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Nationally renowned priest and podcaster Father Mike Schmitz spoke to 1,000 youth and young adults from seven states on Jan. 17 encouraging them to always seek the Lord in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is God's Love for Us

by Kim Roberts

From the moment he stepped onto the altar at St. Catherine of Siena in Metairie, Father Mike Schmitz, priest, podcaster and author, held the attention of the 1,000 youth, young adults and seminarians representing seven states gathered to hear him speak during a special morning of Eucharistic Adoration and confession.

Father Mike is a popular and nationally renowned speaker who serves as the Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, Minn. He is known for his videos "The Bible in a Year" with Ascension Press and podcasts on the Hallow App. Joining Father Mike at St. Catherine were Archbishop Gregory Aymond, Coadjutor Archbishop James Checchio, Archbishop-emeritus Alfred Hughes and 17 priests who heard hundreds of confessions throughout the morning. The free event, which "sold out" in two days, was also livestreamed.

Prior to taking the altar, Father Mike said he was super grateful to be speaking to young adults and college students in the New Orleans area.

"I am often asked if I had a chance to impart a main message to this age group what would it be?" he said. "I am lucky to have that chance today. The message I will focus on is the heart and love of God and the heart of the Eucharist and how important both are in their lives. My talk will lead into adoration and confession so they can spend time with the Lord and get to be healed by him. I'm really looking forward to this morning and sharing this message with these young people."

Father Mike's message of the day encouraged young people to find intimacy and closeness with Jesus through the Eucharist. He reminded them that God knows every person's name and their hearts, telling them the Eucharist is real and alive for everyone. Filled with emotion and zeal, he shared with those gathered the message that God is love – he doesn't have a body, so Jesus came to Earth as his way to physically become one of us.

(see **FR. MIKE** p. 8)

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"Remember You are Dust and to Dust You Shall Return"

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18

Staff Report

While most of New Orleans is gearing up for Mardi Gras, let us pause and remember the feasting is meant to lead to fasting!

Ash Wednesday is the first day of the liturgical season of Lent. The date changes year to year but it is always six and half weeks before Easter.

Ash Wednesday dates back to the 11th century. Yet the tradition of receiving ashes has even earlier roots to the ancient Hebrew custom of clothing oneself in sackcloth and dusting oneself with ashes as a sign of penance.

There are many instances of this repentant act in the Old Testament, such as Job 16:15, *"I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and have laid my strength in the dust."* The act is also depicted in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14). In the early Christian Church, there was public penance for people who had sinned including wearing ashes and sackcloth. As the Church grew and evolved, this practice lessened, but this long tradition of externally recognizing ourselves as sinners seeking renewal with God ultimately transformed into what we now know as Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

As the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday reminds us of Jesus going into the desert to prepare for his public ministry. This was his time of preparation through prayer and fasting, and we are called to pray, fast and do good works during Lent as we prepare for the celebration of Christ's Resurrection at Easter.

It is typical to receive ashes on your forehead in the Sign of the Cross. The priest will make the Sign of the Cross and say one of two things:

- "Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."
- "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

These ashes symbolize our mortality. They are a physical reminder that our bodies will decay, but our souls will live on in eternal life.

There are only two obligatory days of fasting and abstinence in the Catholic Church and Ash Wednesday is one of them. The other is Good Friday at the end of Lent. The Catholic Church requires those from age 18 to 59 to fast on Ash Wednesday. The obligation to abstain from meat applies to those 14 and older.

Observe Ash Wednesday by:

- Going to Mass and receiving ashes.
- Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.
- Fasting and abstaining from meat.
- Choosing simple meals.
- Selecting and beginning your chosen Lenten disciplines of prayer and sacrifice.

Find resources to prepare for and observe the Lenten season online at https://nolacatholic.org/lent.

Did you know?

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are the ashes from burning palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration?

Marching for Life and Human Dignity





Photo Credits: Andrew Moncada

Archbishop Gregory Aymond joined over 400 pilgrims, mostly teens from local Catholic parishes and high schools, for the 2026 March for Life in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 23.

The annual March for Life pilgrimage is coordinated by the CYO/Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office and features opportunities for pilgrims to explore the nation's capital, participate in daily Ministry Nights and experience Mass with the archbishop. Read more about the experience and see more photos on pages 12 and 13 of this edition.

The mission of the National March for Life is to promote the beauty and dignity of every human life by working to end abortion—uniting, educating and mobilizing pro-life people in the public square.

A Prayerful Witness for All God's Babies



Photo Credit: Sarah McDonald

A small but faithful group gathered to pray for the unborn and the dignity of life on Jan. 26. Despite the arctic air and freezing temperatures, the Monday Night Disciples came together to pray with Coadjutor Archbishop James Checchio at the All God's Babies tomb in the Holy Innocents Prayer Garden in St. Patrick Cemetery No. 1, New Orleans. The annual Memorial for the Unborn is traditionally held the Monday following the March for Life, but with the weather conditions causing archdiocesan-wide school closures, it was announced the full prayer service would be rescheduled in order for Catholic school students to attend.

The Monday Night Disciples were founded 40 years ago by Danny Abramowicz. In addition to their weekly prayer meetings, the Monday Night Disciples funded the construction of the All God's Babies tomb and provides caskets for families to inter infants lost to miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. Their workshop is located on the campus of Our Lady of Divine Providence Parish in Metairie. Learn more about their ministry at https://www.mondaynightdisciples.org/.

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Bringing Unity and Awareness Through Prayer and Art

by Kim Roberts

With the recent installation of a new statue of Saint Josephine Bakhita on the altar, St. Joan of Arc Church in LaPlace is planning a series of celebrations focused on bringing attention not just to the life of the saint, but also to the issue of human trafficking as part of the parish's efforts to reinvigorate their Right to Life ministry. Saint Josephine Bakhita is the Patron Saint of Human Trafficking and the victims and survivors of human trafficking.

"I believe this is the only statue of Saint Bakhita in the archdiocese," said Father Jose Lavastida, St. Joan of Arc pastor. "The five-foot-tall statue is located to the left of the main altar next to a statue of Saint Joseph and is receiving plenty of positive feedback from parishioners."

The first celebration will be on the eve of her feast day, Saturday, Feb. 7, and will begin with 4:30 p.m. Mass followed by Vespers, a reflection from Father Daniel Okafor, pastor of St. Jane de Chantal Parish in Abita Springs, and a social for the community.

"The reason for the celebration is because our parish Right to Life Ministry had been dormant for a while, and it is being reestablished with quarterly activities related to pro-life themes along with monthly Mass intentions," Father Lavastida added. "February is the first month and the intention for the month is for the victims of human trafficking. Since Saint Bakhita is the patroness for those fighting against this evil, and we just installed the statue, it was perfect timing."

He added the parish has reached out to parishioners and those at the deanery and archdiocesan level to invite people to pray with them during Mass and Vespers under the protection and intercession of Saint Josephine Bakhita on Feb. 7 and throughout the month.

"I think it is going to be a beautiful Mass and those attending are going to see something they are not used to viewing," said Father Lavastida. "It is going to be prayerful in an atmosphere where spirits are raised and hearts moved and everyone praying together for one intention. I hope that people leave here that evening knowing more about this important saint and are moved when they see the statue."

According to parish secretary Pamela Meariman, long-time parishioner Nyler Williams wanted to bring in a statue of a saint that recognizes and embraces the parishes African American community. "The response has been overwhelming, and the statue is just beautiful," she said.

"I have been coordinating the social for the evening and putting together pamphlets about Saint Bakhita to get her story out there and help get the pro-life ministry up and running again," Meariman said. "We hope to bring unity to the community along with fostering support and camaraderie across the parish and archdiocese."

The statue of Saint Josephine Bakhita along with a statue of Saint Margaret were originally commissioned by former St. of Joan of Arc pastor Father David Ducote who worked with the Fiat Studio in Port St. Lucie, Florida. The process began in Dec. 2024 and the final products where delivered to the parish in Oct. 2025.

Brent Torres, St. Joan of Arc director of music and technical facilitator, said that the choirs will be singing gospel-style music chosen to coordinate with the Mass and Vespers theme. "Before I retired as a federal supervising officer for sex offender cases, I was in contact with human trafficking victims," he said. "I hope us having this service can help victims see they have a saint they can turn to and pray to find solace and healing. I feel a strong connection to this evening and would like to see some peace brought to victims of this continuing horrific crime and suffering that these people endure."

Richard Cherie, the late Bishop Cherie's brother, is providing the music ministry for the special occasion and his Star of the Sea singers will be joining him. "We are planning to provide music that corresponds with the readings for that weekend," he said. "I am looking forward to contributing to this Mass and Vespers as it is important that we make people aware human trafficking is happening here in our own backyards."



Photo Credit: St. Joan of Arc Church

The new statue of St. Josephine Bakhita at St. Joan of Arc in LaPlace was installed in January. Patron Saint of Human Trafficking Victims, her memorial is celebrated Feb. 8.

In addition to the Feb. 7 activities, St. Joan of Arc will host a Spiritual Rosary on Feb. 21 at 5:30 p.m., following 4:30 p.m. Mass to pray for all victims, survivors and perpetrators of human trafficking.





Image may be viewed in the *Silver Chapel* at Mule's Religious Books & Gifts 2627 David Dr., Metairie, LA 70003

Medjugorje Message

of January 25, 2026

"Dear children, Today, I am calling you to be prayer and a blessing for all those who have not come to know God's love. Little children, be different from others and be positive people of prayer and love towards God, that with your lives, you may be a sign of God's love to others. I bless you with my motherly blessing and intercede for each of you before my Son Jesus. Thank you for having responded to my call."

(With ecclesiastical approval)


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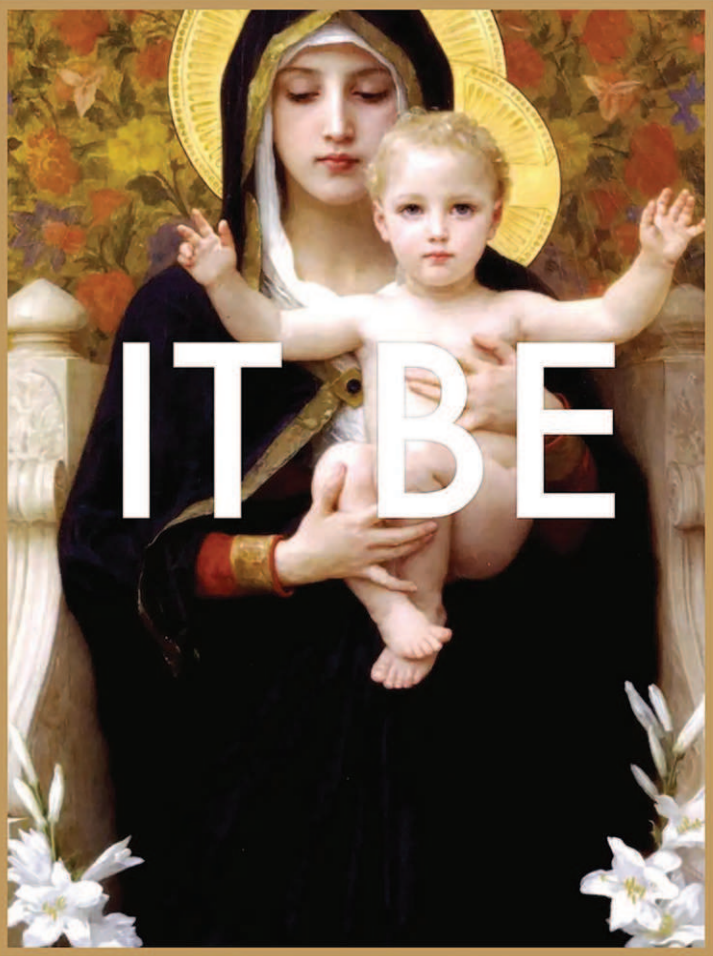
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Let It Be Done: 2026 NOLACatholic Men's Conference

by Chris O'Neill, M.T.S.
Office of Marriage and Family Life

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! - Psalm 133:1

Each year, men from across the region gather for the Archdiocese of New Orleans Men's Conference.This year's Conference will be held on Feb. 28 from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Dominic Church in New Orleans. This year's theme, "Let It Be Done," takes its cue from Mary's "yes" to the Angel Gabriel.

Her response is a willing embrace of a great and far reaching personal responsibility. We say in the Memorare Prayer that "never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided." Her maximal availability to the will of God takes shape in her willingness to accept maximum responsibility wherever she might be needed. From the whispered prayer of the innocent child to the groaning of entire nations, Mary's love knows no bounds. She intercedes whenever and wherever she can help.

The same is said of every Christian worthy of the name. Truly making ourselves available to the will of God opens the path to the greatest adventure of our lives. We should expect to be called to a life of greatest personal responsibility that will require the exercise of every gift God has given us. Making Mary's "yes" our own is the key to every Christian vocation.

That is what the Men's Conference is meant to be about. It is the one occasion a year where we gather the men of our local church to encourage them on whatever adventure God is calling them to. Whatever is happening in our life, no matter how seemingly small, plays an essential part of a larger story of God's work in this world. It is a time for us to be reminded of the profound dignity we have as Christians, to consider anew our particular vocations as men in New Orleans, and perhaps to discover some new adventure that God might be inviting us to. The food is always good and the speakers this year are particularly amazing, but the two greatest highlights of every Men's Conference are the Sacramental graces poured out in confession, Adoration and the Mass, on the one hand, and the voices of perhaps 1,000 men praying "thy will be done" together on the other. You'll want to be there. And we want you there with us too!

The day will begin with a light breakfast, coffee and fellowship as the men arrive and check-in. The first presentations will begin at 9 a.m. Speakers include Dr. Tom Neal, former academic dean and professor of spiritual theology at Notre Dame Seminary; bestselling author and EWTN Radio host Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers; and the men of the Point Man Podcast: Chris Price, Sam Blair, Clint Capdepon and Jason Angelette.

Jason will also be the guide through the day along with the with the talented musicians of the Vigil Project.

To register for the Men's Conference, go to NolaCatholicMen.org and click on "Register". The cost is $70 per person. Many parishes and men's groups have signed up for group discount codes, so check with your parish or local men's group and consider going with some friends. It lowers the cost and makes the experience that much better! If you need a coupon code for your group, click on the "group discount" button on the website and fill out the form. There is a no questions asked "Pay What You Want" option as well. With it you can attend for free, or donate as much or as little as makes sense for your situation. Money is important to keep the conference going, but we would rather have you along than have your money. Really, we want you there!

Check the website for more information and if you have any questions, reach out to the Office of Marriage and Family Life at mfl@archno.org.

It is truly good for brothers to dwell in unity!

Sometimes we need to be reminded of that reality – not just to know it in our minds, but to experience in time and place as a reality. See you at the Conference!

"Ustedes son la sal de la tierra…ustedes son la luz del mundo"



Fr. Manuel
SOLARZANO, O.P.

Queridos hermanos: La Palabra de Dios que hoy escuchamos nos interpela de manera directa y concreta. Jesús no nos habla de ideas abstractas ni de una fe encerrada en lo privado, sino de una fe que se hace visible, que ilumina y transforma la realidad. Ser discípulos suyos implica asumir una misión clara: ser sal de la tierra y luz del mundo.

La primera lectura, tomada del profeta Isaías, nos presenta una denuncia fuerte y, al mismo tiempo, una invitación esperanzadora. Dios no se complace en una religiosidad vacía, en ayunos o prácticas externas que no cambian el corazón ni la vida. El verdadero culto que agrada al Señor es el que se traduce en justicia, solidaridad y misericordia: "parte tu pan con el hambriento, hospeda a los pobres sin techo, viste al desnudo". Cuando la fe se vive así, entonces – dice el profeta – tu luz brillará como la aurora. La luz nace de una vida coherente, comprometida con el hermano.

El salmo responsorial retoma esta misma enseñanza desde la oración confiada del justo. Nos presenta al hombre y a la mujer que temen al Señor y viven según su voluntad: son personas rectas, compasivas y generosas. Su vida se convierte en luz en medio de las tinieblas, porque reflejan el rostro mismo de Dios. No se trata de buscar protagonismo, sino de dejar que la bondad de Dios se transparente en nuestras acciones cotidianas.

La segunda lectura, de la primera carta de san Pablo a los Corintios, nos recuerda que el anuncio del Evangelio no se apoya en la sabiduría humana ni en discursos brillantes, sino en la fuerza de Dios. Pablo reconoce su fragilidad y afirma que lo esencial es que la fe de los creyentes se fundamente en el poder del Espíritu. Esta actitud de humildad es clave para comprender el Evangelio de hoy: la luz que damos no es nuestra, es la luz de Cristo que actúa en nosotros.

El Evangelio, según san Mateo, es el centro del mensaje de este domingo. Jesús nos dirige palabras exigentes y profundamente esperanzadoras: "Ustedes son la sal de la tierra… ustedes son la luz del mundo". No dice "deberían ser", sino "son". Es una identidad que nace del encuentro con Él. La sal da sabor y conserva; la luz orienta, ilumina y vence la oscuridad. Un cristiano que no transforma la realidad corre el riesgo de volverse insípido o de esconder la luz que ha recibido.

(see SOLAZANO p. 15)

FR. MIKE

"The Eucharist is his body and blood. He became one of us so we could know that God is real and not illusive," said Father Mike. "The Eucharist is God's love for us. If you don't want the Eucharist, you don't want Jesus."

His relatable, down-home mix of humor and Scripture references kept the audience's attention from the beginning of his 60-minute talk to the end. He wove personal antidotes from his life with Gospel stories throughout his message about God wanting attendees to embrace his love in their daily lives.

"God wants a relationship with all of us," he said. "Jesus said, 'This is my body given for you' and the Eucharist is God's love for me. It's not just a ritual or a thing we do to remember Jesus; it's not a symbol. It's his flesh given for the life of the world."

He explained in the Bible Jesus said that unless you eat his flesh you will not have life everlasting. Jesus clarifies that the Eucharist is really him, his flesh.

"Jesus asked the disciples, the original boy band, if they wanted to walk away from him after he explained the Eucharist," said Father Mike. "He was willing to risk the salvation of the entire human race in that moment, that's how important the Eucharist is."

He added, in Jesus God is present, and the Eucharist is his essence. It is holiness and goodness. "The point of this is so that we can become closer to him," he said.

"We are grateful St. Catherine had this opportunity, along with Regnum Christi and Louisiana Right to Life to have Father Mike here today," said James Behan, associate director of the young adult ministry for the Archdiocese of New Orleans. "It made sense for us to partner with them, and it is a real gift to be able to have a place for young adults to gather and be encouraged by someone like Father Mike who reaches us through social media with his homilies providing a closeness to God. Being able to see him in person and develop a real-time relationship is a gift."

"Driving here today I prayed the Holy Spirit would use him to bring the good news to those in attendance and encourage all of us in the archdiocese in a special way," he added. "In the 10 years that Father Mike has had his You Tube channel I think young people have become aware of him and his role as a college youth minister has grown his heart for service to young adults. He is attuned to the messages and stories that speak to this age group. This is going to be a special day for everyone."

For Archbishop Hannan High School junior, Kate Clapper, the morning brought her closer to God.

"I'm here because I'm on fire with my love for God," she said. "I think he's (Father Mike) really cool, charismatic and charming for a priest and he is a beacon of hope for everything that is wrong with the world. That is why people are drawn to him, because he is an example of what it means to be a good, holy person spreading the good news."

The event was hosted and coordinated by St. Catherine of Siena Parish and co-sponsored by Louisiana Right to Life, Regnum Christi and the Archdiocese of New Orleans CYO/Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office.

To watch Father Mike's talk, visit St. Catherine of Siena's YouTube page at: https://www.youtube.com/live/5-dh_tbC4TE?si=5EqJxt6bBfeC71ye

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Top left and bottom right: Youth and young adults from the Archdiocese of New Orleans and beyond pray during Eucharistic Adoration. During this time, music reflection was provided by Greg and Lizzie Boudreaux of The Vigil Project and 17 priests as well as Archbishop Aymond, Coadjutor Archbishop Checchio and Archbishop -emeritus Alfred Hughes heard hundreds of confessions from the teens and young adults gathered for the morning. Above right: Coadjutor Archbishop James Checchio presides over Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. Bottom left: Father Mike delivers his presentation.

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The retreat begins with a virtual opening session on Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. and concludes with a closing session on March 26 at 7 p.m. Throughout the retreat, participants will be invited into daily personal prayer using Scripture and reflective practices appropriate for Lent.

Each retreatant may choose one of two accompaniment options for the duration of the retreat:

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Both options are designed to foster spiritual growth, discernment and deeper connection with God and community. This retreat is well suited for those seeking a more intentional Lenten journey while balancing work, family and other commitments.

To learn more or to register for this Virtual Lenten Directed Retreat visit https://nolacatholic.org/lenten-retreat.

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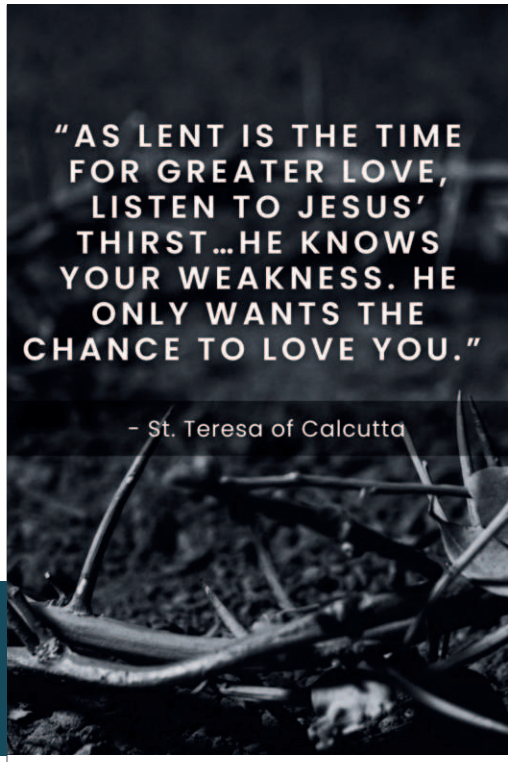

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   b. Submit three ***current*** letters of recommendation
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2. Submit the above and any additional supporting materials to:

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LIGHT



"You are the light
of the world."

MATTHEW 5:14A

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

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Photo Credit: Youth and Young Adult Ministry


Photo Credit: Youth and Young Adult Ministry



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Photo Credit: Andrew Moncada


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Contact Liz at 504-858-1813 • lzbthreis@yahoo.com

March for Life 2026: Life is a Gift



Photo Credit: Andrew Moncada

"The fight to end abortion is serious business, no doubt about it. But we go about that business with peace, confidence and the overspilling joy that is on display here today because all of this is rooted in our deep conviction that life is a gift."

-Jennie Bradley Lighter
March for Life President



Photo Credit: Youth and Young Adult Ministry

"You and I are here because we want to be voices for life!"

-Archbishop Gregory Aymond



Photo Credit: Andrew Moncada

- - Pope Leo XIV
November 15, 2025

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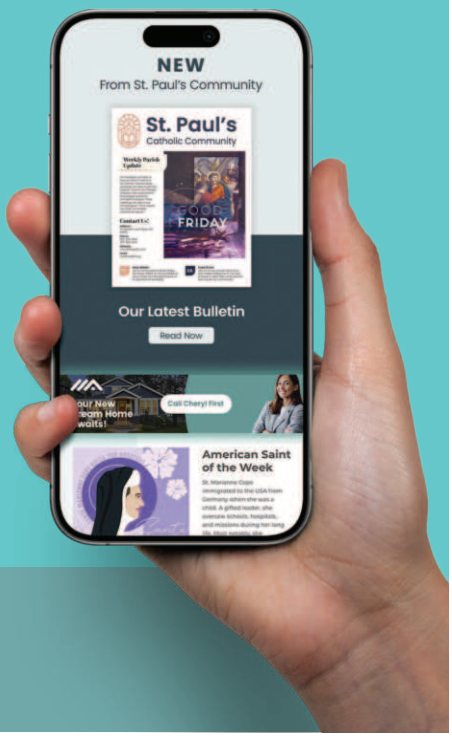

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Living Liturgically in February

Saint Scholastica
Feast Day: February 10

When you become familiar with the life of Saint Scholastica, her unwavering faith and her deep love for God and her brother, Saint Benedict, you come to understand why she is a remarkable example for all Catholics, especially young Catholic women, to honor and emulate.

Born in Nursia, Italy, around the year 480, Saint Scholastica is best known for her close relationship with her twin brother, Saint Benedict, who is considered the father of Western monasticism. Raised in a Christian family, the siblings were inseparable throughout their childhood. However, as they grew older, they chose different paths. Benedict became a monk and founded the famous Monte Cassino monastery. Scholastica embraced the monastic life as well joining a convent located nearby. Despite no longer being physically together, the twins' spiritual connection remained strong.

Scholastica's life teaches us the importance of nurturing one's spiritual journey. Her deep commitment to the monastic life exemplifies how individuals can find their own paths to God. By dedicating herself to prayer and contemplation, Scholastica became an inspiration for those seeking to deepen their faith and grow closer to the Divine.

Saint Scholastica also stands as an advocate for women in the Church. As the founder of a Benedictine convent, she demonstrated that women could lead a life of dedication and prayer within the monastic tradition. Her legacy endures in the many women who have followed her example and become devout religious women, contributing significantly to the Church's spiritual growth and service to society.

Saint Scholastica's life continues to inspire Catholics, reminding us of the profound impact one person can have on the faith and devotion of many. She is the Patron Saint of Benedictine nuns, education and convulsive children and her symbols are rain and a flying dove.

Celebrate her feast day by:

- Attending Mass with the St. Scholastica Academy (SSA) community in Covington, which usually holds a special Mass at St. Peter Church.
- Engage in Lectio Divina or pray the Liturgy of the Hours, focusing on her example of deep faith, as suggested by Benedictine communities.
- Inspired by her love for the poor, serve the weak, sick, or marginalized in your community.
- If you have siblings, pray for them and reach out to them to strengthen family bonds.

Saint Valentine's Day
Feast Day: February 14

Saint Valentine's Day, known secularly simply as Valentine's Day has quite a storied history. As we celebrate this day with expressions of love and appreciation for those we care most deeply about, here are a few quick "Catholic" facts about Saint Valentine's Day for your information and old-fashioned water-bottle filler station discussion:

1.There are at least three Saint Valentines martyred for practicing their Christian faith.

2. The Saint Valentine commemorated annually on Feb. 14 was a Catholic bishop who was martyred on Feb. 14 in 278 A.D. for his devotion to the faith during intense periods of persecution and for continuing to perform Christian marriages, which is why the day is associated with love.

3. Saint Valentine's memorial was removed from the Liturgical Calendar in 1969 during the Second Vatican Council along with several other saints, but he remains the patron saint of Terni, Italy.

4. Feb. 14 is now recognized as the Memorial of Saints Cyril and Methodius, who proclaimed the Gospel to the Slavic people. during the 9th century. This change was part of an effort by the Second Vatican Council to make the liturgical calendar more universal.

Celebrate Saint Valentine's Day this year by:

- Learning more about the liturgical calendar and the ways it has been adapted to meet the needs of the times throughout history.
- Showing charity and gratitude towards the people who mean the most to you.
- Praying for all married couples and for the sanctity of marriage.

If married, consider celebrating by:

- Making plans to share a special date or even a moment in an expression of your love for one another.
- Recognize Saint Valentine's commitment to the Sacrament of Matrimony by renewing your wedding vows, and/or
- Consider writing a card or note to the priests who celebrated the Nuptial Mass expressing your gratitude for his help as you began your Vocation.



SOLARZANO

Jesús nos advierte que la luz no se enciende para ocultarla, sino para que alumbre a todos. Pero también nos aclara el sentido profundo de nuestras buenas obras: no buscan nuestra gloria, sino que los demás glorifiquen al Padre que está en el cielo. La fe auténtica se manifiesta en obras concretas de amor, justicia y servicio. Así, la vida del discípulo se convierte en un signo que conduce a Dios.

La Palabra de hoy nos invita a revisar nuestra manera de vivir la fe. Ser cristianos no es solo creer, sino vivir de tal modo que otros puedan descubrir a Dios a través de nosotros. Cuando la fe se hace vida, la luz brilla y la sal cumple su misión.

- De qué manera concreta soy sal y luz en mi familia, comunidad o trabajo?
- Mi fe se queda en lo privado o se traduce en gestos de justicia y misericordia?
- Busco dar gloria a Dios con mis obras o busco mi propio reconocimiento?
- Qué aspectos de mi vida necesitan más coherencia con el Evangelio?

Hermanos y hermanas, pidamos al Señor la gracia de una fe viva y comprometida. Que no escondamos la luz que Él ha puesto en nuestro corazón y que nuestra vida, sencilla y fiel, sea un reflejo del amor de Dios en medio del mundo. Vivamos como verdaderos discípulos, sal que da sabor y luz que ilumina, para la gloria del Padre y el bien de nuestros hermanos. Amén.

5° Domingo del Tiempo Ordinario
Mateo 5: 13-16
Febrero 08, 2026



Forum and Resource Fair on Addiction Set for March 5

Staff Report

On March 5 the Substance Addiction Ministry (SAM) at St. Angela Merici Church is hosting a Community Forum and Resource Fair on Addiction in the School Gym, 2101 Pomona St., Metairie.

This annual event is a once-a-year opportunity to acquire information and get answers to questions about addiction, discover the various resources that are available in this area, investigate counseling opportunities, talk to an interventionist, or have a conversation with a mental health professional; all in one place, under one roof.

This event if for those who suffer from an addiction, as well as for the affected family members, giving everyone an opportunity to hear a doctor of addiction medicine educate attendees about this disease, how it affects the brain, how it is treated and the effect it has on the whole family and what we can do to begin recovery.

The evening will begin with doors opening at 5:30p.m. Dan Lynch, DO, a doctor of addiction medicine, will offer his presentation, "Roads to Recovery" beginning at 6 p.m.



Dr. Dan Lynch, DO

Dr. Lynch practices addiction medicine at Ochsner Health and specializes in outpatient addiction services, providing medication-based treatments to adults (18+ years old), addressing a variety of substance use disorders, including opioid use disorder, alcohol use disorder and physical dependency due to long term opioid therapy.

The presentation will be followed by a Q&A session with Dr. Lynch in an open mic. setting.

Food and refreshments will be provided by NOLA Detox and Copelands while those attending can visit with over 30 separate resources tables. Those attending will have an opportunity to shake a hand, meet a face, get a brochure or business card from multiple Treatment Centers, Detox treatment facilities, Interventionists, Mental Health facilities, Sober Living Houses, Counselors, Therapists, AA, NA, Alanon, Naranon, Catholic in Recovery, Substance Addiction Ministry (SAM), Ignatian Spirituality Project, Crisis Response Teams and many more resources. Door prizes will be drawn as well.

The Forum is FREE and open to the public and to people of all faiths. Those attending will be able to go home with life-saving information and the knowledge that you are not alone and there is help, hope, support and resources you can count on locally.

2026 COMMUNITY FORUM AND RESOURCE FAIR ON ADDICTION AGENDA

5:15 p.m. – Vendors arrive and set up
5:30 p.m. – Doors open to the public
6 p.m. – Opening prayer and comments
6:10 p.m. – Dr. Dan Lynch presentation
7 p.m. – Question and Answers (Open Mic)
7:20 p.m. – Food and refreshments available & Resource Fair Meet & Greet vendors
8:45 – 9 p.m. – Evening concludes

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Flourishing Sisterhood: Do Not Judge, Lest Ye Be Judged

Sister Thuy Loan
NGUYEN, FMSR

"*Do not judge, so that you will not be judged*" (Matthew 7:1).

I was an aspirant when this Bible passage took on a powerful, personal meaning for me. As a young 16 year old aspirant, I relished any chance to step beyond the convent walls. So when the sisters took us to the annual Charismatic Renewal conference, I was not thinking about sitting and listening to guest speakers, but looking forward to going out for a change, to escape the daily routine and avoid chores for the weekend.

The conference took place in a vast building with grand halls and walkways, all of which offered a view through large glass doors to the world outside. Coincidentally, this particular year, a business conference was being held at the same time. The attendees, dressed in suits, ties and carrying briefcases, were an obvious contrast to us Charismatic Renewal participants, who were easily recognized by our red conference bags.

During lunch, the hallway buzzed with chatter as people scattered to eat wherever they could find space. Amid the noise, I looked up from my meal and noticed a man outside trying to get into the building. He was dressed in jeans, a shirt buttoned halfway, boots and had long hair and a beard. He didn't seem to fit in with either group. I watched him struggle, moving from door to door, trying each one in vain. His attempts grew more desperate with every failed pull. As he finally entered the building, another man approached him, offering guidance. As I looked around, it seemed that no one else had noticed his struggle. Was I the only one? I felt a hesitation to act, maybe out of fear, maybe uncertainty, maybe it was just a slow reaction to what was happening before me. I could have opened the door, but I didn't. I felt a sense of relief when he finally got inside. I justified it to myself, thinking he didn't belong there – he wasn't like us, after all. That was my excuse.

After lunch, we returned to the main conference room for the next part of the program, a Passion Play. As the play progressed, Jesus appeared, carrying his cross. In that moment, I immediately recognized him. It was the same man I had seen earlier outside, with the long hair, beard, half-buttoned shirt and boots.

THAT MAN WAS JESUS.

My heart stopped. I was stunned by the realization! How often has Jesus come into my life in unexpected forms, and I failed to see him? How many times have I judged others hastily, without knowing the full story, or made assumptions based on appearances, only to regret it later?

Our congregation's spirituality is charity and I failed to exemplify Christ's love for my neighbor that day. Being a naïve 16 year old at the time doesn't excuse my judgment of the man nor my lack of action.

That day, I was reminded of the words from Matthew 25:40, *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."* How many times had I failed to see Christ in the "least" around me? How many times have I looked past people or situations because they didn't meet my expectations, didn't fit my view of "who belongs"?

Jesus comes to us in many forms – often in ways we don't expect. I can't say that I always recognize him right away, especially in the midst of daily struggles and distractions. But as I reflect on my day, I begin to see his presence – gently guiding me, helping me to open the "door" of my heart to him, and to the many blessings he has in store for me.

In the end, I was left with a prayer: Lord, open my eyes and my heart. Help me see you in all things, in all people and to open the doors of my life to your grace. I learned that judging others without understanding their heart or their situation blinds me to the presence of Christ in my life. If I want to follow Christ faithfully, I must first open my heart to see him in the least of these, and to respond with love, not judgment.

Just as my 16-year-old self longed to step outside the convent walls, I now long to step beyond the walls I've built in my own heart – the walls of fear, judgment and self-protection – so that I might meet Jesus where he so often waits: in the faces and stories of those the world overlooks.

Sister Thuy Loan Nguyen is a religious sister of the congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. She shared her story as part of the "Flourishing Sisterhood" project, an initiative of the Loyola Institute for Ministry in New Orleans. To learn more about the Institute and this project, visit http://cnh.loyno.edu/lim.

You can listen to the "Flourishing Sisterhood" podcast Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. on Catholic Community Radio or your favorite podcast streaming service.





Seasons of Grace:
Faith in all Ages and Stages
Days of Prayer

- 8:30-3:00 (Mass at noon)
- $35.00 (includes coffee, muffins, & lunch)
- Register at www.neworleansretreats.com



September 17, 2025
Speak Lord, Your Servant is Listening
Mrs. Betty-Ann Hickey



October 8, 2025
Praying within our Catholic Culture
Sr. Judy Gomila, MSC





February 4, 2026
The Path to Interior Freedom
Dr. Susie Veters & Fr. Joe Krafft



March 4, 2026
All the World's a Stage
Sr. Judy Gomila, MSC



March 11, 2026
Shaped by Grace
Mrs. Betty-Ann Hickey

THE CENACLE
on the lake

A Devotion to a New Mardi Gras Tradition



Charla
MISSE
NOLACatholic Parenting

As we approach Lent, the good times begin to roll, and I have a new Mardi Gras tradition to share with you and your family: the Holy Face Devotion. It is related to a custom as old as Mardi Gras itself, but now largely forgotten.

You may know that Mardi Gras developed as a final day of preparation to begin Lent, feasting on all the rich foods typically avoided during Lent, but it is also a day for making spiritual preparations; Shrove Tuesday, as it is traditionally called, is a day to make an examen and confess sins.

The Holy Face Devotion, in particular, makes reparation for sins against the first three Commandments, all of which honor Our Lord. In approved visions, Our Lord conveyed that the prayers of the Holy Face Devotion were weapons fired directly at the demonic kingdom.Such reparations are so important that Venerable Pope Pius XII established the Feast of the Holy Face of Jesus on Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras).

Ever since learning of this devotion, I have been astounded by the number of times we hear reference to his face in sacred Scripture. Further, I have encountered many saints devoted to his Holy Face. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, for example, was so strongly devoted that when taking her vows, she took the name Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face.

This year, on Mardi Gras Day, the Feast of the Holy Face of Jesus, I encourage you to set aside time with your family to reflect on the sad outrages committed against the precious Face of Our Lord. Prayers suggested for this day are the Chaplet of the Holy Face followed by The Golden Arrow Prayer, both given by Our Lord in private revelations to Sister Marie de Saint Pierre in the 1840's.

"O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me. Glory be…
My Jesus Mercy. In honor of the sense of TOUCH of Jesus. Glory be…
Arise, O Lord! and let Thy enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee from before Thy Face (6x).
My Jesus Mercy. In honor of the sense of HEARING of Jesus. Glory be… Arise… (6x)
My Jesus Mercy. In honor of the sense of SIGHT of Jesus. Glory be… Arise… (6x)
My Jesus Mercy. In honor of the sense of SMELL of Jesus. Glory be… Arise… (6x)
My Jesus Mercy. In honor of the sense of TASTE of Jesus. Glory be… Arise (6x)
My Jesus Mercy. Let us recall to mind the public life of the Savior and let us honor all the wounds of his adorable face. Glory be… Arise…(3x)
God our protector, look on us and look on the face of Thy Christ."

"May the most holy, most sacred, most adorable, most incomprehensible and ineffable name of God be forever praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified, in heaven, on Earth and under the Earth, by all the creatures of God, and by the Sacred Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." Amen.

I pray that this devotion becomes a tradition in your home, the beginning of many fruitful Lents to come.

***Charla Misse**, a native of New Orleans, supports various charitable organizations, sits on the finance committee for St. Dominic Church and is a Boy Scouts of America den leader and religious emblems coordinator. She loves to laugh with her family, bake for her loved ones, exercise outdoors, visit the adoration chapel and pick her son up from school.*

When taking her vows, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux took the name Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face.



NOLA CATHOLIC parenting

Help Catholic Charities Help Our Community

At all Masses the weekend of Feb. 21-22 a second collection will be taken to benefit the ministry and outreach of Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans. The support of the community through this collection provides crucial funds that enable Catholic Charities to bring hope and support to those in need in our archdiocese.

Last year's collection raised over $135,000 to assist thousands of individuals and families in need. Through this generous support, Catholic Charities is able to sustain its mission to help the most vulnerable meet immediate needs and face long-term challenges.

Ways to support the Catholic Charities Second Collection:

- Give online at www.ccano.org/secondcollection
- Send a check by mail to: PO Box 58009, New Orleans, LA 70158-8009
- Give during weekend in-person and online Masses on Feb. 21 and 22, 2026

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of New Orleans

By the numbers:

- Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New Orleans serves the eight civil parishes of the Archdiocese of New Orleans: Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany and Washington.
- 293 children attended 27,067 days of school through Head Start and Early Head Start from 2023-2024.
- ACCESS Pregnancy and Referral Services distributes an average of 12,000 diapers to local families each month.
- In 2023-2024, Project SAVE helped 152 victims of abuse in Orleans Parish obtain free emergency legal representation.
- From 2023-2024, Cornerstone Builders offered services to 448 previously incarcerated men and women, 76% more than the previous year.
- English as a Second Language courses offered through CCANO Immigration and Refugee Services served 745 students in 2023-2024, totaling 19,650 hours of classroom instruction.
- In 2023-2024, 1,668 volunteers provided 61,686 hours of service, an economic value of $1,506,857.

Around the Archdiocese

Eucharistic Hour To Pray For Vocations, *Feb. 9, 6 –7 p.m., Mary, Queen of Peace Church, 1501 W. Causeway Approach, Mandeville.* Repeats every second Monday of the month until May 11. For more information, contact Juliana Cloud at (504)236-7585.

Devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus, *Feb. 17, after 6:30 p.m. Mass & Novena, St. Joseph Church & Shrine, Gretna.* (504)485-3164.

Ash Wednesday, *Feb. 18, 2026*

Seelos Day of Prayer, *Feb. 18, 10:45 a.m. Confessions, 11:30 a.m., Mass, St. Mary's Assumption Church, 923 Josephine St., New Orleans.*

Catholic Charismatic Healing Mass, *Feb. 21, 10 a.m. Center of Jesus the Lord at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church. Praise and Worship at 10 a.m, Eucharistic Celebration at 10:30 a.m. and healing prayer following Mass.* Contact Helen Owens at (504)529-1636.

Spiritual Rosary, *Feb.21, 5:30 p.m., following 4:30 p.m. Mass, St. Joan of Arc Church, LaPlace.* In honor of St. Josephine Bakhita.

Lenten Directed Retreat, *opening session, Feb. 22.* See p. 10 for more.

Lenten Evening of Reflection with Father Joshua Rodrigue, *Feb. 26, 5 p.m., National Shrine of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, 2701 State St., New Orleans.* The evening will begin with Mass at 5 p.m. with the presentation and reflection to follow.

Mass Hosted by God's Special Children, *March 1, 2 – 3 p.m., St. Francis Xavier Church, Metairie.* Repeats every first Sunday of the month.

All the World's a Stage: A Day of Prayer with Sister Judy Gomila, *March 4, 9 a.m.– 3 p.m. at The Cenacle on the Lake.* In this monologue from "As You Like It," life is compared to a stage and suggests that we are merely players who have scenes with entrances and exits. The Day of Prayer embraces the metaphor for our human and spiritual experiences: comedy, tragedy, soap opera, etc. in our common call to holiness.Visit neworleansretreats.com to learn more or to register.

Shaped by Grace: How Sacred Ritual Awakens the Restless Heart to God's Presence, presented by Betty-Ann Hickey, *March 11, 9 a.m.– 3 p.m. at The Cenacle on the Lake.* Visit neworleansretreats.com to learn more or to register.

Roads to Recovery, Community Forum and Fair about Addiction, *March 5, 6 p.m., St. Angela Merici Church, Metairie.* See p. 16 for more information.

Lenten Morning of Reflection, *March 7, Notre Dame Seminary – Schulte Auditorium, 8:30 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast; 9 a.m. Morning of Reflection.* Adult-focused morning offers an opportunity to pause, pray and prepare our hearts for Easter. Sponsored by the Office of Black Catholic Ministries. To register email bcatholics@arch-no.org

Order of St. Louis Award Ceremony, *March 8, 2:30 p.m., St. Catherine of Siena.*

Born to Run, *March 21, 7:30 a.m., Bonnabel Boat Launch, Metairie.* Join or form a team today at www.womasnewlife.com/borntorun Register: https://runsignup.com/Race/LA/Metairie/BornToRun5KNewOrleans

Dialogues des Carmélites with the New Orleans Opera, *March 24, March 26, March 28 and March 31 (times vary), Old Ursuline Convent Museum, 1100 Chartres St., New Orleans.* Based on the true story of Carmelite nuns executed during the French Revolution. Tickets: https://www.neworleansoperafestival.org/blank

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Around the Archdiocese in Pictures!



Photo Credit:Office of Black Catholic Ministries



Photo Credit:Archbishop Chapelle High School

On Jan. 19, the day the country paused to observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, hundreds of volunteers representing parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of New Orleans gathered for the annual MLK Day ON Not OFF sponsored by the archdiocesan CYO/Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office and the Office of Black Catholic Ministries. The day began with prayer before the volunteers were sent out to go make a difference for local nonprofit organizations.

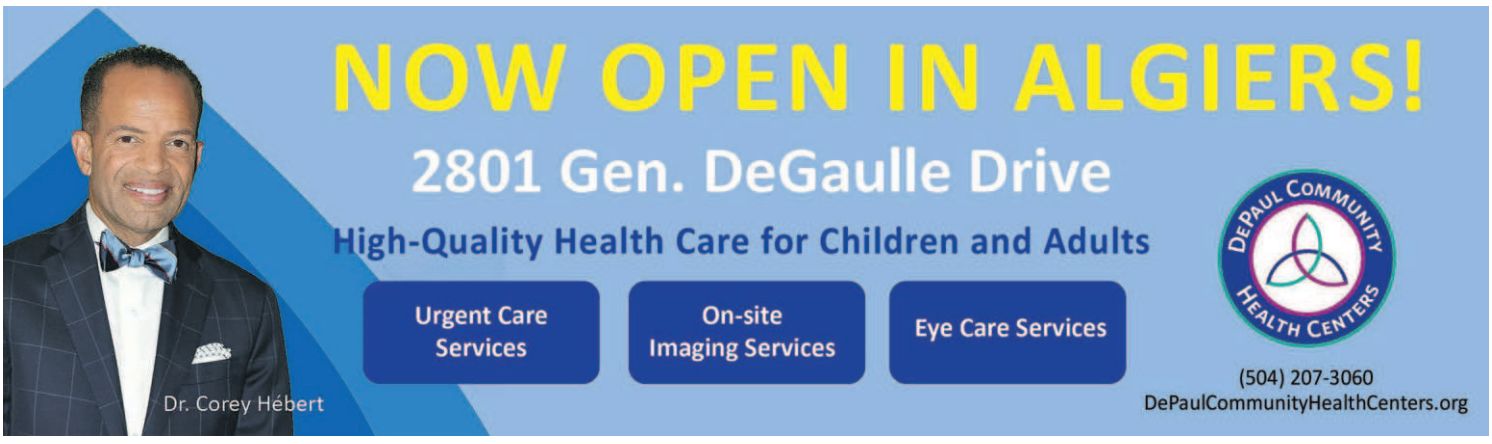


Photo Credit:Loupe Photography

On a bright and brisk Jan. 18 Sunday morning, Archbishop Aymond blessed and dedicated the new St. Catherine of Siena Parish Center. The three story, 22,000 square foot building will be a ministry hub for over 70 parish ministries and a beacon of hope reminding the community of God's presence. Pictured left to right are Ken Zito, director of the archdiocesan building office, Lawrence and Micki Chehardy, capital campaign committee chairs, Archbishop Aymond, Father Timothy Hedrick, pastor, John Hummel, Nashville Dominican Sister Anna Margaret Smith and Kyle Condon of Landis Construction.

During Mass prior to the blessings of the building, Archbishop Aymond said, "This new parish center is a concrete reminder, not just because it is made of concrete, that God wants to be involved in our daily lives. The building is designed to remind us that God is in our midst. The building is a concrete reminder that his ministry in 2026 goes on and is very vibrant."

Read the full story online at clarionherald.org.



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6:30PM-9PM	6:30PM-9PM	6:30PM-9PM

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WORSHIP LED BY:

JOHN FINCH (OCT/DEC/APR)

BRYCE SCHERER, BRIDGET ADAM, & BEACHVIEW HEIGHTS (FEB)


Photo Credit: St. Mary's Academy

To celebrate Catholic Schools Night with the New Orleans Pelicans, the St. Mary Academy Choir, under the direction of John Walker, performed the National Anthem prior to the start of the Pelicans versus Detroit Pistons basketball game on Jan. 21. The St. Mary's Academy choir features the talents of students in 6th-12th grade.


Photo Credit: Mount Carmel Academy

Now in its fifth year, the Mount Carmel Academy art students have once again transformed the Sister's Residence into a house float for Carnival season. The students' art celebrates the school's 100 years in Lakeview and features paper mache flowers, butterflies, women saints riding a streetcar and a quote from Saint Edith Stein to tie it all together.

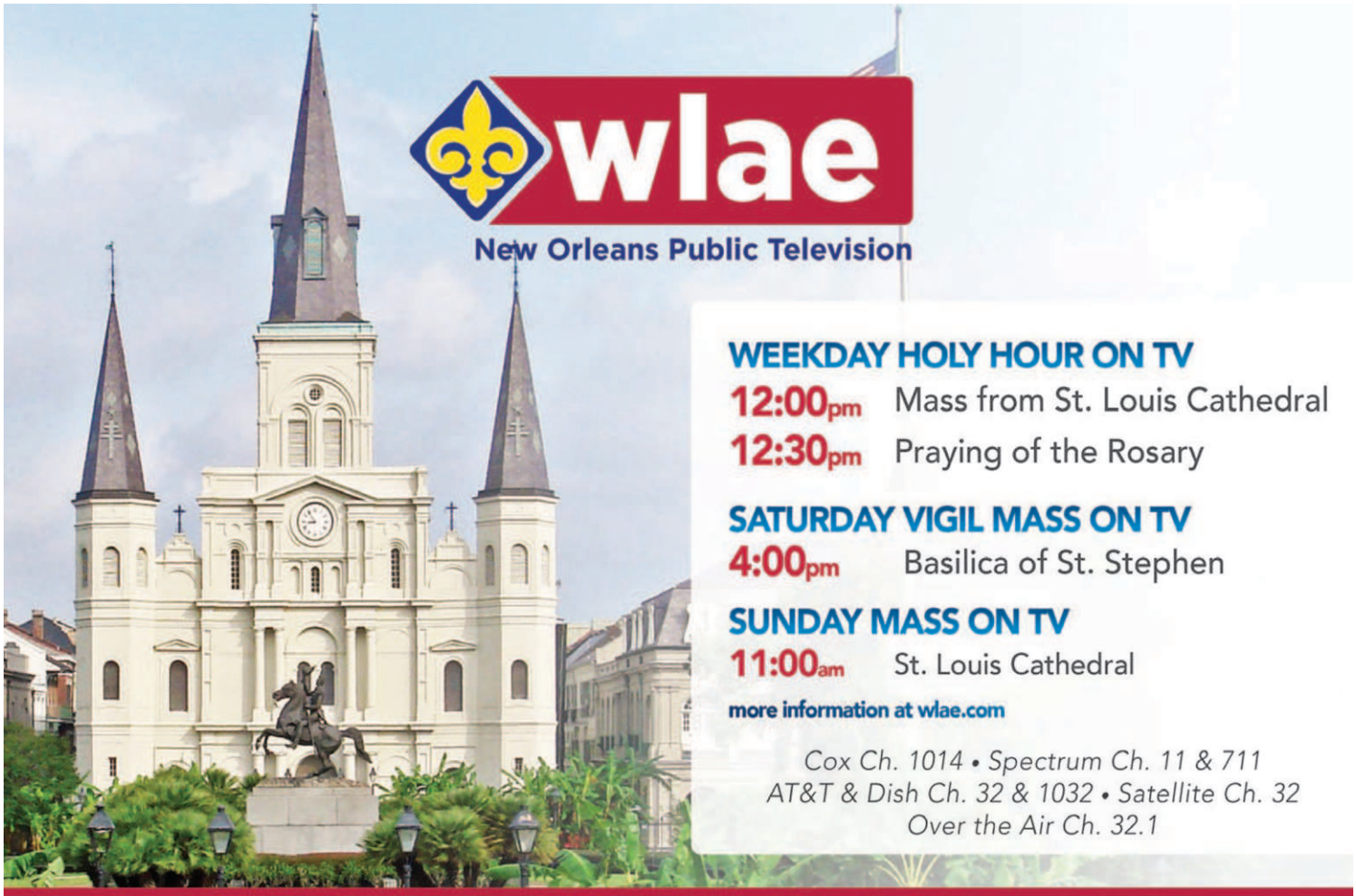

Photo Credit: St. Elizabeth's Guild

St. Elizabeth's Guild recently installed the 2026 officers. Pictured standing left to right: Nancy Colomb; Mickey Rodriguez; Karen Pilie; Margaret Murphy; Anne Bailey Theard; Cindy Paulin; and Lisa Baynham. Seated: Julie Vanderbrook and Erin Stahnke.


Photo Credit: Louisiana Right to Life

On Jan. 16, Archbishop Aymond and Archbishop Checchio attended the annual Proudly Pro-life Gala sponsored by Louisiana Right to Life. The keynote speaker was Father Mike Schmitz and featured representatives of the choirs of local Catholic high schools.

Our newspaper wouldn't be the same **without you!**



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12:30pm Praying of the Rosary

SATURDAY VIGIL MASS ON TV

4:00pm Basilica of St. Stephen

SUNDAY MASS ON TV

11:00am St. Louis Cathedral

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