The Catholic Week

Official Publication of the Archdiocese of Mobile

Volume 92, Number 10 May 15, 2026

'JUST NORMAL GUYS'

Relatable priests, seminarians helped inspire vocations leading to ordinations

By ROB HERBST
The Catholic Week

MOBILE — Long before Deacon Gaten Armstrong was preparing for priesthood, two seminarians assigned to Montgomery parishes spent a summer beating him in basketball while talking trash and also talking discernment.

"It was a moment that broke down barriers for me and helped me see seminarians and priests as just normal guys," Deacon Armstrong recalled of his encounters with now-Frs. Connor and Peyton Plessala.

Now Deacon Armstrong, 29, is preparing for Ordination Mass at 10 a.m. May 30 at the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, where Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso will ordain him to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Mobile.

Seminarian Edward Charnock will also be ordained a transitional deacon for the archdiocese and, God-willing, be ordained to the priesthood next year. Bro. Michael Mong'are Ooga, FMH will also be ordained to the diaconate for the Franciscan Missionaries



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Gelineau/For The Catholic Week

Edward Charnock (left) will be ordained a transitional deacon and Deacon Gaten Armstrong will be ordained a priest on May 30.

See ORDINATIONS, Page 15

Ordinations of Deacon Gaten Armstrong, Edward Charnock and Bro. Michael Mong'are Ooga, FMH
10 a.m. Saturday, May 30 ■ Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile ■ **Livestream: Facebook.com/mobilearchdiocese**



McGill-Toolen Catholic High School President Fr. Bry Shields smiles as family members stand behind him during a celebration recognizing his decades of service to the high school.

Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Gelineau/ For The Catholic Week

MCGILL-TOOLEN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Fr. Shields honored for decades of service

By ROB HERBST
The Catholic Week

Longtime McGill-Toolen Catholic High School President Fr. Bry Shields was honored May 1 with a schoolwide Mass and celebration in the school gymnasium recognizing 44 years of service to the McGill-Toolen community, including more than 36 years as president.

Students, faculty, alumni, clergy and friends gathered to celebrate Fr. Shields' and his decades of leadership at McGill-Toolen.

Fr. Shields, who announced in October that he will retire as president at the end of the school year while remaining

See FR. SHIELDS, Page 20



Pope Leo XIV's General Audience

Editor's Note: We are pleased to share with our readers a summary of one of Pope Leo XIV's general audiences. We pray his words will help deepen your faith and strengthen your walk with the Lord.

■■■

Courtesy of Vatican's Dicastery of Communication

May 6, 2026 — Dear brothers and sisters, in our ongoing catechesis on "Lumen Gentium," we focus on the eschatological dimension of the Church.

As the "universal sacrament of salvation," the Church is a sign and instrument of the fullness of God's promises. As the pilgrim People of God, the Church interprets history through the lens of the Gospel and speaks decisively against all evil.

At the same time, the Church acknowledges the need for continual conversion so she may properly fulfill her mission.

As members of the same Body, we too are called to renewal. We do this by remaining in communion with Christ and one another.

The entire Church is most closely united in our praise of God in the liturgy. There we pray for the faithful departed and ask the Saints to intercede for us so that we may all receive the fullness of God's promises in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Official Announcement

Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso announces the following have been called to be ordained permanent deacons on June 6, 2026 at the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Mobile.



ELMER RAMIRO ARIAS LÓPEZ



ERIC J. BRICKMAN



JEFFERY GLENN FAIRLEY, JR.



TODD W. KLUSEK



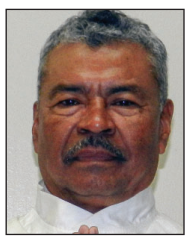
JEFFREY W. LESH



GUSTAVO ROLDÁN VARGAS



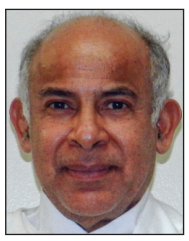
CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM WELLER, SR



MIGUEL BLANCO ALVARADO



JUAN A. CEPERO



JORGE GORDILLO



DAVID R. LEIBOLD



JOSÉ ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ



JOSÉ GUADALUPE VÁZQUEZ CAMACHO



JOHN C. WILLIAMS

The Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults

Baldwin/Escambia Deanery
St. Lawrence Parish—6:30 p.m.
2nd Tuesday of most months
No training June-July, Aug. 11

Mobile Deanery
St. Dominic Parish—6:30 p.m.
4th Wednesday of most months
May 27, June 24, July 22

Montgomery Deanery
Montgomery Catholic High —6 p.m.
4th Wednesday of most months
No training June-July, Aug. 26

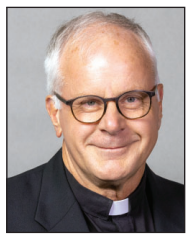
Dothan Deanery
Training sessions conducted on an "as needed" basis. Contact your pastor in the area for information.

Reports of abuse should be made to civil authorities in your county. If the report involves a member of the clergy, Archdiocesan employee or lay volunteer, please also notify the Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults at 251-434-1559. If the report of abuse involves a bishop, please notify the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at ReportBishopAbuse.org or 1-800-276-1562.

The Archdiocesan Child Protection Policy can be found at mobarch.org or protection.mobarch.org

Official Appointment

Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso appoints



Msgr. William J. Skoneki as temporary parochial administrator of Little Flower Parish, Mobile, effective April 28, 2026. He will continue his ministry as vicar general, moderator of the curia and rector of the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile.

THE CATHOLIC WEEK

Official publication of the Archdiocese of Mobile since 1934

Address: 356 Government Street, Mobile, AL 36602
Mailing Address: PO Box 349, Mobile, AL 36601
Phone: 251-432-3529 FAX: 251-434-1547

PUBLISHER: Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso

EDITOR: Rob Herbst, 251-434-1544
rherbst@mobarch.org

ADVERTISING: Claudia T.S. Delmas, 251-434-1543
cdelmas@mobarch.org

WEBPAGE/ONLINE NEWSLETTER:
www.mobarch.org/thecatholicweek

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Catholic Week, PO Box 349, Mobile, AL 36601

SUBSCRIPTIONS: To subscribe or make changes to a current subscription, contact Claudia Delmas, 251-434-1543 or cdelmas@mobarch.org
The Catholic Week (USPS 094-660) is a member of the Catholic Media Association and published biweekly. Subscriptions are free for all registered with an Archdiocese of Mobile Parish or $25 annually for those not registered with a parish. Periodical Postage Paid at Mobile, Alabama.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

Pentecost and the living work of the Holy Spirit

"Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love." This prayer calls upon the Holy Spirit to be present in the hearts of the faithful, kindle in them the fire of God's love and to work through each disciple transformed to be God's love for all.



Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso

We celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost, the conclusion of the Easter season on May 24. Though we conclude the Easter season, the Holy Spirit is dynamic and always at work. The Holy Spirit sustains the Church and we should be keenly aware of the Spirit at work in the Church. I am constantly aware of this working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

I joyfully share with you encouraging signs of the Holy Spirit at work in the Archdiocese of Mobile. This local Church has been blessed with increased growth. This is evidenced by the many catechumens, candidates and confirmandi who were fully initiated at the Easter Vigil. On account of this tremendous growth in numbers, when we were celebrating the Rites of Election we had to add another Rite of Election. We had scheduled three, we had to schedule a fourth. One of those who was coming into the Church at the Easter Vigil said to me, "I cannot wait to become Catholic." This comment was heartwarming for me and a reaffirmation of how we are so blessed to be Catholic and grateful for the gift of our Catholic faith.

Another sign of the Holy Spirit at work was at our recent Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Conference. We had more than 500 teenagers present for this gathering. This was a record number and once again a sign of the Holy Spirit at work as this attendance has grown. We, as an archdiocese, are so blessed by our youth. They have a tremendous love and excitement in living the gift of faith. It was wonderful to be with our clergy, seminarians, consecrated religious, youth ministers, volunteers and presenters. We were inspired by our youth. It was a blessing to interact, pray and celebrate the gift of faith we share and the Holy Spirit working in each one of our lives. It was beautiful to experience at ACYC a witness of our love for the Lord and His love in the life of the Church and the Spirit at work in our world.

I mention these two signs of the Holy Spirit dynamically at work in the life of the Church. As we celebrate Pentecost, we pray to be more keenly aware of the Holy Spirit at work in us, through us, lifting us up and inspiring us to witness Jesus in every moment and circumstance in our lives. May we pray daily, "Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love."

Pentecostés y la obra viva del Espíritu Santo

«Ven, Espíritu Santo, llena los corazones de tus fieles y enciende en ellos el fuego de tu amor». Esta oración invoca al Espíritu Santo para que esté presente en los corazones de los fieles, encienda en ellos el fuego del amor de Dios y actúe a través de cada discípulo transformado para ser el amor de Dios para todos. Celebramos la solemnidad de Pentecostés, la conclusión del tiempo pascual, el 24 de mayo. Aunque concluimos el tiempo pascual, el Espíritu Santo es dinámico y siempre está actuando. El Espíritu Santo sostiene a la Iglesia y debemos ser muy conscientes de la acción del Espíritu en la Iglesia. Soy constantemente consciente de esta acción del Espíritu Santo en la vida de la Iglesia.

Comparto con ustedes la alegría y los signos alentadores de la acción del Espíritu Santo en la Arquidiócesis de Mobile. Esta Iglesia local ha sido bendecida con un crecimiento cada vez mayor. Prueba de ello son los numerosos catecúmenos, candidatos y confirmandos que recibieron la iniciación completa en la Vigilia Pascual. Debido a este enorme aumento en el número de participantes, cuando celebrábamos los Ritos de Elección tuvimos que añadir otro Rito de Elección. Habíamos programado tres, pero tuvimos que programar un cuarto. Uno de los que se incorporaba a la Iglesia en la Vigilia Pascual me dijo: «No puedo esperar a convertirme en católico». Este comentario me conmovió y reafirmó lo bendecidos que somos por ser católicos y lo agradecidos que estamos por el don de nuestra fe católica.

Otra señal de la acción del Espíritu Santo se hizo patente en nuestra reciente Conferencia Arquidiocesana de la Juventud Católica. Contamos con la presencia de más de 500 adolescentes en este encuentro. Se trató de una cifra récord y, una vez más, una señal de la acción del Espíritu Santo, ya que la asistencia ha ido en aumento. Nosotros, como arquidiócesis, nos sentimos muy bendecidos por nuestra juventud. Ellos sienten un amor y un entusiasmo enormes por vivir el don de la fe. Fue maravilloso estar con nuestro clero, seminaristas, religiosos consagrados, ministros de la juventud, voluntarios y presentadores. Nos inspiraron nuestros jóvenes. Fue una bendición interactuar, orar y celebrar el don de la fe que compartimos y el Espíritu Santo obrando en cada una de nuestras vidas. Fue hermoso experimentar en la ACYC un testimonio de nuestro amor por el Señor y Su amor en la vida de la Iglesia y el Espíritu obrando en nuestro mundo.

Menciono estos dos signos de la acción dinámica del Espíritu Santo en la vida de la Iglesia. Al celebrar Pentecostés, oramos para ser más conscientes de la presencia del Espíritu Santo actuando en nosotros y a través de nosotros, elevándonos e inspirándonos a dar testimonio de Jesús en cada momento y circunstancia de nuestras vidas. Oremos cada día: «Ven, Espíritu Santo, llena los corazones de tus fieles y enciende en ellos el fuego de tu amor».

DAILY READINGS

MAY 17 - MAY 30

Sun., May 17 Acts 1:1-11 Ps 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9 Eph 1:17-23 Mt 28:16-20	**Mon., May 18** Acts 19:1-8 Ps 68:2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab Jn 16:29-33	**Tues., May 19** Acts 20:17-27 Ps 68:10-11, 20-21 Jn 17:1-11a	**Wed., May 20** Acts 20:28-38 Ps 68:29-30, 33-35a, 35bc-36ab Jn 17:11b-19
Thurs., May 21 Acts 22:30; 23:6-11 Ps 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11 Jn 17:20-26	**Fri., May 22** Acts 25:13b-21 Ps 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab Jn 21:15-19	**Sat., May 23** Acts 28:16-20, 30-31 Ps 11:4, 5 and 7 Jn 21:20-25	 The Ascension of the Lord May 17
Sun., May 24 Acts 2:1-11 Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 Jn 20:19-23	**Mon., May 25** Gen 3:9-15, 20 Ps 87:1-2, 3 and 5, 6-7 Jn 19:25-34	**Tues. May 26** 1 Peter 1:10-16 Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4 Mk 10:28-31	
Wed., May 27 1 Peter 1:18-25 Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20 Mk 10:32-45	**Thurs., May 28** 1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12 Ps 100:2, 3, 4, 5 Mk 10:46-52	**Fri., May 29** 1 Peter 4:7-13 Ps 96:10, 11-12, 13 Mk 11:11-26	**Sat., May 30** Jude 17, 20b-25 Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6 Mk 11:27-33

Archbishop's schedule

May 15 - May 29

Friday, May 15

7 p.m. McGill-Toolen Catholic High School graduation, Mitchell Center, Mobile

Saturday, May 16

8:45 a.m. Prayer and Blessing for Miles of Hope 5K Run for HOPE for ALL, Mardi Gras Park, Mobile

3 p.m. Meet with members of Institute Voluntas Dei secular institute

Sunday, May 17

11 a.m. Confirmation, St. Theresa Parish, West Mount Vernon

Tuesday, May 19

7 p.m. Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School Graduation,

Wednesday, May 20

12 p.m. Luncheon with chaplains at Fountain Correctional Facility, Atmore

Thursday, May 21

5:30 p.m. Dinner and auction to benefit Catholic Social Services of Baldwin County's To Be Options for Women, Water's Edge, Robertsdale

THE LOVE OF CHRIST IMPELS US

Saturday, May 23

9 a.m. Morning with Archdiocese of Mobile Permanent Diaconate class, Camp Beckwith, Fairhope

Sunday, May 24

10:30 a.m.. Mass, St. Joseph Parish, Lillian

Monday, May 25–Thursday May, 28

Archdiocese of Mobile Priest Retreat, Manresa House of Retreats, Convent, La.

FAITH AT HOME

Easter hope for the hard work of family life



Laura Kelly Fanucci

Family life is hard. In case no one has affirmed that for you lately, let me be the one. Whether you're in the stage of diapers and bottles, wiping faces and losing sleep or whether you're worrying about the children who have grown, the now-adults making their stumbling way through a suffering world, families will always be holy, hard and humbling schools of love.

Sometimes we look to Scripture and ask, "Does anything here speak to my life today?" Especially when biblical times, societies and structures differ sharply from our own, we may be more likely to seek support, advice or models for our daily struggles from more contemporary sources. But the Gospels surrounding Easter offer refreshing, realistic and surprisingly relevant stories for the struggles we face as families.

Take Mary Magdalene, the first to encounter the Risen Christ. In the Gospel of John she stands weeping at the empty tomb—but because she is willing to enter fully into her grief, she alone is there to meet the Lord (Jn 20:1-18). Her witness reminds us that God is always making a way to meet us in grief and loss, even after deep trauma, as Jesus did for Mary whom he freed from seven demons (Lk 8:2).

Or take the story of Peter sitting on the shore with the friend he denied. What searing regret he must have felt—and what a shocking twist for Jesus to offer nothing but mercy, extending the greatest second chance of all time: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (Jn 21:15-19). Peter teaches us that forgiveness after deep hurt is the way of the Christian life. Like Jesus, we must keep offering forgiveness. Like Peter, we must keep answering yes to love.

The struggles of families—and the ordinary work that keeps us going—are all over the Easter Gospels. Thomas reminds us how often we feel confused, left out or misunderstood, even among those who know us best. Sometimes it takes time, humility and a willingness to show up again to see the truth before us.

The Myrrhbearers (the men and women who cared for Jesus' body after his death) underscore the quiet holiness of tasks of care. Like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, we can carry our heavy burdens together. Like the women who brought oil and spices to anoint Jesus' body, we learn how the smallest offerings let us care for Christ in each other.

Notice where Jesus meets his disciples after the Resurrection. In a house in Emmaus, breaking bread over dinner. On the lakeshore, after a long night of fishing. On the road, when his friends were grieving and aimless. In locked rooms, where they huddled together in terror. God will meet us in the same places. Over ordinary meals, in daily work, on the road. In the midst of grief, loss and fear.

The gritty humanity of the first disciples ranks among the greatest gifts that God gave us. We do not have ancestors in faith who got everything right, whose families always flourished, whose faith never wavered or whose witness was perfect. Instead, we got sisters and brothers just like us: longing, loving but losing their way and stumbling back to God, over and over again.

Much like pregnancy, fostering or adoption, Easter takes a long stretch of time, much longer than we might have realized when we first set out. Far from a single Sunday, Easter is a gift of 50 days—because the sacred mysteries that we recall and relive during this season are so great that we need plenty of time every year to pray through the Resurrection again.

What goodness of God, to give the gifts we need: extra time, real companions, rich stories and relentless grace. In the family of faith, even in our hardest days, we are never alone on the road.

— Laura Kelly Fanucci is an author, speaker and founder of Mothering Spirit. Her latest book is "Living Easter: 50 Days to Practice Resurrection."

BEST OF THE BLOG

Reading suggestions to make the most of summer



Pat Arensberg

Summer is knocking on the door. Many of our students and teachers are anticipating the free time. Perhaps you are looking to tackle some projects around the house or maybe you are looking forward to a vacation. I hope that whatever your summer holds, it will provide you with rest and renewal of mind and body.

I also hope that we approach the freedom of the summer break with some intentionality. We may consider spending some time reading. In fact, you may consider inviting some friends to be part of a book club. There can be a lot of great conversations and new friendships made.

With that in mind, here are a few recommendations for summer reading.

Here are a few suggestions for books:

"The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis

The story takes the form of fictional letters written by a demon and his nephew, who are seeking to keep their "patient" from turning back to God.

"Six Hours one Friday" by Max Lucado

This is a reflection on the Passion of Jesus, but translated into a modern setting.

"The Commandments We Keep" By Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi

This provides a practical approach to growing in the Faith.

"Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley

We all know the story … or at least we think we do. This is a reflection on morality and science.

Please feel free to pass on other reading suggestions that I can pass along.

God bless you all, and please make the effort to be intentional with your summer vacation.

— Pat Arensberg is the Director of the Office for Evangelization and Family Life. Email him at parensberg@mobarch.org.

MEDIA MINDFULNESS

Preserving human voices and faces



Sister Hosea Rupprecht

Pope Leo XIV reflects on artificial intelligence in his inaugural World Communications Day message. Falling on May 17, the Holy Father invites the faithful to look at AI through the lens of "Preserving Human Voices and Faces."

My recent journey into American Sign Language (ASL) via a mobile app highlighted a vital truth: While the app teaches vocabulary and other helpful things, it cannot replace the soul of communication, interacting with real people. Deeper understanding of the language only came when I joined a "peer signing practice." Navigating the clumsy, nerve-wracking but rewarding reality of live interaction reminded me that communication is an embodied act.

In our AI-driven age, Pope Leo insists that we keep the human person at the heart of every digital interaction. He reminds us that our faces and voices are sacred, for through the face and voice of Jesus, God communicates his very self to us. To protect this sanctity, the pope issues three specific challenges.

1. Exercise your mind

Thinking for ourselves defines our humanity. The Holy Father encourages us not to lean on AI as an all-knowing oracle or an instant font of advice. Algorithms often tell us exactly what we want to hear, creating an echo chamber that needs our critical questioning.

We want to prevent AI from stifling our creativity. As technology advances, AI-generated content becomes almost indistinguishable from human-created art. While we naturally seek tools to increase efficiency—much like the invention of the wheel—what price are we willing to pay?

2. Prioritize real relationships

The proliferation of generative AI brings to the fore a disturbing trend: the substitution of chatbots for real human intimacy. Our relationships with others constitute the core of what it means to be human. Think for a moment about what makes you feel most fulfilled in your life. I would bet that it has something to do with another human person—your spouse, your children, your best friend.

Designers program AI chatbots to affirm whatever we input, yet allowing a machine to influence our emotions carries "painful consequences … for the social, cultural and political fabric of society," Pope Leo says.

3. Educate and cooperate

Pope Leo does not merely warn; he offers a positive way forward. He calls for cooperation, especially between developers and legislators, to ensure AI respects human dignity. He specifically asks that we design algorithms to seek the truth rather than capture every second of our attention.

Furthermore, he champions AI literacy. Understanding how these tools function, including what questions to ask when using AI, removes the element of fear. By educating ourselves, we ensure AI remains a tool rather than a master.

Let us heed Pope Leo's call: "We need faces and voices to speak for people again. We need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented."

— Sister Hosea Rupprecht, a Daughter of St. Paul, is the associate director of the Pauline Center for Media Studies.

THE CATHOLIC DIFFERENCE

In thanksgiving for the gift of Baptism



George Weigel

Three-quarters of a century ago, on April 29, 1951, I was baptized by Father Thomas Love, SJ, in Baltimore's Church of Saints Philip and James. Old Scratch must have thoroughly sunken his claws into my infant self; according to family tradition, I sent up such a howl when he was ousted by water and the Holy Spirit that my cousin Judy hid in a confessional. (Critics may find traces of this experience in my later prose style; I couldn't possibly comment.)

Saints Philip and James, a fine combination of Greco-Roman and Byzantine architectural styles, is now under the care of the Dominican Fathers of the St. Joseph Province, who run a lively parish and a campus ministry to nearby Johns Hopkins University. The church has some splendid stained glass and its apse decoration, reminiscent of many Roman basilicas with their arrays of saints, reminds me of a pertinent theme for reflection on this diamond anniversary of my baptism: the communion of saints.

To be baptized is to be incorporated into the Church. To be raised to new life in Christ in the waters of baptism is to be simultaneously incorporated into the transtemporal body of the friends of the Lord Jesus Christ: what tradition calls the Church Militant (those living today), the Church Suffering (those being purified after death), and the Church Triumphant (those blessed with the vision of the Thrice-Holy God). These three "states" in the Church form one body, or communion, across the centuries, and indeed beyond the natural world as we perceive it. It is a "communion of saints" because all who belong to it by reason of their baptism are called to the vocation of sanctity, for which there is no single template.

Over these 75 years, I have experienced that sanctity in so many ways, each of which has left its imprint on my soul and my spiritual life. To mention but a few:

I likely got my first intuition of what sanctity might mean through the sacrificial love of my parents, who brought me to the waters of baptism and did so much for me in the two decades I lived with them.

Retrospectively, I now understand that the teachers who most profoundly shaped my mind and disciplined my childhood and adolescence offered another experience of the communion of saints. So, too, did my piano instructor, the ever-patient Sister Mary Arnold, SSND, and my great choirmaster, that irascible, passionate genius Robert Twynham—for whenever I've had what I imagine to have been a "religious experience," it's almost always had something to do with music.

I learned a lot from my experience of a pastor who fought his way to sanctity and serenity through a lengthy battle with alcoholism.

My wife and children have each shown me unique gifts of sanctity—and all of them have surely lived the saintly quality of patience!

I have been privileged to know persecuted martyr-confessors who grew into sanctity amidst persecution through the faith, hope, and love infused in them by baptism: Myroslav Marynovych of Ukraine, Sister Nijolė Sadūnaitė of Lithuania, Jimmy Lai of Hong Kong, and Cardinal Francis-Xavier Nguyen Văn Thuan of Vietnam, to name but four.

And while the past 30 years have given me a keen appreciation for Ronald Knox's prudent warning (which I formerly mis-attributed to John Henry Newman) that "he who travels in the Barque of Peter had better not look too closely into the engine room," I have had many experiences of sanctity in Rome, in encounters with men like Cardinal Bernardin Gantin of Benin, Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria, and Cardinal Robert Sarah of Guinea—three churchmen, living and dead, whom even the most cynical curialists recognized as men of God who lived the sanctity to which they were called in baptism.

Moreover, I am especially mindful of the tremendous grace of having known two saintly popes, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. In both cases, the greatness of their work and teaching reflected the fact that they were radically converted Christian disciples—men who took their baptism with utmost seriousness as the most important day of their lives.

Participation in the "communion of saints" is one of the great gifts conferred in baptism. As I give thanks for the gift of my baptism seventy-five years ago, it is incorporation into this "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1) for which I am particularly grateful. And it is the prospect of joining them at "Mount Zion, (in) the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Hebrews 12:22) that constitutes my great hope.

— George Weigel's column 'The Catholic Difference' is syndicated by the Denver Catholic, the official publication of the Archdiocese of Denver.

CALLED TO HOLINESS

Interrupting the procession of death with hope



Jaymie Stuart Wolfe

"Christ is risen! Alleluia!" We'll be saying (and singing) that refrain and others like it until Pentecost, which, this year, isn't until the end of May.

And well we should! The resurrection of Jesus is the irreplaceable centerpiece of our faith. So much so that St. Paul devoted a substantial portion of his First Letter to the Corinthians addressing those who thought otherwise.

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:17-19).

Pitiable indeed. The entire point of the cross is the empty tomb. The whole reason for Christ's sacrificial death was to change death as we knew it—to make death a door instead of a wall, a bright beginning instead of a bitter end.

This was clear, if not explicit, in the public ministry of Jesus. The raising of Jairus' daughter early on in Galilee and the last great sign in John's Gospel—the raising of Lazarus—show us where the rabbi from Nazareth intends to go. But the third recorded story of Jesus raising the dead—the son of the widow of Nain—rarely gets our attention. And that's unfortunate, because the account has a lot to teach us about the mission of Christ in the world.

Recorded only in Luke's Gospel, the raising of the widow's son occurs before the other more famous miracles and less than 10 miles from Nazareth. The scene is sadly familiar and dominated by what we have been forced to accept as a non-negotiable fact of life: death. As Jesus, his disciples and a large crowd approach Nain, they met a line of mourners in procession at the gates. "A man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town" (Lk 7:12).

I imagine that is not all Jesus saw. The procession of death had been going on, uninterrupted, since humanity's exile from Eden. One by one, year after year and age after age, death came to every soul. The son of the widow of Nain was simply next in a long line stretching before and after him; his widowed mother, yet another casualty consigned to loneliness and loss until the day she, too, would be carried out of town.

I think Jesus saw all of it that day, the entire and unending procession of death. Perhaps that was the source of his compassion and the reason he chose to intervene. "Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, rise!' The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother" (Lk 7:14–15).

Suddenly, the crowd who had accompanied Jesus and the crowd who had accompanied the corpse were at a loss. "Fear seized all of them" (Lk 7:16). Death, after all, is what we expect, and most of us live our lives in ways that accommodate it. Loss is sad, but inevitable. Life is short. All good things must come to an end.

But none of that is enough for Jesus. Christ does not accept the inevitability of death. He does not allow it to have the last word. Our Lord does not join the funeral cortege or stop to pay respects. Nor does he comfort or counsel the widow. Instead, Christ reaches out and commands the archenemy to retreat. He restores the young man to life and to his mother.

Jesus does this not simply to evoke the memory of Elijah and the widow of Zarapheth, but to begin the divine campaign that will vanquish the enemy. Ironically, he does this by dying himself, another only son of another (presumed) widow.

This stirring Gospel account is an icon of what Jesus intends to accomplish for every one of us. The Lord of life comes to do what no one else can—interrupt the procession of death. Whatever is dead or dying in us, Jesus comes to disrupt it. Sin, selfishness, fear, anger, addiction—all the works of death we have learned or chosen to accommodate—are destroyed by the Risen Lord. Christ is Risen! And so are we!

— Jaymie Stuart Wolfe is a sinner, Catholic convert, freelance writer and editor, musician, speaker, pet-aholic, wife and mom of eight grown children, loving life in New Orleans.

Looking back

By Anne Baggett

50 Years

Joanne Wathen crowned the statue of the Blessed Mother at the City of St. Jude Parish, Montgomery. She was assisted by Michael Talbot.

Sr. Beatrice Couture, R.S.M., celebrated the 40th anniversary of her profession at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Mon Louis Island.

Srs. Clarence, Mary James and Benigna celebrated their golden jubilee as Vincentian Sisters of Charity.

Winners of the 46th annual Field Day were Holy Family Catholic School (blue group) and St. Ignatius Catholic School (red group).

Newly elected officers of St. Ignatius sanctuary society: Mrs. Maynard Sanders, president; Mrs. John Vella, vice president; Mrs. John Leacy, recording secretary; Mrs. John Robbins, treasurer; and Mrs. Dewey Gibson, corresponding secretary.

Mrs. Vernon Gentle, state director of the Alabama Right to Life, was guest speaker at the spring meeting of the Montgomery Deanery DCCW hosted by the Queen of Peace women's club, Selma.

Fr. Joseph Konen, C.M., former pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church, Auburn, and St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, Tallassee, passed away.

A capital funds drive for $1.5 million for the Little Sisters of the Poor's new home in Mobile was launched.

Lawrence A. Mickwee was named the new head football coach at McGill-Toolen Catholic High School.

Br. John Hotstream and Br. Vincent Bono celebrated their 25th year as Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Officers of the Catholic men's association, Tallassee: Gene Studioso, president; Phil Sharpe, vice president; and Joe Scielli, secretary-treasurer. Officers of the Tallassee Catholic women's association: Willie May, president; Wanda Maloney, vice president; and Suzanne Studioso, secretary-treasurer.

Receiving McGill-Toolen awards were Timmy Betbeze and Shannon McDonough (ideal graduates) and Nelson Summerlin and Cindy Smith (student athletes).

25 Years

The 13th annual Joe Perez Golf/Tennis Tournament was held at Spring Hill College Golf Course and Mobile Tennis Center. Sponsored by the Catholic High Schools Alumni Association of Mobile, the tournament benefited the Eleanor Marston Benz Library at McGill-Toolen. Brenda Barter and Tricia Spafford were tennis co-chairs while Walter Verneuille and Skip Bailey were golf chairs. Chuck O'Brien was the CHSAAM board liaison.

Alabama's newest Knights of Columbus council was initiated and its 16 members installed into first and second degree knighthood at a Palm Sunday ceremony at Annunciation Catholic Church in Monroeville.

Christine Thomas, a senior at Montgomery Catholic High School and member of Our Lady Queen of Mercy Parish, was awarded a $12,000 grant to Dillard University in New Orleans.

McGill-Toolen student Michael James Papa received a certificate of appointment from the United States Naval Academy.

McGill-Toolen student government officers for 2001-02 were Alex Morris, president; George Busbee, vice president; Lizzie Pearson, secretary; and Danielle Cunningham, treasurer.

Several Boy Scouts were awarded the Pius XII religious award, including Andrew Browning, Jay Champagne, Stephen Vrazel, Matt Agee, Christopher Lyon, Matthew Guy and Thomas Fowlkes. Fr. Steven T. Williams served as Boy Scout chaplain.

St. Edmund by the Sea Catholic Church on Dauphin Island was filled as 30 priests and deacons as well as more than 200 parishioners and friends came together to celebrate the 25 years that Fr. William N. Gorman had served as a priest.

Our Lady of Lourdes parish center was dedicated to the memory of James Cink in loving memory and in grateful appreciation for his many years of dedication to the parish and school.

The 52nd annual Blessing of the Fleet featured queen Stephanie Chau, and first runner-up Sunye Ross. The fleet maid was Deanna Pruitt.

— Anne Baggett compiles information for Looking Back from past issues of this newspaper. Anne is a member of St. Mary Parish in Mobile.

ARTCRAFT PRESS, INC.
Fine Printing Since 1929
For All Your Printing Needs
send to the
Nicholas Family
12 Tacon St. • Mobile, AL 36607
(251) 471-4383
Todd@ArtcraftPressMobile.com



SCRIPTURE SEARCH

Gospel for May 17, 2026

John 17: 1-11a / Matthew 28:16-20

Following is a word search based on the Gospel readings for both the Seventh Sunday of Easter and the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Cycle A. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE HOUR
THE WORK
WORLD
GALILEE
IN HEAVEN
MAKE
HOLY
ETERNAL LIFE
WORDS
DISCIPLES
MOUNTAIN
ON EARTH
NATIONS
THE END
TRUE GOD
I PRAY
WENT TO
DOUBTED
GIVEN TO ME
NAME
OF THE AGE

PRAYER

M B R I D G A L I L E E
E G A E H T F O J K T L
D U I I G H T R A E N O
T D D V P H N M R C H D
H O L K E R I N D W I I
E G R H N N A T I O N S
W E O C A L T Y L R H C
O U W M L H N O J D E I
R R E I E H U H M S A P
K T F E C H O I L E V L
W E N T T O M L W K E E
E D O U B T E D Y N N S

© 2026 TRI-C-A Publications; tri-c-a-publications.com

Gospel for May 24, 2026

Romans 8: 22-27 / John 7: 37-39

Following is a word search based on the Second and Gospel readings for the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of Pentecost, Cycle A. The words can be found in all directions in the puzzle.

THE LAST
SCRIPTURE
FIRST
LOCKED
HIS HANDS
THE LORD
I SEND YOU
JESUS
RIVERS
WEEK
PEACE
HIS SIDE
AS THE FATHER
BREATHED
DRINK
EVENING
DOORS
SHOWED
REJOICED
SENT ME
FORGIVEN

IN JESUS' PRESENCE

R E H T A F E H T S A T
D E R U T P I R C S H Z
S F J O K G N I N E V E
D O E O F T H E L A S T
N R S H I C B O A N A N
A G U C J C R I V E R S
H I S S I D E W O H S O
S V W L E M A D O O R S
I E K K T K T S R I F W
H N C N L I H J E I R E
G O E Y A P E A C E N E
L S I S E N D Y O U L K

© 2026 TRI-C-A Publications: tri-c-a-nublications.com

Archdiocesan Bulletin Board

The Archdiocesan Bulletin Board publishes parish and diocesan-relevant events and is intended as a service to our readers.
Email Claudia Delmas at cdelmas@mobarch.org to submit an event for publication.

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION/HOLY HOUR

◆**Cathedral—First Fri.,** 12:40-4 p.m.
◆**Annunciation, Monroeville**—Mon., Tues. & Thurs. 7 a.m., Wed. 4:30 p.m.
◆**Christ the King, Daphne**—Perpetual Adoration. Call 251-626-7427 to schedule a weekly holy hour.
◆**Christ the King, Andalusia**—Every Tues. at 4 p.m. with Mass following at 7 p.m.
◆**Corpus Christi, Mobile**—First Fri. after 8:15 a.m. Mass-3 p.m.
◆**Holy Name of Jesus, Semmes**—Thurs., 8:30 a.m.-noon and 6-8 p.m. third Thurs.
◆**Holy Redeemer, Eufaula**—First Fri. 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
◆**Holy Spirit, Montgomery**—Every Wed. 9 a.m. until Fri. 8 a.m. and First Fri. 6:30 p.m. until 8:15 a.m. First Sat.
◆**Little Flower, Mobile**—First Fri. Noon-5:15 p.m. Every other month on sec. Sat. 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.
◆**Our Lady of Guadalupe, Wetumpka**—Sun. 8:30-9:15 a.m. and Tues. 5:30-6:15 p.m
◆**Our Lady of the Gulf, Gulf Shores**—First Fri. 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Every Wed. 4:30-5 p.m.
◆**Our Lady of Lourdes, Mobile**—Sat. 3:15-4 p.m., Sun. 8-8:30 a.m., & 10:30 -11 a.m.
◆**Our Lady Queen of Mercy, Montgomery**—Every Mon. 9 a.m.-8 p.m. inside chapel.
◆**Our Savior, Mobile**—Wed. 9 a.m.-6 p.m., First Fri. 9-10 a.m.
◆**Prince of Peace, Mobile**—Mon.–Fri. 8-9 a.m.
◆**St. Bridget, Whistler**—Sat. 7 a.m.-8 a.m.
◆**St. Columba, Dothan**—Mon. 9:45 a.m.–8:30 p.m.
◆**St. Dominic, Mobile**—First Wed. 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Wed. 5:30–6:15 p.m.
◆**St. Francis Xavier, Mobile**—Wed. 10-11 a.m., Thurs. 4:45-5:45 p.m.
◆**St. Ignatius, Mobile**—Mobile Area Perpetual Adoration Chapel at St. Ignatius. All are welcome 6 a.m.-6 p.m., M-F; registration required for after-hour & weekend visits: mobile.weadorehim.com
◆**St. James Major, Prichard**—First Fri. 5 p.m.
◆**St. John the Evangelist, Enterprise**—Tues. 10 a.m.-Wed. 5 p.m.
◆**St. Joseph, Lillian**—First Fri. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
◆**St. Joseph, Prattville**—Mon. 10:15-11:15 a.m., Wed. 8 a.m.-5:45 p.m.
◆**St. Joseph, Tuskegee**—Sun. 10:30-11 a.m.
◆**St. Jude, Montgomery**—Tues., Wed., Fri. 5 p.m., Thurs. 11:40 a.m., Sat. 3:30-4:30 p.m.
◆**St. Lawrence, Fairhope**—First Fri. following 8:30 a.m. Mass-10 a.m.
◆**St. Matthew, Mobile**—Thurs. 6:50-7:50 a.m. followed by Mass in the church.
◆**St. Margaret of Scotland, Foley**—First Wed of the month 8 a.m.-5:15 p.m.
◆**St. Martin of Tours, Troy**—Wed. 9 a.m.- 8 p.m.
◆**St. Mary, Mobile**—Fri. 6 a.m.-4 p.m.
◆**St. Michael, Auburn**—Mon., Wed., Thurs., Fri., 5 p.m. (St. Michael),Tues. 5 p.m.(Frassati Chapel)
◆**St. Patrick, Phenix City**—Wed. 12:30-2 p.m.
◆**St. Pius X, Mobile**—Adoration Every Fri. 8 a.m. - Sun. 7:45 a.m.
◆**St. Thomas by the Sea, Orange Beach**—First Fri. Holy Hour after 9 a.m. Mass; silent Holy Hour every Fri.
◆**St. Thomas the Apostle, Chickasaw**—Wed. 5-6 p.m.
◆**St. Vincent de Paul, Mobile**—Sat. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
◆**St. Vincent de Paul, Tallassee**—Wed. 5 p.m.-8 p.m., Thurs. 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.

MEETINGS/SUPPORT GROUPS

◆**Heart of Mary Alumni meetings**—Third Sunday of each month; 1 p.m. in the HOM Parish Hall.
◆**Secular Carmelite Community**—Third Sat., Carmelite Monastery, DIP. Dan Davidson (251) 404-2607 or email dmacdhaibhidh@yahoo.ie
◆**St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Chickasaw and St. Bridget Parish, Whistler**—Bible study, Sat. 9:30 a.m., St. Bridget. Men of St. Joseph and Daughters of Mary, Thurs., 8:30 a.m. at St. Bridget.
◆**The Little Flock Secular Franciscan Fraternity**—Second Sun., 2 p.m., St. Lawrence Parish Center, Fairhope. Cathy Vurraro, OFS, 954-421-6030.
◆**Cathedral Parish young adults "Pews and Brews"**—2nd Wed. of each month. Mass at 6 p.m., then gather at Greer's, 260 St. Louis St. for food, drinks, and fellowship.
◆**St. Michael Book Club**—2nd and 4th Sundays at noon each month in the Corpus Christi Parish House, 454 Evergreen Rd. Mobile, AL 36609. Contact George Lundy 251-509-3278 or george.lundy@wofco.com for more info!
◆**Corpus Christi Parish Grief Support Group**—Meets 2nd and 4th Tues. of the month at 11 a.m. in second floor conference room

PILGRIM VIRGIN MINISTRY

MOBILE
Will be at the homes of Ethal Clarke through May 16; Brynne & Jon Mixon May 16-23; and Beth & Woodie Perkins May 23-30.
To host the Mobile Pilgrim Virgin call Colleen McNorton at 251-709-8419

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS
Will be at the homes of Amelia Koné through May 23; and Mary Wadowick May 23-30.
To host the St. Martin of Tours Pilgrim Virgin call Debi Green at 334-322-3620.

ST. LAWRENCE
To host the St. Lawrence Pilgrim Virgin call Carol Bell at 251-554-2301.



CONFESSION TIMES

Editor's note: This is only a partial list of confession times at parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Mobile. Other parishes will be listed in future editions as space allows. Visit mobarch.org/sacrament-of-confession for a complete list.

◆**Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile**—11:45 a.m.-12:05 p.m. Weekdays.; 3:30-4:15 p.m. Saturday
◆**St. Peter, Montgomery** – 11:45 a.m.-12 p.m. Weekdays; 4:30-5:15 p.m. Saturday
◆**St. Vincent de Paul, Tallassee** – 3:00pm-3:55pm on Saturdays.
◆**Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Spanish Fort** – 3:30 p.m. Saturday
◆**Christ the King, Daphne** – 4-5:10 p.m. Saturday
◆**Our Lady of Bon Secour, Bon Secour** – On request
◆**Our Lady of the Gulf, Gulf Shores** – 7:30 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 4:30 p.m. Wednesday; 4 p.m. Saturday
◆**Shrine of the Holy Cross, Daphne** – 4:45 p.m. Saturday
◆**St. Agatha, Bay Minette** – 5:45 p.m. Saturday
◆**St. Bartholomew, Elberta** – 5-5:45 p.m. Saturday; 5-5:45 p.m. Tuesday
◆**St. John the Baptist, Magnolia Springs** – 4-4:45 p.m. Saturday; 8-8:45 a.m. Sunday
◆**St. John the Evangelist, Bromley** – Before 11:30 a.m. Sunday Mass
◆**St. Joseph, Lillian** – 3:45-4:30 p.m. Saturday
◆**St. Lawrence, Fairhope** – 4:30-5 p.m. Saturday; 6-6:30 p.m. First Wednesday of the month
◆**St. Margaret of Scotland, Foley** – 4-4:45 p.m. Saturday; 30 minutes before all other Masses

SPECIAL EVENTS

◆**Our Mother of Mercy Parish, Plateau**—100th Anniversary Celebration – Join for a celebration of 100 years of worship, ministry and service. 11 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 18. Learn more and RSVP at ourmotherofmercymobile.org/100-year-anniversary
◆**St. Pius X Parish, Mobile**—Annual estate sale Oct. 16-17. Accepting well-maintained donations, no clothing. Leave donations on the porch of the estate sale building across Sage Ave. from the church. Call parish office for assistance: 251-471-2449
◆**Southern Echo Chorale Concert**—7:30 p.m., Friday, May 15, Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

CLASSIFIEDS
251-434-1543 • PO Box 349 • Mobile, AL

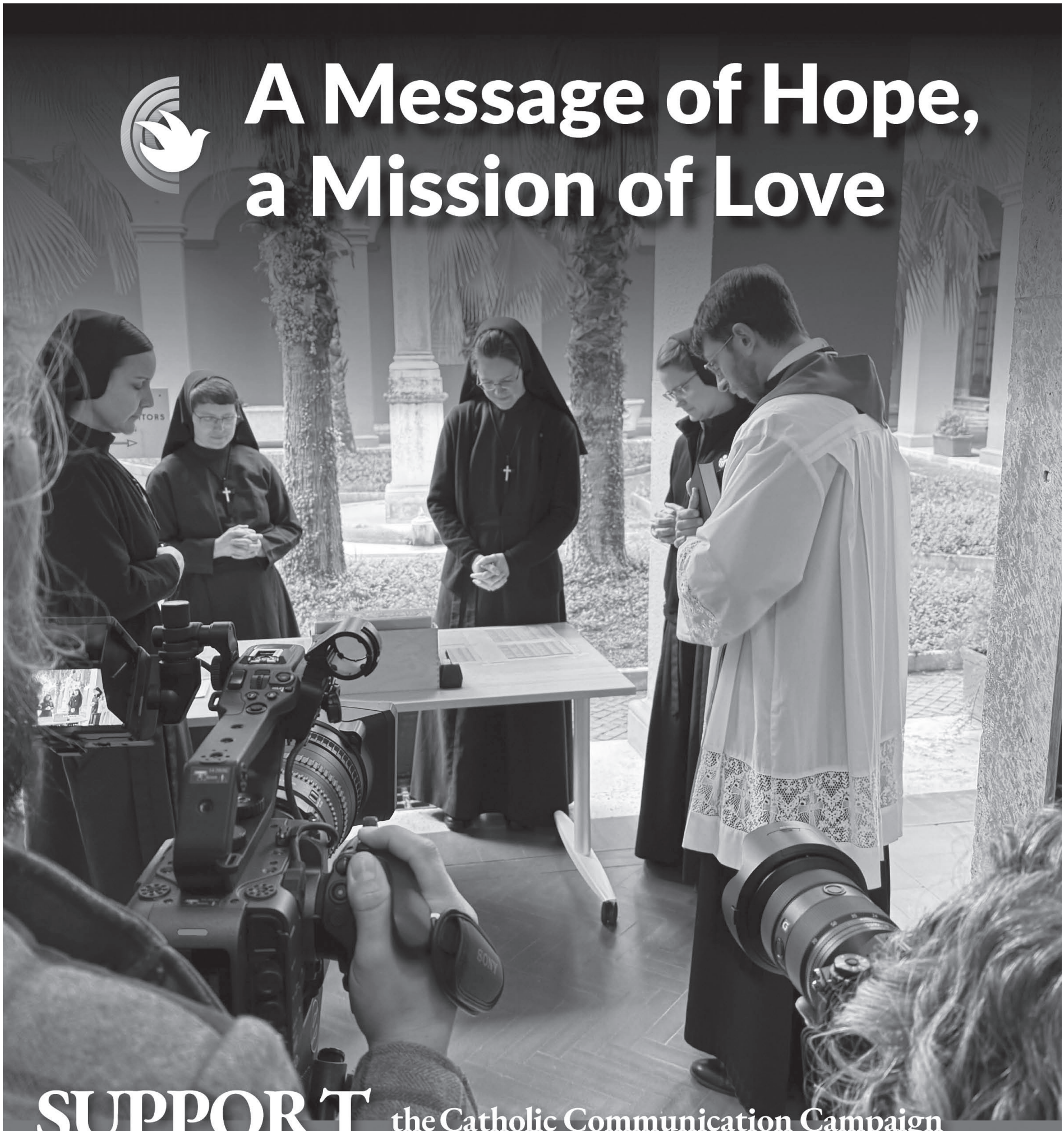
SERVICES
• **All Handyman Repairs**—Residential repair, siding, porches, windows, decks, painting, doors and more. Call Gerard 251-654-1901.
• **Pressure washing**—35 years experience.
Grass cutting. Call Jeff 251-689-4782. Free estimates.
• **Professional Remodeling & Repair, LLC**—State Licensed Home Builder/Remodeler. Bonded. Insured. Commercial, Residential. Jamie Price 251-604-1859.
• **Specializing in porch repair**—Call Jimmy Stauter 251-391-5319.

FOR HIRE
• **Theresa's Sitter Service**—48 years experience. Care for your loved ones day or night. Call Theresa Partee 251-232-8215.

THANK YOU
• **Thank you**—Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Jude and St. Joseph for prayers answered. Help still needed. Donna.

The Catholic Week recommends our readership observe due diligence in the hiring for services or in the sale of items herein.

A Message of Hope, a Mission of Love



SUPPORT the Catholic Communication Campaign

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

WWW.USCCB.ORG/CCC

Catholic Communication Campaign

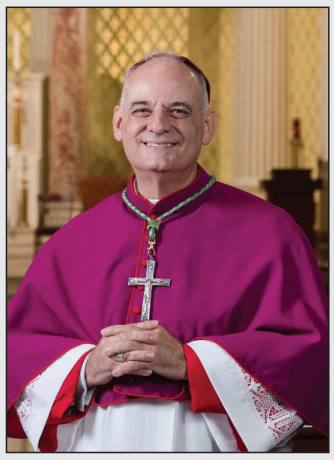
Copyright © 2025, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC. All rights reserved. Photo: USCCB Staff.

COLLECTION: MAY 23-24

ANNUAL REPORT
Archdiocese of Mobile

LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

In this edition of "The Catholic Week," the Archdiocesan Annual Report is presented. This information has been compiled from our archdiocesan offices and ministries. The information provides a synopsis of those enrolled in our Catholic schools and seminaries. There is also data provided on the number of those who have received the sacraments and came into Full Communion in the Catholic Church. This report presents as well the archdiocese's due diligence in child and youth protection and for all ministers serving our youth to be in compliance with the archdiocesan training policy.



As you review this Archdiocesan Annual Report, I encourage you to purview it from the lens of faith. From our Catholic faith, we see the beauty of the life of this local Church and how we are living Church. We should see beyond the numbers and see a portrait of the Church living the beauty of Christ's mission. As you see this data, see how God has blessed the Church in abundance of grace and growth in school enrollment, sacramental life, and in living discipleship and making disciples.

With this Archdiocesan Annual Report, I offer my gratitude for all who serve in our archdiocesan offices, ministries, parishes, and elementary and secondary Catholic schools. They are a gift to me in support of my episcopal ministry and providing the pastoral care and service of Jesus to all throughout this archdiocese. I also express my gratitude to you. Through your prayers and generous support, the archdiocesan offices and ministries, with our parishes and schools, continue to foster the goodness of Christ's mission.

You should remember that we, as an archdiocese, are here to serve you and serve all who are in need. For all in our archdiocesan offices and ministries, parishes and schools are blessed to serve, to represent our Catholic community, to be the Church Jesus calls us to be, and with God's help, to make a difference everyday in our world. Thank you for the blessing you are to the archdiocese. May we pray for each other daily to live being intentional disciples of Jesus who care with the care of Jesus for one another and for all in the lower half of this great state of Alabama.

Sincerely in the Lord,

+Mark S. Rivituso

Most Reverend Mark S. Rivituso, D.D., J.C.L.
Archbishop of Mobile

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

■ The Daughters of Charity were recognized for their impact on Alabama—dating back to 1841—during a celebration held before the departure of the three remaining sisters from the Archdiocese of Mobile.

■ The Archdiocese of Mobile recognized Sister Marilyn Graf, RSM, on her 70th anniversary of entrance into religious life, and Sister Maria Goretti, L.S.P., and Sister Andrea Miller, D.C., on their 60th anniversaries during Mass for the World Day for Consecrated Life.

■ The 94th annual Catholic Charities Appeal exceeded the goal of raising $4.7 million for ministries throughout the archdiocese.

■ Gia S. Long was named the new executive director for financial services for the Archdiocese of Mobile.

■ Young people from parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Mobile took part in the Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Conference in Orange Beach and SEARCH Retreats.

■ 447 catechumens and candidates entered into full communion with the Catholic Church during Easter Vigils on March 30. It was the largest group since at least 2014.

■ The Catholic Maritime Ministry of Mobile celebrated its 80th year of service to seafarers.

■ Students from Catholic schools throughout the Archdiocese of Mobile participated in the annual Catholic Challenge Cup.

■ Pope Leo XIV was elected, and students in Catholic schools shared in the historic moment by watching the announcement on TV.

■ Father Rich Perkins was ordained to the priesthood and Deacon Gaten Armstrong was ordained a transitional deacon.

■ The Archdiocese of Mobile's permanent diaconate candidates were installed into the ministry of acolyte by Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi.

■ Most Rev. Mark S. Rivituso was named the next Archbishop of Mobile, succeeding Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi.

■ "The Catholic Week," the official publication of the archdiocese, received three awards from the Catholic Media Association.

■ A reception was held to recognize Archbishop Thomas J. Rodi, who served the Archdiocese of Mobile since 2008, before his letter of retirement was accepted.

■ The annual Seminarian Summer Gala at Montgomery Catholic Preparatory School's Dolly Barranco Center raised more than $226,000 for seminarian education.

■ Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso was formally installed as the third Archbishop of Mobile.

■ Archbishop Rivituso celebrated the Blue Mass at the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in recognition of First Responders. He also celebrated the Red Mass for those in the legal profession and the White Mass for those in the medical profession.

■ Couples took part in the 77th Toy Bowl to raise money for CYO activities.

■ The archdiocese's Department of Multicultural Ministry sponsored a Mass in honor of Black Catholic History Month at Prince of Peace Parish in Mobile, and a program at City of St. Jude Parish in Montgomery.

■ The faithful took part in a Rosary procession through downtown Mobile on the Feast of Christ the King. Archbishop Rivituso also awarded the Christ the King Medal to nominated volunteers from parishes throughout the archdiocese.

QUICK STATS

	2025	2024
Catholic Population	113,767	107,870
Students in Catholic Schools	4,917	4,669
Students in Religious Education classes	2,615	2,949
Priests resident in the archdiocese	111	109
Seminarians	13	13
SACRAMENTS		
Baptisms	1,147	1,094
Adult Baptisms	150	122
Received into Full Communion	308	250
First Eucharist	1,270	1,145
Confirmations	968	951
Marriages	295	276
Funerals	548	537
Background checks for Child Protection Program	1,302	1,424
Total number of background checks since 2002	34,786	33,484

ARCHDIOCESE OF MOBILE OFFICES' SUMMARIES






Office for Development
Executive Director Shannon Roh

Development & Stewardship

- 9,517 gifts totaling $1,489,355 were received from 2,126 donors toward Generations of Faith Endowment campaign pledges. As of Dec. 31, 2025, 89% of the total pledged has been collected. During 2025, $1,375,204 was added to the three established trusts, and $570,436 was sent to parishes for parish projects identified during the campaign. The three trusts for sick and retired priests, seminarian formation and youth ministry grew to more than $28.8 million by Dec. 31, 2025.
- The eighth annual Seminarian Summer Gala held at Montgomery Catholic High School in August raised $241,072 for seminarian formation. 3,311 Burse Club gifts totaling $407,910 were also received. The first $130,000 collected was deposited into the Burse Endowment in the Catholic Foundation, which distributes 5% annually to help fund the cost of seminarian education.
- 929 individuals donated $466,778 through #iGiveCatholic on #GivingTuesday to 26 participating parishes, schools and ministries.

Catholic Charities Appeal

- The 2025 Appeal received gifts totaling $5,521,622 from 7,356 donors, exceeding the $4.7 million goal.
- A private Mass was celebrated every month by the Archbishop for all the prayer intentions requested through the Appeal.
- 38% of Catholic Charities donations funds social service ministries, 25% funds Catholic education and youth ministry programs,10% funds outreach ministries, 6% funds Ministries with the aging & disabled, 7% funds crisis pregnancy services, 3% funds mission parishes, along with 6% for emergency funding. Less than 6% of the donations are used for administration.

Multicultural Ministry
Executive Director Father Victor Ingalls

- Sponsored monthly fellowship and faith formation for Black Catholic youth grades 8-12.
- Sponsored a Black Catholic History Month celebration at Prince of Peace, Mobile, and St. Jude, Montgomery.
- Sponsored a three-day Lenten tent revival at St. Peter the Apostle, Chastang.
- Invited parishes throughout the Archdiocese to make donations to support the cause for canonization for the "Saintly Six"— six African Americans currently being promoted for canonization.
- Emaus, engagement and marriage, vocational, Lenten, Advent, and healing Spanish language retreats were held.
- Ms. Diane Phelps was hired as the director of Hispanic Ministry.

Catholic Social Services
Executive Director Buffy Marston

- 46,856 individuals were assisted at the six different CSS offices located in Baldwin, Clarke, Houston, Lee, Mobile and Montgomery counties.
- Disability Ministry began a new social program, Connections, designed for young adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities.
- 387 individuals attended the third annual neighborhood Halloween Trunk or Treat event in Mobile.
- 503 holiday meals were provided in three counties through the Rockwell Dinner Charitable Giving Project.
- 38 home repair projects were completed in Mobile County for elderly and disabled homeowners unable to afford repairs. The projects included wheelchair ramps, painting, landscaping, windows and floor repairs.
- 782 seniors were served through St. Margaret Services, Montgomery, and St. Teresa of Calcutta, Mobile, the CSS non-medical programs for the elderly.
- 1,216 individuals were provided parenting, pregnancy and supportive services through 2B Choices for Women in Mobile and To Be Options for Women in Robertsdale.
- Robertsdale and Dothan offices provided 4,434 backpacks for elementary and middle school children in homes experiencing food insufficiency, providing children with three meals and snacks on weekends.
- The Emergency Assistance Program in Mobile provided housing assistance and other resources to 1,987 individuals who were unsheltered or at risk of being homeless.

Chancellor
Deacon Bill Harkins

- Continued to coordinate with other dioceses regarding marriage and clerical support for sacraments within the archdiocese.
- Archivist Gentry Holbert added 17.54 linear feet of materials to the archives' permanent collection, along with digitizing collections to expand electronic access.
- The Catholic Maritime Ministry, known as Stella Maris, made 1,104 ship visits, transported 900 seafarers, celebrated 17 onboard Masses and provided free internet service to 394 ships while in port. Through the support of parishes and individuals, 460 gift bags were provided to visiting seafarers during the Christmas season. 80 years of Catholic maritime ministry in Mobile was celebrated with a Mass of Thanksgiving.
- The Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women (ACCW) held its annual fall convention in October in Foley hosted by the Baldwin-Escambia Deanery leadership.
- The Knights of Columbus and the Knights of Peter Claver continued to be involved in various charitable and religious works throughout 2025.

Catholic Education
Executive Director Chad Barwick

Office of Catholic Schools

- Helped more than 1,200 students benefit from the CHOOSE Act, almost 30% of archdiocesan K-12 students.
- Dr. Kathy McCool retired from St. Benedict School and Mrs. Lauren Alvarez retired from St. Pius X School.
- Welcomed Mr. Kai Lopez as principal of St. Benedict School and Ms. Emily Dolan as principal of St. Pius X School.
- Completed a comprehensive educational plan for Baldwin County Catholic schools.
- Added sixth grade to St. Michael School, Auburn.

Office for Evangelization and Family Life

- Held the fourth "Religion Bowl" for Catholic school 6th-8th graders - the Catholic Challenge Cup.
- Organized Rites of Election for more than 300 individuals entering the Church.
- Offered "Be Prepared" sessions and facilitated catechist workshops at various parishes.
- Conducted training and facilitated marriage preparation at various parishes.
- Coordinated meetings to share ideas for more effective prison ministry.

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

- 343 youth and adults attended the Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Conference in February.
- Search Retreats 32 and 33 brought together more than 100 retreatants from across the Archdiocese.
- 142 junior high students attended ACYC JR at Holy Spirit Hall, Battles Wharf.
- Young adult communities continue to meet regularly in Mobile, Baldwin, Lee and Montgomery counties.
- 54 retreats for youth and young adults were held at Holy Spirit Hall, Battles Wharf.

Office of the Permanent Diaconate
Deacon Ronnie Hathorne

- A joint English speaking and Hispanic diaconate candidate formation retreat was held in May, where Archbishop Rodi called 14 men to their third and final year of candidacy.
- Inquiry sessions were held in every deanery for men and their wives interested in entering the permanent diaconate program.
- A Mass with the renewal of vows for permanent deacons and their wives was celebrated at the Cathedral in August by Archbishop Rodi.
- Permanent deacons and their wives attended the annual retreat in September.

Office for the Protection of Minors and Adults
Director Ginger Koppersmith

- Independent Review Board meetings were held in June and November.
- OPMA participated in the summer New Priest Orientation and International Priest training programs.
- OPMA provided the annual retraining for priests at the September Priest Convocation.
- A revised Youth Travel/Activities Policy was published in June.
- OPMA provided annual training to archdiocesan high school coaches.
- An audit of the OPMA office for 2022-2025 was conducted by the USCCB in December.

Here are a few of OPMA's 2025 activities by the numbers:

303 live trainings throughout the Archdiocese of Mobile
7,975 trained clergy, employees, and volunteers are in OPMA's data system
1,302 background checks were processed for clergy, employees, and volunteers
4,306 clergy, employees, and volunteers completed their annual retraining
7,877 youth were trained with the Archdiocesan Safe Environments Curriculum

OPMA is dedicated to the protection of all the people in the archdiocese and to all who serve the mission of the Catholic Church within its ministries. OPMA appreciates everyone's commitment to the prevention of abuse and the willingness of all to submit to background checks and trainings. It is this commitment that will help provide a safe environment for those participating in Archdiocesan activities and ministries.

PHOTOS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A sponsor places his hand on the shoulder of a catechumen during a Rite of Election ceremony at the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

Deacon Gaten Armstrong smiles and laughs during the Seminarian Summer Gala.

Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso celebrates Mass for Black Catholic History Month at Prince of Peace Parish.

Catholic Social Services clients participate in one of CSS's Disabilities and Ministries programs.

Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso, with assistance from the Catholic Maritime Club, celebrated Mass for visiting seafarers on board the MV Cardiff.

Participants in the annual Catholic Challenge Cup join together.

Mass is celebrated during the annual Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Conference.





STATEMENTS OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

General Fund Financial Report

Executive Director for Financial Services
Mrs. Gia S. Long

Below are the financial results for the General Fund of the Archdiocese of Mobile for the years ended June 30, 2025, and June 30, 2024. The General Fund includes the offices that provide administrative and other support services to Catholic parishes, schools and ministries of the Archdiocese of Mobile. The results do not include Catholic Charities, Sick & Retired Priest Fund, Health Insurance & Benefits Fund, Property & Liability Insurance Fund, or the Catholic Foundation.

Primary funding for the General Fund is provided by cathedraticum which is a 10% assessment on parish Sunday collections and certain other income. Other sources of revenue include seminarian collections and fund raisers; The Catholic Week advertising & subscriptions; pupil tax assessments for the Office of Catholic Schools; rental income, and other donations and grants.

Total operating revenues of $6.5 million increased $1.2 million in 2025 due to several factors. The Archdiocese of Mobile was the beneficiary of an estate, the Generations of Faith Seminarian Education Trust made a $316,000 distribution for seminary education expenses, and the Cathedraticum experienced a 5.3% increase of $168,500 to $3.53 million. Total expenditures decreased $58,000 to $4.76 million mainly because Fixed Asset expenses decreased from $329,000 to $197,000. Expense control measures remain in effect to keep costs as low as possible. The Net Operating Income was $1,739,000 as compared to $443,000 in 2024.

Gains in the investment portfolio, gains on the sale of assets, and bad debt recoveries all helped increase the overall net income. Overall, we are pleased with the results and continue to strive to be good stewards of the finances for the Archdiocese of Mobile.

Please feel free to contact Mrs. Gia S. Long, Executive Director Financial Services, should you have any questions regarding this report.

Catholic Charities Appeal Financial Report

Executive Director for Financial Services
Mrs. Gia S. Long

The Catholic Charities Appeal supports more than 30 Catholic ministries throughout the 28 counties in southern and central Alabama that comprise the Archdiocese of Mobile.

Total revenues for the Catholic Charities Appeal rose about 1.8% (about $100,000) to $5.78 million as compared to $5.68 million in 2023. Overall expenses for the Catholic Charities Appeal increased about $130,000. The increase was mainly due to additional expenditures for Catholic school tuition assistance, along with small increases in other ministries. The Catholic Charities Appeal remains in a good financial position by setting the amounts given to its ministries based on the amount of annual pledges. Gifts and bequests given to the Appeal are reserved and used for capital expenditures, as additional support for various ministries when needed, and for unexpected needs as they occur. Reserves are also used to provide aid and support for catastrophic events when funds are needed quickly.

Please feel free to contact Mrs. Gia S. Long, Executive Director for Financial Services, should you have any questions regarding this report.

General Fund

Twelve Months ended June 30, 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
Operating Revenue:		
Cathedraticum	3,531,681	3,363,179
Seminarians Burse/SOS, Collection, Gala, etc	663,253	516,680
Seminarians Foundation distributions	648,373	317,913
Office of Catholic Schools - Pupil Tax Assessments	291,707	274,988
The Catholic Week	111,817	113,940
Other Donations & Grants	931,291	303,079
Rental Income	66,430	128,219
Miscellaneous	258,890	247,253
Total Operating Revenues	**6,503,442**	**5,265,252**
Expenditures:		
Archbishop's Office & Residence	234,041	227,445
Chancery & Cathedral Rectory	364,526	360,967
Fiscal Management Office, Payroll & Technology	880,356	761,473
Development & Stewardship	146,441	110,951
Legal	236,428	215,025
Archives	68,458	94,604
Seminarians	1,028,208	1,059,054
The Catholic Week	424,823	477,247
Metropolitan Tribunal	208,914	231,345
Office of Catholic Schools	579,649	572,377
Fixed Assets	196,764	328,863
Charitable Contributions	19,000	29,000
Canon 1271/USCCB Assessment	69,242	66,931
Miscellaneous	307,253	286,976
Total Expenditures	**4,764,103**	**4,822,258**
Operating Net Income	**1,739,339**	**442,994**
Other Items:		
Investment Portfolio Gains	719,721	296,367
Gain on sale of assets	1,085,457	270,989
Bad debt recovery	90,408	12,000
Depreciation	(156,611)	(138,432)
Total Other Items	**1,738,975**	**440,925**
Net Income	**3,478,314**	**883,919**

ARCHDIOCESE OF MOBILE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Youth ministry leaders invited to May gatherings

By ROB HERBST
The Catholic Week

The Archdiocese of Mobile Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry is hosting a series of youth ministry meetings throughout May, inviting all high school and middle school youth ministers and parish youth ministry leaders to attend one session.

Parish catechetical leaders are also encouraged to participate, as the gatherings aim to support those who serve young people across the archdiocese.

While the first meeting was held earlier this month in Baldwin County, additional sessions are scheduled for May 18 at St. Columba Parish in Dothan, May 20 at St. Pius X Parish in Mobile and May 26 at St. Bede the Venerable Parish in Montgomery. Each session will take place from 6-8 p.m., and dinner will be provided.

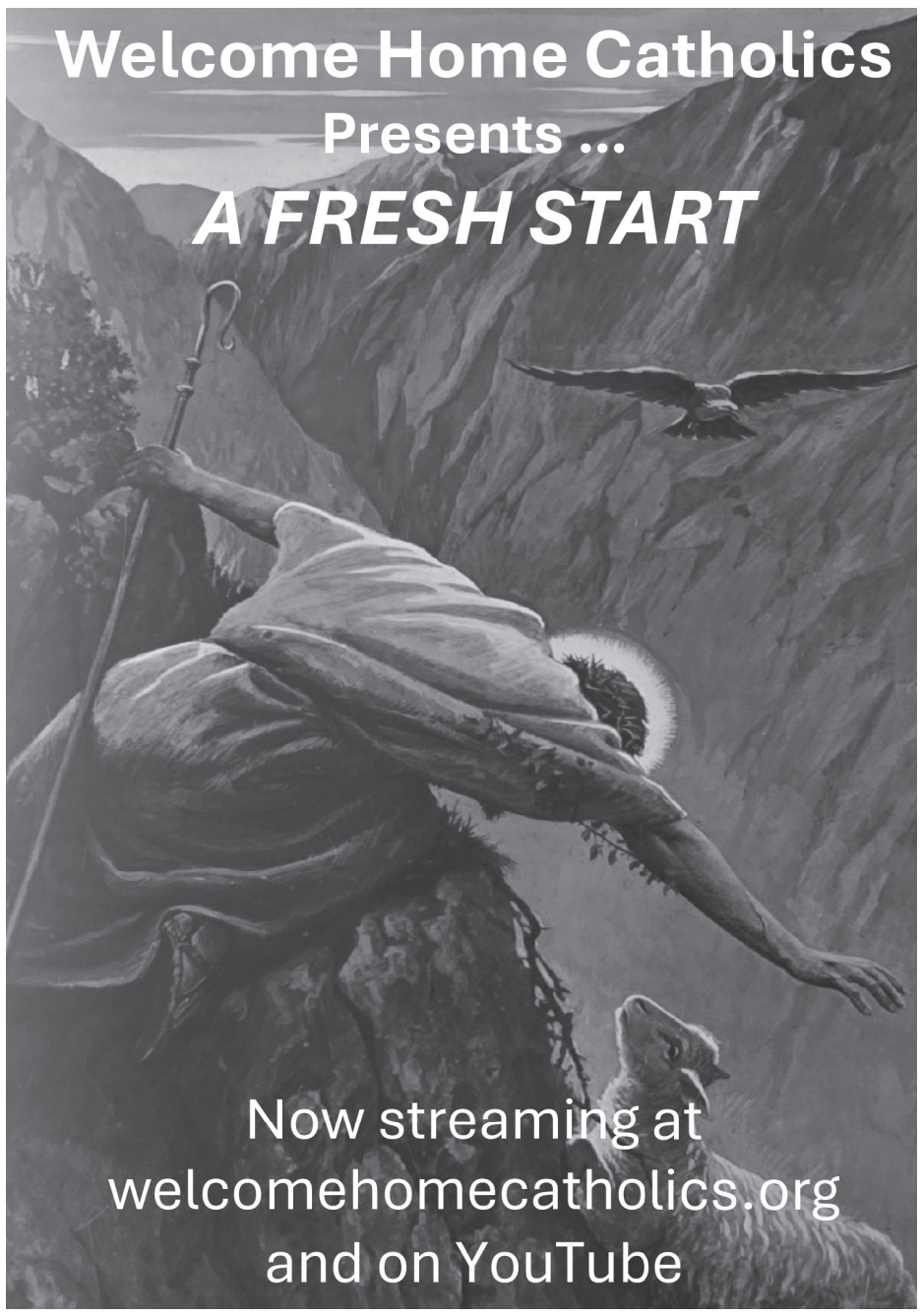
The meetings will include a review of Archdiocese of Mobile youth ministry policies and offer an opportunity for fellowship and collaboration among ministry leaders. Attendance will also count toward the renewal of volunteers' child protection training requirements.

"We are grateful for the ministers who help our youth deepen their faith in prayer and community," said Dillon Stein, director of the Archdiocese of Mobile Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

"Bringing leaders together to share ideas and build community will bear much fruit for our young Church."

— Attendees are asked to RSVP by scanning the QR code above.







VATICAN

Pope Leo: 'My soul magnifies the Lord!'

Pope marks anniversary of election at Marian shrine in Pompeii

By COURTNEY MARES
OSV News

POMPEII, Italy — Pope Leo XIV marked the anniversary of his May 8 election by making a pilgrimage to celebrate Mass at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, one of Italy's most beloved Marian shrines, placing his pontificate under the protection of the Virgin Mary.

"Exactly one year ago, when I was entrusted with the ministry of the Successor of Peter, it was precisely the day of the Supplication to the Virgin, this beautiful feast of the Supplication to the Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii," the pope said in his homily before an estimated 20,000 people gathered in the piazza in front of the basilica.

"I therefore had to come here to place my ministry under the protection of the Blessed Virgin," he said.

The pilgrimage brought Pope Leo XIV full circle: On May 8, 2025, moments after his election, the newly chosen pope led the crowd from the loggia in St. Peter's Basilica in praying a Hail Mary on what happened to be the feast of Our Lady of Pompeii. Now, a year later, the pope began his homily with words echoing Mary's Magnificat: "My soul magnifies the Lord!"

"Brothers and sisters, no earthly power will save the world, but only the divine power of love, this divine power of love that Jesus, the Lord, has revealed to us and given us. Let us believe in Him, let us hope in Him, and let us follow Him," Pope Leo said in Pompeii.

The first pope born in the United States had a busy first year. The Augustinian pope presided over more than 65 public Masses, the canonization of nine saints, apostolic journeys across three continents, audiences with many world leaders, and led the Catholic Church in the celebration of the historic Jubilee of Hope.



Simone Risolutii/Vatican Media, OSV News

Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass in Piazza Bartolo Longo in front of the Pontifical Shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii near Naples, Italy, on May 8, on the first anniversary of his election as the first American pontiff.

On the morning of the May 8 anniversary, the pope traveled south by helicopter from the Vatican to the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii, located near Naples. He began the day by meeting with hundreds of sick and disabled pilgrims inside the basilica before greeting thousands of people gathered in the piazza outside.

The Basilica of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompeii

The Marian shrine has its roots in a remarkable conversion story of a former Satanist who was canonized as a saint by Pope Leo in October as one of the first new saints of his pontificate. The basilica was founded by St. Bartolo Longo, an Italian lawyer and former Satanist who returned to the Catholic faith and dedicated his life to promoting the rosary.

Located near the ancient Roman ruins of Pompeii, the modern city of Pompei was founded after Bartolo Longo built the Marian sanctuary.

"One hundred and fifty years ago, as he laid the cornerstone of this Shrine—on the very spot where the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D. had buried the vestiges of a great civilization under ash, preserving them for centuries—Saint Bartolo Longo, together with his wife, Countess Marianna Farnararo De Fusco, laid the foundations not only of a church, but of an entire Marian city," Pope Leo said.

In addition to the basilica, Bartolo Longo also built up the extensive charity network around the shrine, welcoming orphans and the children of prisoners, and earning two nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize in the early 1900s.

"When Saint Bartolo first arrived in the valley of Pompeii, he found a land plagued by great poverty, inhabited by a few very poor farmers, and ravaged by malaria and bandits. He was able to see, however, the face of Christ in everyone: in the young and the old, and especially in the orphans and the children of prisoners, to whom he made the beating of God's heart felt through his tenderness," the pope said in a meeting with charity volunteers affiliated with the shrine before the Mass.

Pope Leo listened to testimonies from those aided by the shrine's ongoing charitable works before the Eucharistic celebration. Among them was a mother named Serena, who told the pope: "When I arrived, I felt like a failure: a mother who hadn't been able to protect herself and her children from an abusive relationship. But then I began to understand that falling to the ground doesn't

See ANNIVERSARY, Page 15

Eastern Shore
URGENT CARE CENTER
WALK-IN MEDICAL CLINIC
29710 Urgent Care Drive • Daphne, Al
Across From Lowe's In Historic Malbis
251-626-ESUC (3782)
www.esucare.com
NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY
ESTABLISHED IN 2007
HOURS
Monday-Friday
8 - 6
Saturday & Sunday
8 - 3
Michael A. Mahoney, M.D.
Treatment of Non-Life-Threatening Illnesses & Injuries for Adults & children
Sports, School & Employment Physicals
Workers' Compensation Injuries
Drug Screens & Other Lab Services
State-of-the-Art Digital X-Ray On-site
LOCATED ACROSS FROM LOWE'S IN HISTORIC MALBIS
29710 URGENT CARE DRIVE, DAPHNE, AL

Assisting Families
in making essential cemetery arrangements prior to, and at the time of need. Serving Catholic families in the Mobile area for more than 180 years.
CATHOLIC CEMETERY of MOBILE
1700 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AVENUE
356 GOVERNMENT STREET • MOBILE, ALABAMA 36602
251-479-5305
WWW.MOBARCHCEMETERIES.ORG
TILMON BROWN • DIRECTOR

Ordinations

From page 1

of Hope and all are invited to attend.

For Deacon Armstrong and Charnock, seemingly ordinary encounters with priests and seminarians helped shape their vocations.

Charnock, a Mobile native who grew up in St. Dominic and St. Pius X parishes, said he first seriously considered seminary during his senior year at McGill-Toolen Catholic High School after attending a retreat led by then-Archdiocese of Mobile Vocations Director Fr. Victor Ingalls.

"We went kayaking, grilled burgers, and played Monopoly Deal for hours," Charnock said. "I never thought a priest had a personality."

"To see a priest that was energetic and funny, as well as spiritual, made me start to think that I could do that," he added.

Deacon Armstrong's path to seminary was less direct.

A Montgomery native who grew up at Our Lady Queen of Mercy Parish and Holy Spirit Parish, Deacon Armstrong enrolled at Auburn University to study civil engineering. He joined a fraternity and envisioned a much different future for himself.

"I wanted to go to Auburn University, join a fraternity, marry a beautiful woman, have a bunch of kids, and live in Smalltown, Alabama," Deacon Armstrong said.

But over time, Deacon Armstrong said he began feeling an emptiness as he drifted from the faith.

By 2018, after stepping away from Auburn for a semester, Deacon Armstrong attended the March for Life in Washington, D.C., with his family. During the trip, repeated highway signs for "Seminary Road" grabbed his attention. So did a talk a talk his sister gave to high school students about hypocrisy. "That talk cut like a knife," he said. "I had prayed for a sign, and He gave me one,"

Soon afterward, Deacon Armstrong visited St. Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology with other young men discerning priesthood. While standing near a Marian grotto overlooking the snow-covered campus and having a one-on-one conversation with Fr. Peyton Plessala, Deacon Armstrong said he experienced a deep sense of peace.



Ordinations of Deacon Gaten Armstrong Edward Charnock and Bro. Michael Mong'are Ooga, FMH

10 a.m. Saturday, May 30
Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Mobile

ABOVE: Deacon Gaten Armstrong was ordained a transitional deacon on May 31, 2025, at the Cathedral-Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. One year later, he will be ordained to the priesthood on May 30 at the Cathedral.

File photo by Rob Herbst The Catholic Week

According to Deacon Armstrong, Fr. Plessala said, "Wherever He is calling you, He will give you that peace."

"In that moment, I knew that God was inviting me into that peace," Deacon Armstrong said.

Deacon Armstrong eventually studied philosophy at St. Joseph Abbey Seminary College before returning to St. Meinrad for theological studies. Charnock also studied at St. Joseph Seminary College before continuing formation at St. Meinrad.

As ordination approaches, Deacon Armstrong said the anticipation has steadily grown. He has spent the last few months ministering at St. Dominic Parish.

While deacons can preach, baptize and witness marriages, Deacon Armstrong compared the experience to being trained in a gym without fully being able to use the equipment yet.

"You've been taught the proper forms to work out in a gym, the different machines, etc., but you can't touch the equipment yet," Deacon Armstrong said. "You can only use the 5 or 10-pound dumbbells."

Priesthood, he said, will finally allow him to fully enter sacramental ministry.

"I'll be able to go to a hospital and actually anoint someone," Deacon Armstrong said. "I'll be able to say yes to someone when they ask to be reconciled back to God through the sacrament of Reconciliation."

Charnock, 25, said he also feels a growing sense of peace ahead of ordination.

"Now I feel peace that I am where I need to be," Charnock said. "That makes me excited and eager to begin."

Deacon Armstrong said much of his excitement comes from the opportunity to serve the people of the Archdiocese of Mobile after years of seminary formation and summer assignments throughout the archdiocese.

"The people of our Archdiocese have also been the source of a lot of excitement and eagerness," Armstrong said. "Everyone here are so great and loving toward their priests and the Church."

Both chose priests currently serving at St. Columba Parish in Dothan to vest them. Parochial Vicar Fr. Rich Perkins, who was ordained to the priesthood last year, will vest Armstrong during the ordination Mass, while Pastor Fr. Jim Dane will vest Charnock. Both Deacon Armstrong and Charnock pointed to those priests as influential examples of joyful priestly service.

"While (studying) at St. Meinrad, (Fr. Perkins) would often say, 'My life is a gift' when he chose to do acts of service, small or large, to his fellow seminarians," Deacon Armstrong said. "When I was thinking of who's priesthood and an example that I want to my own after … of course you could really pick any priest in our archdiocese, but Fr. Rich Perkins immediately came to mind."

Anniversary

From page 14

necessarily mean staying there."

Today the Pompeii shrine dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary draws approximately 3 million pilgrims annually.

Pope Leo XIII and the rosary

On his anniversary, Pope Leo XIV reflected on how his choice of the papal name Leo connects him to Pope Leo XIII, who championed devotion to the rosary.

"Having chosen the name Leo places me in the footsteps of Leo XIII, who, among his other merits, also developed an extensive Magisterium on the Holy Rosary," the pope said.

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV reflected at length on the importance of praying the rosary.

"The Hail Mary is an invitation to joy," he said. "It tells Mary—and through her, all of us—that upon the ruins of our humanity, tried by sin and therefore ever prone to oppression, abuse, and war, God's caress has come, the caress of mercy, which takes on a human face in Jesus."

He described the repetition of Hail Mary in the prayer of the rosary as an echo of the angel Gabriel's greeting at the Annunciation, an echo "that spans the centuries and directs the believer's gaze to Jesus, seen through the eyes and heart of his Mother."

In the rosary, he said, "Jesus is adored, contemplated, and assimilated in each of his mysteries, so that with Saint Paul we may say: 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me' (Gal 2:20)."

A plea for peace

The pope closed his homily with an urgent appeal for peace, noting that "times have not improved" in the quarter century since St. John Paul II placed the Year of the Rosary under the patronage of Our Lady of Pompeii.

"The wars still being waged in so many regions of the world call for a renewed commitment, not only economic and political, but also spiritual and religious," Pope Leo said. "Peace is born in the heart. … We cannot resign ourselves to the images of death that the news presents to us every day."

Invoking the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the pope prayed that "the God of peace would pour out an overflowing abundance of mercy, touching hearts, soothing grudges and fratricidal hatred, and enlightening those who bear special responsibilities of governance."

Following Mass, the pope led the crowd in praying the traditional Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii, the prayer composed by St. Bartolo Longo himself that is prayed each year on May 8 and the first Sunday of October by Catholics in Italy and around the world.

24 HOUR WRECKER SERVICE
SPECTRUM COLLISION
Marie Stringfellow, *Marketing*
(251) 342-0005 • FAX 342-1145
7060 AIRPORT BLVD. • MOBILE, AL 36608

Farnell
HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING, INC.
We Care About Your Comfort
areyou energywise
High Efficient Natural Gas
H. R. Farnell, Jr.
President
251-471-2674
www.farnellac.com

BIENVILLE
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
GENERAL CONTRACTING &
LOAN DISBURSEMENT ADVISEMENT
Phillip DeKeyser
BienvilleCS.com • 251.220.4406

Springhill Dentistry
Dr. Jospeh M Crow
Dr. Bailey Crow Hines
Family Dentistry
4634 Bit & Spur Road
Mobile, AL 36609
Ph: (251) 342-4926 SHD@byrddentalgroup.com

HOPE NEEDS A HELPING HAND.
Become a CASA volunteer!

Are you interested in a volunteer role where you really know you are making a difference for some of the most vulnerable children in our community? CASA volunteers make a life-changing difference for a child. Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers advocate for the best-interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Volunteers work to ensure that judges have all the information they need to make the most well-informed decisions for each child. More volunteers are desperately needed. There's a child waiting for someone like you. CASA Mobile conducts several new volunteer training courses each year. If you believe you are ready to change a child's story please visit casamobile.org to find out more or call 251-574-5277.

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
CASA OF MOBILE COUNTY

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS

ST. MARTIN OF TOURS PARISH, TROY



Photo by Debi Green/For The Catholic Week

Reyne Gibson crowns Mary on Mother's Day at St. Martin of Tours Parish in Troy to honor our true mother.

Central/Eastern Europe and Africa Collection
Collection date: March 29, 2026

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception	**875.00**	St. John the Baptist, Grand Bay	271.00
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos	564.10	**St. John the Baptist, Montgomery**	**84.15**
Christ the King, Andalusia	**125.00**	St. John the Evangelist, Butler	116.00
Christ the King, Daphne	1,831.00	**St. John the Evangelist, Enterprise**	**2,127.51**
Corpus Christi	**371.25**	St. John the Evangelist, Ozark	194.00
Holy Family	355.00	**St. Joseph, Holy Trinity**	**385.00**
Holy Name of Jesus	**409.81**	St. Joseph, Lillian	402.00
Holy Redeemer	200.00	**St. Joseph, Maysville**	**133.00**
Holy Spirit	**2,564.22**	St. Joseph, Prattville	463.00
Little Flower	2,090.72	**St. Joseph, Tuskegee Institute**	**210.00**
Most Pure Heart of Mary	**121.00**	St. Jude	1,211.00
Our Lady of Guadalupe,Clio	558.00	**St. Lawrence**	**1,278.64**
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Wetumpka	**431.00**	St. Margaret	478.00
Our Lady of Lourdes	263.00	**St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland**	**900.00**
Our Lady, Queen of Mercy	**1,576.00**	St. Martin of Tours	55.00
Our Lady Queen of Peace	800.00	**St. Mary, Mobile**	**125.00**
Our Savior	**1,381.14**	St. Matthew	285.00
Resurrection	100.00	**St. Michael, Auburn**	**2,940.00**
Sacred Heart	**135.00**	St. Patrick, Phenix City	944.00
Shrine of the Holy Cross	493.10	**St. Patrick, Robertsdale**	**777.00**
St. Andrew Kim Taegon	**20.00**	St. Peter	628.79
St. Bartholomew	300.00	**St. Philip Neri**	**35.00**
St. Bede the Venerable	**4,190.68**	St. Pius X, Mobile	332.00
St. Bridget	50.00	**St. Pius X, Union Springs**	**50.00**
St. Catherine of Siena	**81.00**	St. Robert Bellarmine	217.00
St. Columba	397.00	**St. Rose of Lima**	**230.60**
St. Dominic	**701.00**	St. Thomas by the Sea	2,980.02
St. Edmund-by-the-Sea	449.00	**St. Thomas the Apostle, Chickasaw**	**50.00**
St. Elizabeth	**160.00**	St. Vincent de Paul, Mobile	222.00
St. Ignatius	1,344.00	**St. Vincent de Paul, Tallassee**	**200.00**
St. James Major	**90.00**	**Grand Total**	**41,661.73**
St. Joan of Arc	65.00		
St. John	**245.00**		

— To ensure inclusion in the collection report, all money must be sent to the Fiscal Management Office within two weeks of the special collection.

PEDIATRICIAN
Savannah Browning, M.D.
Children's Medical Group, PA
(251)-342-3810
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK | MOBILE, ALABAMA
PARISHIONER AT ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Custom designed jewelry
Gold Art
DESIGN IN JEWELRY
PAT, DANNY AND TONY CLARKE
PH. (251)342-6303
4503 Old Shell Road
Mobile, Alabama
Hours 9:30 - 5:00, Mon. - Sat.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Knights host 123rd state convention in Atmore





Photos courtesy of Ryan Marks/For The Catholic Week

The Knights of Columbus held their 123rd Alabama State Convention May 1–3 at the Wind Creek Hotel and Casino in Atmore. Among the highlights was the "Breakfast with the Bishops," a staple Saturday morning event.
ABOVE LEFT: Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso delivers a blessing during the breakfast.
ABOVE RIGHT: Archbishop Rivituso and Archbishop Emeritus Thomas J. Rodi are joined by (from left) Fr. Tom Weise, Msgr. Warren Wall, Bishop Steven J. Raica of the Diocese of Birmingham and Bishop Emeritus Robert J. Baker of Birmingham.

The Knights also presented awards and donations during the convention. Fr. Zachary Greenwell, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Enterprise, was named Clergy of the Year.
BELOW LEFT: Keith Bardell of Knights of Columbus Council 11480 accepts the award on behalf of Fr. Greenwell from State Deputy Bill Mores.
BELOW RIGHT: State Deputy Mores presents a $1,000 check to Archbishop Rivituso in support of Archdiocese of Mobile seminarians.





The Catholic Week Digest

Free E-Newsletter sent to your inbox every two weeks!

Subscribe at mobarch.org/thecatholicweek



StateFarm®
LAD DRAGO
Christ the King Parishioner
(251) 626-1237
lad@laddragoinsurance.com
www.laddragoinsurance.com

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

ST. BENEDICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

12786 Illinois St. | Elberta, AL 36530

Principal: Kai Lopez
Grades: PreK3-8th Grade
www.saintbenedict.net
251-986-8143





Our principal, Mr. Lopez, and third-grade students worked as a team to build a cup pyramid using only strings and rubber bands. All of the students enjoyed the challenge of communicating and succeeding!

ABOVE, RIGHT: The second graders completed a retreat ahead of their First Communion to make banners and monstrances.





The entire school and many parents recently participated in a Mass honoring all life. After the Mass, students, faculty and parents marched for life around the church.



Middle school students portrayed the Living Stations of the Cross as third-grade students narrated. School students and parents attended in preparation for Easter.

Editor's note: This is a series that highlights happenings at one school in the Archdiocese of Mobile. This week's featured school: ***St. Benedict Catholic School, Elberta.*** *Photos courtesy of Cookie Krehling*

ST. MARGARET PARISH, BAYOU LA BATRE

Tradition continues with 77th Fleet Blessing



By The Catholic Week

BAYOU LA BATRE — St. Margaret Parish in Bayou La Batre held its 77th annual Blessing of the Fleet festival May 2-3.

It was Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso's first Blessing of the Fleet celebration. He celebrated Sunday Mass at St. Margaret, then continued the tradition set before him of tossing Tootsie Rolls to those watching the parade.

It culminated with the blessing of boats and docked vessels during the boat parade. Archbishop Rivituso blessed a wreath that was placed in the water by parish Pastor Fr. Michael Long Vu, SVD in remembrance of those lost at sea.

In 1949, St. Margaret Parish held its first Blessing of the Fleet envisioned by a parishioner, Clarence Mallet, who moved to Bayou La Batre from Louisiana in 1925 with a strong belief that God's blessings were essential to a good harvest from the sea. With this conviction, he convinced Fr. Alex O'Neill to hold the first Blessing of the Fleet.





ABOVE: Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso blesses boats during the Blessing of the Fleet celebration on May 3 in Bayou La Batre. FAR LEFT: Archbishop Rivituso and St. Margaret Parish Pastor Fr. Michael Long Vu, SVD show off their haul of Tootsie Rolls before they were thrown to parade watchers. LEFT: Faithful filled St. Margaret Parish for Sunday Mass on May 3.

Photos courtesy of
Christian Delburn
For The Catholic Week
Visit Facebook.com
mobilearchdiocese
for more photos



MOBILE
FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORY

Jim Kahalley/Owner

Full Traditional Funerals and Burial.

Or

Crematory and Memorial Services.
Your Church or using our Funeral Home.
The choice is yours. Our prices are more economical and affordable than most of our competitors.

Family Owned and Family Focused
690 Zeigler Circle West Mobile, AL 36608
(251) 633-4733
On Site Crematory

Prince of Peace Church
ANNUAL LAWN FESTIVAL

KIDS ACTIVITES, HOMEMADE GOODS, PLATE SALES, & LIVE BAND
10K IN CASH PRIZES!!!

SATURDAY, MAY 30TH
ALL YOU CAN EAT CRAWFISH
WITH DRAWDOWN TICKET
1PM - UNTIL

SUNDAY, MAY 31ST
DJ & RAFFLE DRAWINGS
1PM - UNTIL



Contact
Claudia Delmas

cdelmas
@mobarch.org
or 251-434-1543

to advertise in
The Catholic Week

Fr. Shields

From page 1

pastor of St. Ignatius Parish, said he was deeply moved by the outpouring of support.

"It's a great honor," he said. "I'm overwhelmed. I just can't believe that so many people came. I really hate being honored — I'm more used to talking about other people than being talked about. I don't like doing that, but today is very special because I could tell people were honoring not just me but the wonderful time they had here at McGill-Toolen."

One of the celebration's special moments came during a special presentation in which representatives from each graduating class during Fr. Shields' 44 years at McGill-Toolen processed forward carrying roses as part of a spiritual bouquet Rosary honoring the Blessed Mother.

"I was shocked by the number of people who came up with a rose," he said. "Absolutely overwhelmed. That was just so amazing."

The celebration also included the unveiling and blessing of a statue of St. John Henry Newman, now permanently displayed in the school's student center as a tribute to Fr. Shields' legacy and commitment to Catholic education.





Current McGill-Toolen Principal Blake Stein, who will become president next school year, praised Fr. Shields for the lasting impact he has had on the school community.

"His years of quiet leadership, steady presence and deep care for our students and faculty have left a lasting mark on this school," Stein said.

Former Administrative Assistant to Fr. Shields, Odile Schneider, said Fr. Shields remained focused throughout his tenure on creating a strong Catholic environment rooted in excellence.

"Fr. Shields has always had that one goal, creating a place of excellence where knowledge, faith and character are nurtured," Schneider said.

Fr. Shields first arrived at McGill-Toolen in 1982 as a theology teacher after entering the Catholic Church earlier that same year. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1984 and became the school's first president in 1989 under a new president-principal model adopted by the Archdiocese of Mobile.

Over the next four decades, he became one of the defining figures in the history of McGill-Toolen, helping oversee major campus growth while strengthening the school's Catholic identity and fostering pride in academics, athletics and faith formation.

At the conclusion of Mass, Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso reflected on Fr. Shields' priestly ministry and servant leadership.

"Having a heart like the Lord, who truly came to be of service, (Fr. Shields) lifts us up in goodness by his leadership, humbly serving all of you," Archbishop Rivituso said.

LEFT: Archbishop Mark S. Rivituso, Archbishop Emeritus Thomas J. Rodi and other clergy members joined by for the celebration of Fr. Bry Shields on May at McGill-Toolen Catholic High School.

BELOW: Archbishop Rivituso blesses a statue of St. John Henry Newman, which stands at the high school in Fr. Shields' honor.

Photos courtesy of Elizabeth Gelineau For The Catholic Week

See What's New on the Archangel Radio App

archangel radio 1410 AM 94.5 FM

Carry Catholic Radio in Your Pocket.
Lower Alabama.

Apple Android

Local Voices, Global Catholics
archangelradio.com