the strength of St. Joseph School. In both 1927 and 2026, rising waters threatened homes, livelihoods, and the community itself. Yet through faith and perseverance, St. Joseph School stood firm.

The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 remains one of the most devastating natural disasters in American history. Floodwaters inundated vast portions of Louisiana, displacing families and leaving lasting scars across the region. Despite the destruction, St. Joseph School endured and continued serving generations of students and families.

Ninety-nine years later, history seemed to repeat itself. The flood event of June 2026 brought unprecedented rainfall and widespread devastation throughout Avoyelles Parish. Roads disappeared beneath water, homes were damaged, and many families found themselves in need of the most basic necessities. Yet once again, St. Joseph School weathered the storm.

While flood waters surrounded the campus, the school itself suffered only minimal leak damage. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members expressed



99 YEARS AGO. On May 16, 1927, the Bayou de Glaises levee was breached when the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers overflowed their banks, causing catastrophic flooding. The photo above shows St. Joseph School in Plaquemine barely above flood water level in 1927. 99 years later, the photo on the right shows St. Joseph School just high enough to avoid flood damage to the interior of the school after 20-30 inches of rain fell within a 12 hour period on June 18, 2026. Over 1,500 homes were flooded in Avoyelles parish during this recent flooding.

gratitude that the buildings remained protected.

Many saw the school's preservation as more than good fortune.

"From the flood of 1927 to the flood of 2026, St. Joseph has stood as a beacon of faith, hope, and perseverance," said

Principal Rhiannon Moreau. "We are humbled and grateful for God's protection and for the intercession of St. Joseph, our patron, who has watched over this school and community for generations."

As relief efforts continue throughout the parish, St. Joseph

School has become a place of service and hope, helping distribute supplies and providing support to neighbors in need. Community members have come together in prayer and generosity, demonstrating that while flood waters may rise, faith and compassion rise even higher.

Nearly one hundred years after surviving the flood of 1927, St. Joseph School remains a testament to the enduring spirit of Plaquemine—a community sustained by faith, strengthened by adversity, and protected, many believe, through the intercession of St. Joseph.



HELP CAME FROM OUT OF STATE IN THE FORM OF MERCY CHEFS. Bringing a team of six chefs traveling from California, Kentucky and Tennessee, *Mercy Chefs* mobilized into Simmesport on June 30 to offer relief by serving meals daily for the residents of the area following the flooding rains that occurred on June 18. Christ the King Church opened the doors to their hall as a prep station for the chefs. Members of the Ladies Altar Society, Knights of Columbus Council #10564, and other community volunteers stepped up each day to prepare the food and distribute plates. With two meals served each day for one week, *Mercy Chefs* was able to provide more than 4,000 plates of food to those in need.

*The hand
of the Lord
feeds us; he
answers all
our needs.*

Psalm 145: 16
Responsorial Psalm
for August 2
Eighteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Diocese ordains Matthew Bonner to priesthood



On Saturday, June 20, we celebrated the priestly ordination of Father Matthew Bonner at St. Francis Xavier Cathedral. Father Bonner's first assignment is Parochial Vicar for St. Joseph Church, Marksville. May his ministry impact many hearts with faith, compassion, and devotion.

(LEFT) Father Matthew Bonner with Bishop Robert Marshall.

(below left) ORDINATION. Through the laying on of hands by the Bishop and the Prayer of Ordination, the gift of the Holy Spirit for the priestly office is conferred on the candidate. Together with the Bishop, the Priests present lay hands on the candidate to signify incorporation into the presbyterate.

(below) Father Matthew Bonner participating with the other priests during liturgy of the Eucharist.

(opposite, pg 7) Following the ordination of Father Matthew Bonner, the seminarians, transitional deacons gathered for a photo with Bishop Robert Marshall, Father Luke LaFleur, vocations director, and Fr. Jeffrey Montz, Coordinator of Spiritual Directors, Notre Dame Seminary, New Orleans. Seminarians include Ty Schexnayder, David Rubio, Matthew Kramer, Graham Descant, and Blake Bernard. Transtional Deacons are Blaine Phillips and Gabriel Dowden.



(right) FR. PAUL KUNNUPURAM CELEBRATES HIS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD. The parishoners of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Vidalia hosted a reception on Sunday, May 31 for Father Paul Kunnumpuram (center) on his 50th Anniversary as a priest. Years ago, Fr. Paul was pastor of OLL for nine years. He also served at St. Patrick Church in Ferriday. Father Joseph Xavier (left) and Father Dan O'Connor (right) also attended the reception.





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FR. LOUIS SKLAR CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRIESTHOOD. On Thursday, June 4, Father Louis Sklar enjoyed a delicious steak supper with priests of the Diocese of Alexandria at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Winnfield. The gathering of priests enjoyed celebrating Fr. Sklar’s 25th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. Lots of stories were shared! Pictured with Fr. Sklar are Father Rick Gremillion, Father Josh Burch, Father Dale Meade, Father Martin Laird, Father Dutch Voltz, Father Christian Ogbonna, Father Brian Seiler, Father Ryan Humphries, Father Wade DeCoste, Father Chad Partain, Father Kenneth Michiels, Msgr. James Ferguson, and Father Dan O’Connor.



MSGR. JAMES FERGUSON RETIRES. Members of St. Francis Xavier staff, Altar Society, the Knights of Columbus and friends, hosted a retirement celebration for Msgr. James Ferguson on Thursday, June 18 in Xavier Hall. Many Cathedral parishioners and members of other churches where Msgr. served in his tenure as pastor attended the reception. Msgr. welcomed all and thanked everyone for their support through the years. A beautiful array of hors d’oeuvres and refreshments were served to all who attended.

Seminarian Burses

June 2026 Donations

Knights of Columbus Council #9217	\$25.00
Father Adrian Molenschot Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Silton Innerarity	\$25.00
Father Luke LaFleur 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. Peter L. Couvillon	\$100.00
Monsignor James Ferguson Burse	
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Vanderlick	\$200.00
Monsignor Julius G. Walle Burse	
Knights of Peter Claver Assembly #27	\$300.00
Monsignor Henry A. Thompson Burse	
Knights of Columbus Council #14657	\$1,000.00
Bishop Charles P. Greco Burse	
The Robichaux Children	\$2,050.00
Mary Lee and Gerald Robichaux, Sr. Burse	
Total	\$3,850.00

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

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.

MASS

continued from page 2

to make their celebration most convenient to us. Each Sunday, we are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb. We come together to receive the Body of Christ and to become the Body of Christ. In a church with a seating capacity of 300, do we really need four Masses attended by only 60 people each? Candidly, do we make Mass the high point of our Sunday and adjust our schedules accordingly? Or do we make our personal schedule first and then find a Mass that fits – and do not go if one does not.

The early Church faced many challenges. Within 10 years of writing his First Apology, St. Justin had been martyred during the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Even in the face of persecution, the early church persevered. Today, most of us do not face persecution or death – and yet we do not even risk inconvenience in order to practice our faith.

Canon law is clear. Except as otherwise permitted by law, “[a] priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day.” (Canon 905 §1). That same canon provides “If there is a shortage of priests, the local ordinary [i.e., the bishop] can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy

days of obligation.” (Canon 905 §2). Clearly, we have a shortage of priests, so there is a just cause for each priest to celebrate two Masses on Sunday (and often on other days in the case of a funeral Mass or a wedding Mass, for example). As bishop, however, I must determine whether there is a true pastoral necessity that would require a priest to celebrate more than two Masses on Sunday on a regular basis.

In the month of September, each parish and mission in the Diocese of Alexandria will conduct a count of those attending each weekend Mass. If the number of Masses is reasonable for the combined size of the congregations and the seating capacity of the church, then any changes would be merely an opportunity to evaluate the quality of the liturgy in light of the mission of the Church. If, however, the schedule of a parish requires a priest to celebrate three or more Masses each Sunday

on a regular basis (i.e., not in an emergency because a brother priest is sick, for example), then I must determine that there is a true pastoral necessity, namely that the attendance at each Mass regularly exceeds approximately 75% of the seating capacity of the church. If the combined Sunday congregation of a given parish at all of its Masses could easily fit into one or two Masses, then, as bishop, I will step in by withdrawing the permission in that parish for additional Masses of convenience – as there would be no pastoral necessity.

I know that we want happy, holy and healthy priests, not those who are over-burdened and exhausted. I invite you to prayerfully consider whether you could be more flexible by participating in Mass at a different time rather than asking our priests to retain a full schedule of Masses that are unnecessary, repetitive, and are not justified by a true pastoral necessity.



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8 a.m. Sunday Mass

7 a.m. Sunday Mass

President Trump sends personal letter to St. John Chapel

The staff at St. John Chapel in Columbia, have received a personal letter from the President and First Lady, on official White House stationery and reads:

April 2, 2026

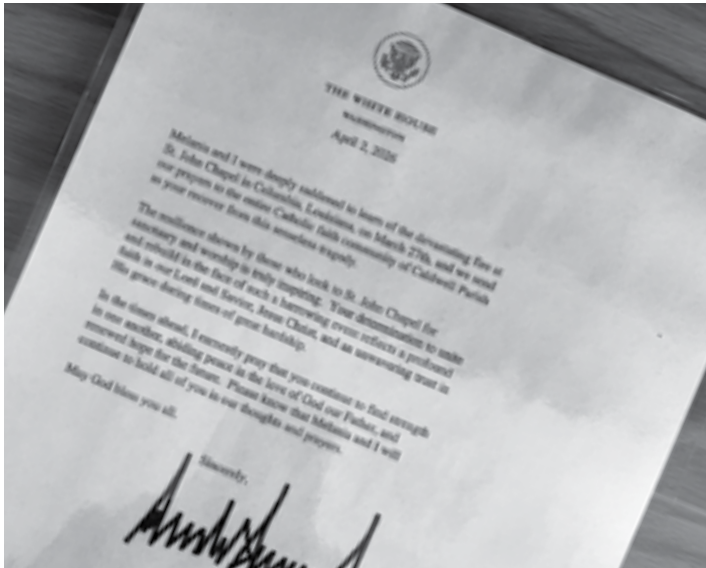
Melania and I were deeply saddened to learn of the devastating fire at St. John Chapel in Columbia, Louisiana, on March 27th, and we send our prayers to the entire Catholic faith community of Caldwell Parish as your *[sic]* recover from this senseless tragedy.

The resilience shown by those who look to St. John Chapel for sanctuary and worship is truly inspiring. Your determination to unite and rebuild in the face of such a harrowing event reflects a profound faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and an unwavering trust in His grace during times of great hardship.

In the times ahead, I earnestly pray that you continue to find strength in one another, abiding peace in the love of God our Father, and renewed hope for the future. Please know that Melania and I will continue to hold all of you in our thoughts and prayers.

May God bless you all.

The letter is signed by the president.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION was held on May 3 at Mater Dolorosa Church in Plaquemine.

ECHO KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS INSTALLATION BANQUET AND AWARDS. The Knights of Columbus Council #9294 (St. Francis de Sales Church, Echo) recently held its annual installation banquet, and it was a night of great joy as they recognized some truly dedicated members. Congratulations to all the award winners which included TB and Sandi Brouillette, Family of the Year. Their commitment to service is inspiring. Thank you for everything you do!





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your kindness,
and grant us
your salvation.

Psalm 85: 8
Responsorial Psalm
for August 9
Nineteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time



DISCIPLES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. Sisters from the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, based in Oklahoma, traveled to Steubenville South to spend the weekend accompanying teens in prayer, and interceding for everyone attending the conference.



MOREAUVILLE AND MANSURA KNIGHTS COOKING JAMBALAYA FOR STEUBENVILLE SOUTH. The collaboration of Sacred Heart Church Knights of Columbus and St. Paul's Knights of Columbus, who came together to prepare their authentic Cajun Cuisine Jambalaya for almost 3,000 teens from all over the southern part of our country at the Steubenville South Youth Conference on Saturday, June 27. Pictured, front row: Maurice Mayeux, Derek Juneau, and Justin Coco. Second row: Cole Lacombe, Nick Mayeux, Felix Bordelon, Heath Pastor, Kannon Pastor, Nick St. Romain, Lance Soldani, Chris Rousseau, Geoffrey Bordelon, Adam Laborde, Keith Lacombe, Keith Lacombe, Justin Gaspard, Austin Boudreaux, Weston Lacombe, Dale Couvillion, Jay Soldani, and Deacon Reggie Ducote.



MATER DOLOROSA, PLAUCHEVILLE. Teens and adult leaders from Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine joined more than 2,800 participants from across the region for the 2026 Steubenville South Conference.



FR. DAVE PIVONKA. (ABOVE) Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR, President of Franciscan University of Steubenville and Team Priest for the weekend, welcomes participants during the opening session.

SACRED HEART YOUTH ATTEND STEUBENVILLE SOUTH. Pictured, front (seated) Andre' Spruill, Group Leader;



TEENS FROM ACROSS THE SOUTH. More than 2,800 teens and adult leaders from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Florida gathered for Steubenville South 2026, with one parish traveling by bus from Minnesota to participate in the milestone 30th conference.



PAUL GEORGE. Central Louisiana native Paul George came out of youth ministry “retirement” to serve as host for the 30th Steubenville South Conference, leading participants through a weekend of prayer, laughter, and encounter with Christ.



OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR, ALEXANDRIA. Teens and adult leaders from Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church, Alexandria were among the many local parish groups participating in this year’s Steubenville South Youth Conference.



A LEGACY OF SERVICE. More than 200 volunteers from the Diocese of Alexandria and beyond generously offered their time and talents to make Steubenville South possible. Above LEFT, Olivia Vasquez and Sarah Van Mol welcome and check in arriving groups. Above RIGHT, current Logistics Coordinator Matt Delaune is pictured with Martin Lyons, who faithfully led the conference logistics team for many years.



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

Rising Waters: Avoyelles Parish weathers the June 2026 floods

In mid-June 2026, the quiet roads and sprawling fields of Avoyelles Parish were transformed into a vast network of waterways. Triggered by the relentless rainfall of Tropical Storm Arthur, the first named storm of the 2026 Atlantic hurricane season, several regions of Central Louisiana were inundated. In just a few hours, some areas in the parish received a staggering two feet of rain.

The sudden deluge quickly overwhelmed local canals, bayous, and drainage systems. Roads became completely impassable, bridges were submerged, and countless families found their homes perilously surrounded by rising floodwaters. Though local emergency teams and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries moved quickly to ensure resident and pet safety, the water left behind a long trail of property damage, ruined crops, and displaced households.

As the floodwaters recede, the daunting road to recovery begins.

How You Can Help: Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana

In times of crisis, the community relies heavily on local support systems to rebuild. Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana is actively working to provide relief and long-term hope to affected households.

If you would like to support your neighbors in Avoyelles



AVOYELLES FLOOD RELIEF SPEARHEADED BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA. Immediately following the devastating floods in Avoyelles Parish, employees and volunteers of CCCLA pitch in to help with intake, sorting and distribution of supplies and food at the Moreauville Fire Department.

Parish, you can make a direct financial contribution through the Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana Disaster Relief Portal: <https://shorturl.at/UDY3C> or scan the code at the end of this story.

Your donations are channeled into three vital recovery programs:

- **Emergency Visa Gift Cards:** This program puts immediate purchasing power directly into the

hands of flood victims. Families can use these cards to buy essential everyday necessities—such as fresh food, baby supplies, hygiene products, and emergency clothing—tailoring the aid to their immediate, unique needs.

- **Tuition Assistance for Affected Catholic School Families:**

Flooding can strip a family of their savings in an instant. Catholic Charities is raising

funds to ensure that children from flooded households can continue their education at local Catholic schools without the threat of financial disruption or withdrawal due to tuition costs.

- **Long-Term Recovery & Rebuilding Homes:**

True recovery takes months,

sometimes years. Donations will support long-term disaster case management, helping families navigate insurance, secure rebuilding materials, and fund the labor necessary to repair and safely move back into their homes.

Make an Impact Today:

Every dollar donated brings a family one step closer to dry land and a restored home. To give, please visit the Catholic Charities of Central LA Avoyelles Flood Relief portal. If you prefer to reach out regarding targeted giving, you can email jgilchrist@cccenla.org

Scan the code below to access the Catholic Charities of Central Louisiana Disaster Relief Portal:



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
- **Assist.Educate.Elevate.**
Emergency Basic Needs Assistance
(For those at risk of utility disconnect and eviction, victims of house fires, and information and referral)
- To support our work, thank you for your donation of time, talent, or treasure!

 - **Volunteer** - cccenla.org/volunteer
 - **Donate** - cccenla.org/hero-of-hope

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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.

Central Louisiana support helps open Wellness Gym for neighbors with developmental disabilities

New space at St. Mary's will support movement, wellness, and quality of life for residents who call St. Mary's home

ALEXANDRIA, La. — St. Mary's Residential Community & Services opened a new Wellness Gym on Thursday, July 9, 2026, giving Central Louisiana a visible reminder of how local generosity can support daily life for neighbors with developmental disabilities.

Funded through St. Mary's 2025 Feast for Good Fund-a-Need, the new space will provide residents with more opportunities for movement, wellness, and quality-of-life activities in a setting designed to support their needs.

"This Wellness Gym is a beautiful example of what happens when Central Louisiana shows up for the people who call St. Mary's home," said Bo Vets, Administrator of St. Mary's. "Because of that support, our residents now have a space where they can be active, engaged, and supported in ways that meet them where they are."

The grand opening was held

on the St. Mary's campus at 6715 Highway 1 North, Boyce, LA. The program included a welcome, administrator's remarks, a blessing of the space by Bishop Robert Marshall, a ribbon cutting, and the first announcement connected to Feast for Good 2026.

For St. Mary's, the opening is more than a ribbon cutting. It is a chance for supporters, families, staff, and the broader Central Louisiana community to see how generosity can become a lasting part of daily life for residents.

"Feast for Good has always been about more than a single evening," said Tamara McNulty, Director of Development at St. Mary's. "It brings people together around the mission of St. Mary's, and this Wellness Gym gives our community a very tangible way to see what that support makes possible."

St. Mary's serves individuals with developmental disabilities from across Louisiana and beyond, providing residential care, programming, and support designed to help each resident live with dignity, purpose, and



RIBBON CUTTING FOR ST. MARY COMMUNITY & SERVICES WELLNESS GYM. Bishop Robert Marshall attended the grand opening ribbon cutting and blessed the space where St. Mary's residents will be able to take advantage of much needed daily quality-of-life activities. Also pictured with Bishop Marshall are Bo Vets, Administrator of St. Mary's; Tamara McNulty, Director of Development, members of the Central Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, other dignitaries and many supporters and families impacted by St. Mary's.

connection. The Wellness Gym is part of St. Mary's ongoing effort to create meaningful spaces and opportunities that support residents in their daily lives.

The opening also marks the beginning of promotion for Feast for Good 2026, St. Mary's signature fundraising event, which will be held Monday, November 2, 2026, at the Alexandria Riverfront Center. Additional details about the 2026 culinary experience will be shared at the grand opening.

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*O God,
let all the
nations
praise you!*

Psalm 67: 4
Responsorial Psalm
for August 16
Twentieth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Sacramental: A Catholic Marriage Enrichment Program

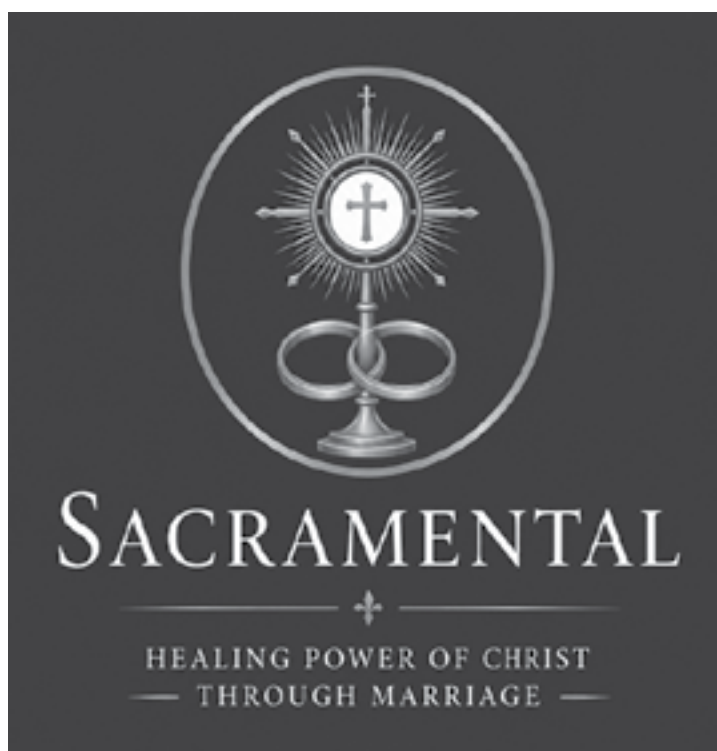
The grace of your wedding day has not expired.

In the Catholic understanding of marriage, the exchange of vows is the moment Christ enters as a living presence — and that grace does not fade when the ceremony ends. It is here now, ready to be found again, no matter where the years have taken you.

Sacramental is a Catholic marriage enrichment program for couples who sense there is more waiting in their marriage than they have yet received. Whether yours is thriving, weathering a hard season, or simply hungry to go deeper — there is room for it here.

Over five Sundays and a weekend retreat at Maryhill Renewal Center, couples make honest, unhurried space for the things we all carry into marriage — old patterns, quiet hurts, the parts of our story we have never fully told — and discover what it means to be fully known and fully loved. Not through a lecture, but alongside a community of couples walking the same road, led by a team who have walked it themselves.

We'd love for you to join us this fall for something we believe God has been preparing for your marriage all along. This unique series of events isn't just a lecture. It's a journey — a safe, confidential community of couples walking the same road. Your presenters will be couples just like you. Whether your marriage is struggling or strong, there is always more God wants to give you through it. Over 5 afternoons together, a



closing retreat and a follow-up, we'll make room for real healing, deeper faith, and the kind of intimacy that only comes through trust, honesty, and time. You will take away true growth, learn how healing happens, and break the nervous system patterns that hold you back. Cost is \$500 for the entire journey which will include reflection, prayer, Mass. Lodging and meals included at Maryhill Renewal Center. For more information or to register, email ministry@sacramentalmarriage.org or call Steve at 318-794-0944 or Amanda at 318-792-7404.

The Sessions: Five Sundays, 1:00-4:00 p.m., Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25 and Nov. 1

The Retreat: Nov. 12-15

The Follow-up: Sunday, Dec. 6, 1:00-4:00 pm

Upcoming programs:
SPRING 2027

Five Sundays — Mar. 14 to Apr. 11
Closing Retreat — Apr. 15-18

FALL 2027

Five Sundays — Sept. 19 to Oct. 17
Closing Retreat — Oct. 21-24

All will be held at Maryhill Renewal Center. Cost is \$500.

Being curious is enough to begin. For more information, contact ministry@sacramentalmarriage.org or call Steve Warden (318) 794-0944 or Amanda Warden (318) 792-7404.

Steve and Amanda Warden have been together since high school. Through twenty-four years of marriage they have three kids — Matt, Ben, and Abby. Steve spends his days as an Executive Vice President at Manchac Technologies and Amanda as an RN at Christus Central Louisiana Surgical Hospital, but the work closest to their hearts is sitting across from other couples and telling them the truth: Christ meets you most tenderly in the person you married.

They founded Sacramental: Healing Power of Christ Through Marriage — because healing isn't only for marriages that are falling apart, and it isn't only for the ones that look fine. It's for every couple willing to let God in.

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*Lord, your love
is eternal;
do not forsake
the work
of your hands.*

Psalm 138: 8
Responsorial Psalm
for August 23
Twenty-first Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Books from local authors

The Woman Underneath devotional

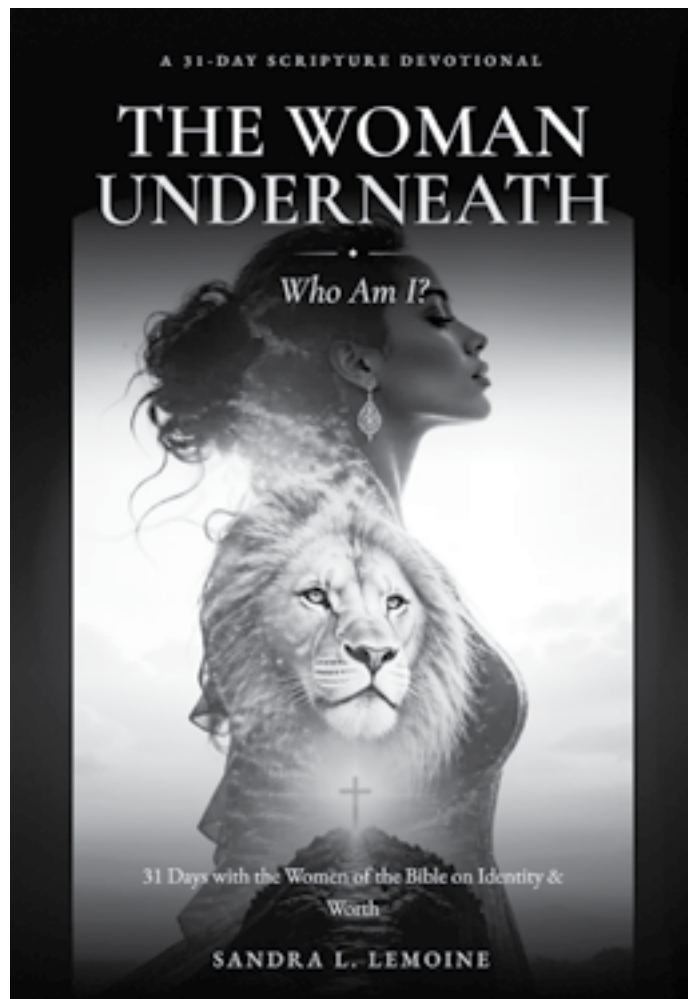
I have always loved the women of the Bible.

For as long as I can remember, I've been drawn to their stories — not as distant figures on a page, but as women whose lives still speak. Their faith stories shape our lives. Their struggles are our struggles. Across thousands of years, the fears they carried, the questions they asked, the ways they wrestled and walked with God still reach into our ordinary days and say: you are not the first woman to feel this, and you are not alone in it. There is so much we can learn from their faith, and from how God met them in their time, when we let it translate into ours.

This book began, honestly, with a friend text. Every morning I share prayer and encouragement with a group of women I love. We tell each other the truth about our days — the struggles, the worries, the small victories — and we lift each other up. I write the prayers that help me and send them out each morning. Some of those women are my beautiful ACTS sisters, and more than once they read a morning prayer and said, gently but persistently: Sandra, you should write a devotional.

I didn't set out to write a book. I set out to encourage a few women I care about. But the idea took root and grew — from a daily prayer text to this: the first book in The Woman Underneath five-book series. Book One, *Who Am I?*, is about identity and worth. In its pages you'll meet women like Judith on Day 14 — a woman the world saw as merely agreeable, whose story reminds us that the courage we so admire in other women was placed in us too. It isn't a trait we lack; it's part of who God made us, a quiet lioness waiting for her moment. I'm at work now on Book Two, *Why Am I Afraid?*, and praying it's in your hands by Christmas.

I've always loved to write, and especially to write for women — because we need all the encouragement we can get. We pour ourselves out for everyone else, and sometimes we need someone to pour back into us. That's what I hope these pages do: sit down beside you, and remind you who you are, and Whose you are.



Sandra L. Lemoine

I have to give all the glory to God. He is the one who put this on my heart, and He is the one who has given me the courage and the ability to do far more in my life than I ever imagined. I'm simply grateful I get to share it with you.

If this book helps even one woman — in whatever she is quietly struggling with — it will have been worth every word.

"I have the strength for

everything through him who empowers me." Philippians 4:13

With love and prayers,
— Sandra L. Lemoine

Book one, *The Woman Underneath — Who Am I?* is currently available on Amazon:
<https://a.co/d/081kuvS2>

More books in the series to come in the future!

Sandra L. Lemoine is a devoted mother, cancer survivor, and woman of strong Catholic faith. Professionally, she serves as the Manager of the Executive Office at CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital and holds an MBA from Louisiana Christian University. Locally, Sandra is a dedicated parishioner of Sts. Francis and Anne Catholic Church in Kolin, Louisiana. Above all, her greatest joy is her family, and she is the proud mother of two wonderful children, Matthew and Elizabeth.

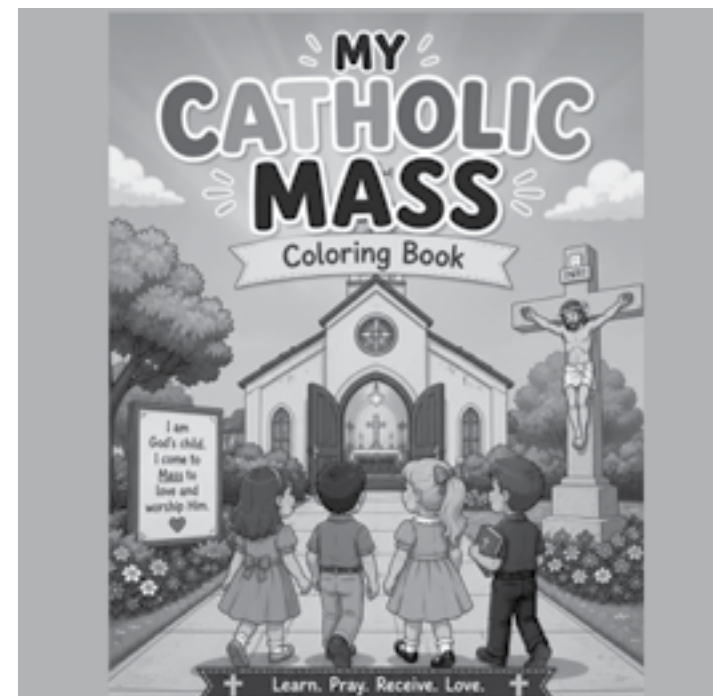
My Catholic Mass Coloring Book

This 12-page coloring book gently guides children through the important parts of the Mass—from entering the church and joining the opening procession to listening to God's Word, celebrating the Eucharist, receiving a blessing, and being sent forth to share God's love.

Each page features a simple scene with bold outlines and plenty of room to color. As children complete the pages, they can become more familiar with what they see and experience at Mass.



Anne Mizell



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My Catholic Mass Coloring Book offers children a joyful and creative way to grow in their understanding of the Mass and their love for the Catholic faith.

My Catholic Mass Coloring book is currently available on Amazon:

<https://a.co/d/04JleE5d>

Anne Mizell has been a Pineville native since 1976 and attends St. Francis Xavier Cathedral in Alexandria. Anne has taught 1st grade CCD at Our Lady of Prompt Succor and has been involved in several ACTS Retreats.

She is a devoted Catholic whose faith inspired her to create My Catholic Mass Coloring Book to help introduce young children to the beauty and meaning of the Mass through simple, engaging illustration and is a way for families to learn about, celebrate, and deepen their Catholic faith together.

**First Day of classes for Catholic Schools
in the Diocese of Alexandria is Friday, August 7**

A legacy of faith: Steubenville South celebrates 30th conference

*By Cari Terracina
Steubenville South Coordinator*

More than 2,800 teens, adult chaperones, priests, religious, and volunteers gathered June 26–28 for the 30th annual Steubenville South Youth Conference, marking a milestone weekend filled with gratitude, celebration, and countless encounters with Jesus Christ.

This year's conference, themed "Worthy" (1 Samuel 17:47), invited young people to remember that every battle belongs to the Lord and that their worth is found not in achievement or comparison, but in being beloved sons and daughters of God.

The conference also marked a homecoming as Steubenville South returned to the Laborde Earles Coliseum for the first time since 2012. For many, walking



back through those doors stirred memories of life-changing moments from years past. Former participants, longtime

volunteers, and families who have faithfully served the conference for decades returned to celebrate

this historic anniversary alongside a new generation experiencing Steubenville South for the very first time.

Participants traveled from across Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Florida, with one parish making the journey by charter bus all the way from Minnesota. Throughout the weekend, nationally recognized speakers Tim Jara, Noelle Garcia, and Tanner Kalina proclaimed the Gospel with joy and authenticity. Fr. Dave Pivonka, TOR—President of Franciscan University of Steubenville—served as the conference's Team Priest, offering inspiring preaching, celebrating the Eucharist, and spending hours in the confessional. Central Louisiana's own Paul George came out of youth ministry "retirement" to serve as host, bringing his signature warmth, humor, and love for young people to this landmark celebration.

Yet perhaps the greatest testimony of the weekend was not found on the stage—it was found throughout the entire conference

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

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community.

More than 200 volunteers gave generously of their time and talents, serving everywhere from registration and hospitality to medical care, security, production, meals, and prayer. More than 30 priests, representing our Diocese of Alexandria and dioceses from across the region, spent the weekend celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, and accompanying young people in their faith.

Throughout Saturday, more than 1,200 teens celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation, many encountering God's mercy in a profound way. At the same time, another quiet ministry was taking place just steps away. Individuals from parishes throughout the Diocese signed up to spend an hour in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament, interceding for every teen, adult leader, volunteer, and priest throughout the conference. Hidden from the spotlight, their faithful prayers formed the spiritual heartbeat of the weekend.

Steubenville South has always been much more than a conference. It is a ministry sustained by an entire community of believers. Many of this year's volunteers first attended as teenagers. Today they return with spouses, children, and even grandchildren, continuing a legacy of service that has shaped generations of young Catholics.

Thirty conferences represent far more than a number. They represent three decades of faithful "yeses"—parents willing to make the trip, parish leaders who believed in investing in teenagers, volunteers who quietly served behind the scenes, generous benefactors who supported the mission, and countless people throughout Central Louisiana who recognized that the faith of our young people is worth investing in.

As we celebrate this milestone, we do so with hearts full of gratitude. We stand in awe of what God has accomplished through Steubenville South over the past thirty years and give thanks for every person who has helped

make this ministry possible. The Diocese of Alexandria has never simply hosted a conference; it has embraced a mission. Together, our community continues to invest in the next generation of disciples, ensuring that young people encounter Jesus Christ, discover their dignity as sons and daughters of God, and leave knowing they are truly worthy of His love.

To God be the glory for all He has done—and for all He continues to do.

The impact of Steubenville South cannot be measured simply by attendance or anniversaries. Its true fruit is found in the young adults who first encountered Christ here and now serve as youth ministers, priests, religious sisters, parish leaders, parents, and volunteers. It is found in lives redirected toward the Gospel, vocations discerned, friendships rooted in faith, and countless quiet "yeses" to God that continue long after the weekend ends. Thirty years later, that mission remains as important as ever.

PRAY continued from page 3

meet.

Prayer when passing a cemetery

This habit I learned from my own grandmother. When driving past a cemetery, we say a Hail Mary for the souls of those buried there, still undergoing purification in purgatory. Souls in purgatory cannot pray for themselves, but rather they rely on the prayers of others. This simple habit has allowed us to explain the communion of saints in a real and tangible way to our children and given them the chance to pray for those who might not have anyone left to pray for them.

Prayer when witnessing beauty

The final time we try to slip prayer into our daily lives is when we see something beautiful in the natural world. In those moments, we'll offer a prayer of gratitude out loud for whatever it is. "Thank you, Jesus, for this stunning

sunset." "Thank you, Father, for the smell of fresh cut grass."

Whatever you feel grateful for, vocalize it. This was the hardest one for me to feel comfortable with, but it's also borne so much fruit in my children that I'm grateful I pushed through the awkwardness of my first attempts.

Prayer on the go

Cultivating a life of prayer for your family doesn't have to be complicated. These small on-the-go moments will blossom into bigger conversations, longer moments of prayer and a deeper understanding of the gift that is our Catholic faith.

Colleen Pressprich is the author of "The Jesse Tree for Families" (OSV) and "Marian Consecration for Families with Young Children" (OSV).

*My soul is thirsting for you,
O Lord my God.*

Psalm 63: 2 | Responsorial Psalm for August 30
Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

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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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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.

School starts! - August 7

The first day of classes for all Diocese of Alexandria Schools is Friday, Aug. 7. To see more dates for the 2026-2027 school year plus school breakfast and lunch menus, visit www.diocesealex.org/events/category/school/

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>

Discalced Carmelite meeting - August 8

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.

Pilgrimage Rosary and Mass for Servant of God Charlene Richard - August 11

St. Frances Cabrini Church invites you to join us on August 11 as we travel to St Edward Catholic Church in Richard LA for a rosary and mass honoring Servant of God Charlene Richard. Following the mass there will be a small reception and shopping opportunity. St. Frances Cabrini Church has chartered a large bus to transport us to and from the event. The cost to ride the bus will be \$35 per person payable to the church office, Ashley will be handling the reservations. Spots are NOT RESERVED

DIOCESAN BRIEFS

til payment is made. We will leave from Cabrini Church at 3:45 p.m. and return around 9:00 p.m. Those wishing to follow the bus may do so but parking will be an issue. Please call the office of St. Frances Cabrini Church at 318-445-4588.

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 dcnjlavergne@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 dcnjlavergne@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!

Women's Day Retreat - August 22

Please join us at St. Francis and Anne Church, Kolin, as we pray "Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace" at this 6th annual women's day retreat, Saturday, Aug. 22 from 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. You can expect music, fellowship, prayer, food, talks, sharing, Sacraments, service, and fun! An indulgence will be available this

year through participation due to the Jubilee year of St. Francis of Assisi! Cost is \$30 and includes breakfast, lunch, snacks, shirt, etc. We will not turn anyone away due to finances, so please let us know if you need financial assistance. Payment can be made before or day of retreat. Cash, check, PayPal, or Venmo (please ask Amelia for info). For more information, contact Amelia Bordelon at

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 dcnjlavergne@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

SAVE THE DATE! Day of Reflection - October 10

Fr. Louis Sklar presenter. Maryhill Renewal Center. More information to follow.

Church Today News Deadlines

August 24
Deadline for news:
Thursday, August 13

September 28
Deadline for news:
Thursday, Sept. 17



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August 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
JULY 27 PRAY FOR DCN. K. SAYES	28 PRAY FOR DCN. G. SCHUPBACH	29 PRAY FOR FR. C. SCOTT	30 PRAY FOR FR. B. SEILER	31 PRAY FOR FR. PEDRO SIERRA-POSADA	AUGUST 1 Steubenville South Rally Day for Youth Ministry Leaders 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Maryill Renewal Center FIRST SATURDAY PRAY FOR BISHOP R. MARSHALL	2 PRAY FOR FR. L. SKLAR
3 PRAY FOR FR. I. ST. ROMAIN	4 PRAY FOR DCN. P. SUNDERHAUS	5 PRAY FOR DCN. C. THIBODEAUX	6 PRAY FOR FR. J. THOMAS	7 FIRST DAY OF CLASSES FOR ALL CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE DIOCESE FIRST FRIDAY PRAY FOR FR. A. TRAVIS	8 Discalced Carmelites Monthly Meeting 9:00 a.m. Maryhill Renewal Center PRAY FOR DCN. W. TRAVIS	9 PRAY FOR FR. A. VARGHESE
Men's Silent Retreat -- Maryhill Renewal Center						
10 PRAY FOR FR. V. VEAD	11 Charlene Richard Cabrini Church trip 3:45-9:00 p.m. EMHC Workshop 6:00 pm St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR FR. G. VOLTZ	12 PRAY FOR DCN. L. WHITE	13 PRAY FOR DCN. J. WHITEHEAD	14 PRAY FOR FR. J. XAVIER	15 Altar Servers Mass 10:30 am St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, Alexandria ASSUMPTION of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (not a holy day) PRAY FOR DCN. M. YOUNG	16 PRAY FOR FR. K. ZACHARIAH
17 PRAY FOR FR. A. AELAVANTHARA	18 Lector Workshop 6:00 pm St. Joseph Catholic Center, Alexandria PRAY FOR DCN. W. ALDRIDGE	19 PRAY FOR DCN. F. ANDRADE	20 PRAY FOR FR. J. ANTONY	21 PRAY FOR DCN. E.J. BARRE	22 6th Annual Women's Day Retreat 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Sts. Francis and Anne Church, Kolin PRAY FOR FR. M. BONNER	23 PRAY FOR FR. S. BRANDOW
24 PRAY FOR FR. D. BRAQUET	25 PRAY FOR FR. J. BROCATO	26 PRAY FOR FR. J. BURCH	27 PRAY FOR MSGR. S. CHEMINO	28 PRAY FOR DCN. R. CHRISTOPHER	29 Catechist Enrichment Day TBA PRAY FOR FR. J. CUNNINGHAM	30 PRAY FOR FR. W. DECOSTE



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT ST. ANTHONY, BUNKIE. Deacon Gabe Dowden brought the VBS kids to the Mother Bettini Thrift Center, two blocks from St. Anthony of Padua Church. The thrift center is run by the Catholic Daughters of America Court #968. St. Anthony's VBS was held from July 6-9.



ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL 8TH GRADE CROSSOVER. On Monday, May 18, the 8th grade class of St. Joseph School celebrated a Crossover Ceremony into high school. The ceremony took place at Mater Dolorosa Church, Plaquemine.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA CHURCH, BUNKIE. This year's theme was "The Mass Comes Alive." Kids ages 5 to 11 attended.



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IN WINNFIELD. Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Winnfield celebrated Bible School from June 9-11. The theme this year was "Fishing With Jesus."



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AT SACRED HEART, MOREAUVILLE. From July 12-16, it was "Rainforest Falls-Exploring the Nature of God!" at Sacred Heart Church in Moreaville. Approximately 80 kids in grades PK3 - 5th attended. Picture with the kids are pastors, Fr. Brian Seiler and Fr. Abraham Varghese.

School starts Friday August 7

The first day of classes for all Diocese of Alexandria Schools is Friday, Aug. 7. To see more dates for the 2026-2027 school year plus school breakfast and lunch menus, visit www.diocesealex.org/events/category/school/



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

All retreats are held at Maryhill Renewal Center.
Contact each host to register.

See more future dates:
<https://www.diocesealex.org/events/category/acts-retreats/>