

## OLPS Jr. High youth hitching CABLE ride to heaven

By Sid McDaniel

I had a recent opportunity to sit down with Felicia Schneider, the director of OLPS' Junior High Youth Ministry, to see what is going on these days with our "middle-aged youth" at OLPS. It was great to get a sense of what's happening.

Every Wednesday evening, between 60-80 students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades gather from 6-7:30 p.m. at the DPC for "Edge Night," an offshoot of the Life Teen Program for high school teens.

These evenings consist of prayer, a game, a 10-15-minute talk by a leader followed by small group discussions, a "challenge" for the week, and, of course, snacks. A parish supper is also available, where youth and/or their families can enjoy a convenient dinner together, starting at 5 p.m. They are then welcome to begin showing up at 5:30 in the youth room to hang, giving adult leaders a chance to get to know them on a more informal basis.

In addition to Edge Nights, there are other spiritual enrichment activities offered, such as an annual Jr. High Youth Rally, retreats, and Camp Hidden Lake or Catholic Heart Workcamps in the summer. Plans for the Spring include exposure to Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

Felicia said the mission of the program is simple: "To help kids get to heaven!" Their motto is "CABLE": an acronym for Come and Be Loved Everyday. She and her team are committed to loving each teen unconditionally, regardless of where they are in their faith life. OLPS Youth from all schools are WELCOME, and they can even bring a friend. Students from six or more schools are represented, helping them to bond as a church community as they explore their Catholic faith more deeply.

Edge has team of adult leaders, including Megan Beck, Sarah Branton, Rebekah Brocato, Diane Drago, KK Gallagher, John Jeanise, Josh Kidd, Kyle Lachney, Caroline Lessens, Joel Perrotti, Chandler Pinkerton and Joel Steverson.

Felicia is happy to speak to anyone who has questions or would like to get involved in the program, either as a participant or an adult leader. Her phone number is (318) 613-3497. If you have a young person in this age group who has not yet attended, we invite them to get involved so they can begin their teen years with a strong spiritual foundation and faith community. You can also check out our Instagram page at [olpsedge\\_Alexandria](#).

If you would like to get an idea of the energy and enthusiasm of this segment of our church family, just show up at the parish supper in the DPC on Wednesday nights and you will feel the vibrancy in the atmosphere as these youth gather next door.



**Jr. High Youth Group members gather and hold hands in prayer.**



## Parishioners elect two to Pastoral Council

Two parishioners have been elected to the OLPS Pastoral Council: Anita Go and John Moylan. They will be filling the spots vacated by Jamie Perrotti and Bob Tompkins, who rotated off the council after serving since 2018.

Other parishioners who are on the council are Steve Gauthier, president; Brandon Monceaux, George Hardy, Kasey Gill and Phil Brocato.

## O Come Let Us Adore Him

By Jan Bordelon

During Advent the church was opened at 6 a.m. prior to Mass to offer parishioners time in Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament.

This was a continuation of the Eucharistic Revival for 2024. Deacon Mike Young believes that spending time before Our Lord in Adoration is very rewarding in preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus.

Several people regularly spent time in Adoration before Mass. Advent Adoration begins at 6 a.m. with silent prayer and then Deacon Mike leads the community in vocal prayers at 6:25 a.m. Mass is offered at 6:30 a.m.

Everyone in attendance is appreciative of spending time in Adoration before Mass begins. Deacon Young realizes it is a sacrifice to get there early but sees the graces as gifts in return for the effort.

Advent will soon be over, but every Friday Our Lady of Prompt Succor opens the church from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. for Adoration. Recently there has been a change in entering the church on Fridays. The entrance is now via the back door closest to the 21st Street/parking lot side of the church. A code will be given to you at the Rectory office to gain access. This is for security purposes.

Sometimes only one person is present inside the church. This will provide a secure place and worry-free time of prayer.

If you haven't been to Adoration on Friday at Prompt Succor Church, please consider making a date with the Lord! Committing to regular Adoration with an open heart can have some surprising results.

The atmosphere of a quiet church, the perpetually lit Tabernacle candle and the sight of the monstrance instill a sense of awe and wonder. Peace will envelop you.

Yes, sometimes your mind will wander, but return to Him. You are giving God the best gift you can -- your time and company. Soon you will want to spend more time with Him in Adoration because it is fulfilling. We were created to adore. Soon gratitude will abound in you. Oh come let us adore Him! Now and in the season of Christmas.

Adoration is imprinted on our hearts and, as St. Augustine said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in You."



**Several parishioners have gathered regularly for the Advent Adoration offered before 6:30 a.m. weekday Masses.**

## STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

My parish is composed of people like me. I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly, if I am. It will be holy, if I am.

Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them. It will do great work, if I work.

It will be prayerful, if I pray.

It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver.

It will bring others into worship, if I invite and bring them in.

It will be a place of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, of compassion, charity and mercy, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these same things.

Therefore, with the help of God, I now dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my parish to be.

Amen.

# Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish News

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

## Christ split time in two

Dear Parishioners of OLPS Church and School:

Time is a gift, one that can easily be taken for granted. In our youth, we tend to think we will remain young forever. Then, in middle age and the later years, one senses that his or her days are indeed limited. Really, at any stage of life, we do not know just how much time we have remaining to our earthly journey, so we must live each day with faith in God. And, as we advance, it is helpful to mark significant events and junctures, such as moments of sacramental initiation, birthdays and anniversaries.

In the larger scope of history, every 25 years, the Catholic Church observes a major Jubilee or "Holy Year" with a special focus. This has been the case since 1470, when Pope Paul II changed it from being observed every 50 years. Many of us vividly recall the great Jubilee Year 2000, when, with Pope St. John Paul II, we celebrated two millennia of the Catholic Christian Faith. At that time, I was a newly ordained priest. I remember fondly all the excitement and hope of the Jubilee 2000!

In between the 25-year junctures, a pope can also proclaim an Extraordinary Jubilee, like the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy which Pope Francis inaugurated in the year 2015. In these and other ways, such as the marking of the current calendar year on the large Paschal Candle specially blessed each spring at the great Easter Vigil Mass, we recognize that time has a purpose in Christ. When we seek to do God's Will, we find that time, according to God's Plan, is sacred.

Pope Francis, in his recent papal bull or letter "Hope Does not Disappoint," states, "Everyone knows what it is to hope; in the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future will bring."

Our world has changed greatly since the year 2000. We hear so often of the added

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## Catholic Daughters sponsor Giving Tree for Pregnancy Center

By Janet Tompkins

Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church and its Catholic Daughters sponsored the Christmas Giving Tree to help the Cenla Pregnancy Center (CPC). Two pickup truck loads of gifts were delivered to the agency that helps any pregnant woman through a problematic pregnancy.

"We know that the Cenla Pregnancy Center has been a tremendous benefit to the women and children of Central Louisiana," said Bridget Joubert, Catholic Daughters president. "Many children's lives have been saved and improved by their intervention."

Ornaments on the tree in church identified various items needed to restock the Baby Boutique. Mothers earn "bucks" through their participation in parenting classes to stock the necessary items needed in their homes for their babies. Everything from cribs to strollers and blankets and diapers are at the center.

The tree was up for 4 weeks and parishioners took an ornament and returned the gift needed or the dollar amount to the rectory. The Knights of Columbus arranged for the gifts to be taken to the center located at 1254 MacArthur Drive next to the Baptist Building.

The center is supported by churches throughout the area, and expectant mothers pay no money for their pregnancy diagnosis and counseling. Kim Lyons, CPC director, is a member of OLPS church.

There are two other satellite centers located in Marksville and Vidalia.

Susan Harrison, former Catholic Daughters president, was a volunteer at the CPC when the idea came up for the Christmas drive. Years ago, OLPS had a giving tree to donate presents for families at Christmas through the Shepherd Center. That agency has since gone out of business.

"We asked Father Rusty if we could do the drive for the Pregnancy Center and he agreed," Harrison said. Catholic Daughters members Betsy Lanclous, Dee Gilbert and Kim Herrington set up the tree and ornaments for the drive.



**Volunteers (from left) Steve Gauthier, Jan Bordelon and Dwayne Simpson helped load gifts from the Giving Tree to bring to the Cenla Pregnancy Center.**

# Devotion to Mary inspires Bayone to lead Food Pantry

By Bob Tompkins

Chris Bayone heads the St. Timothy Center Food Pantry for OLPS, but her service in this ministry is an outgrowth of an ardent faith nourished by a profound experience with Our Blessed Mother. In February of 2016, Chris left Alexandria to enter the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of the Church in Baltic, Conn. During her short time there, she had an extraordinary experience one day at Mass, after receiving communion.

"I was drawn by the light into this barn-like place," Chris began. "I walked in, and Mary was holding the baby Jesus. She picked him up and he was crying, and she noticed that I was in there and asked me if I'd like to hold Him. I did, and she said, 'Every time you receive communion, every time you receive Him, it's the same Jesus that walked the earth, died and rose again.'

"It's been eight years," she continued, her eyes puddling with tears, "and I still have that memory when I go to Mass. Every time I think about it, especially around Christmas, it has a profound effect on me. I know it's real."

Nonetheless, Chris, who had taken the name Sister John Paul, left the convent some six months later, feeling homesick and out of place in New Jersey. She had spent two years with her spiritual director, Fr. Charlie Ray, in discerning her vocation before entering the novitiate.

"It was not for me," she said. "The people on the East Coast are different, the food is different. I never felt the call (to be a nun) again."

"A cradle Catholic, Chris and her sister, Julie, the OLPS parish manager, were raised by Victor and Germaine Bayone. Victor worked as a cameraman and in production at the KALB radio and TV stations, and Germaine was a nurse at the Veterans Administration Center. Chris relished her Catholic education at St. Frances Cabrini Elementary School and Menard High School.

A biology/chemistry major at Louisiana College (now Louisiana Christian University), Chris worked 18 years with the Alexandria police Department as a record clerk in criminal investigation. She now works as an administrative secretary in the purchasing department for the City of Alexandria.

Chris joined OLPS Church in 2013 after making an ACTS retreat in June of that year. A guitar player, she has teamed with the music ministry several times on ACTS retreats, including serving as the director in June of '18.

Bayone started the Food Pantry Ministry in February of 2018. She said the pastor then, Fr. Dan O'Connor, let her start the ministry thinking the church might have to help at first supplying food items, "but we got large donations, all funded by parishioner donations, and we've been surviving on parishioner donations since."

Chris helps coordinate the process of the month food distribution and organizing of foods with volunteers.

"This ministry is very active in helping persons in need," said Fr. Rusty Rabalais, OLPS pastor, "and all the more around the upcoming holiday time."

Bayone said those the pantry serves are either homeless or the working poor.

"We usually make about 125 bags of food in advance," she said, "but we often have to make more, as much as 150. We don't judge, we don't ask for an ID. The Girl Scouts, Beta Club and Menard students needing project hours come and volunteer" for the distribution on the final Saturday morning of the month, except for November and December, when it's the next-to-last Saturday.

Her inspiration to lead the Food Pantry Ministry at OLPS is near at hand. "I have so much devotion to the Blessed Mother," she said, "and it starts up again outside of church by the Madonna Complex whenever I see the statue of her and Baby Jesus."



Chris Bayone poses by Mary with Baby Jesus statue near Madonna Complex.

*"If a tiny spark of God's love already burns within you, do not expose it to the wind, for it may get blown out. Stay quiet with God . . . Do not give yourself to others so completely that you have nothing left for yourself."*

— St. Charles Borromeo

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challenges of our times, from increased crime rate to wars and the uncertainties of the emerging AI. Since the future is unknown to us, we can live in fear, or we can walk in faith. Both fear and faith require believing in something you can't fully see. We must choose. However, we do know this, from St. Paul: "All things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8: 28)

If we are filled with hope, with God's help, our faith and love will always win the day!

Tempus Fugit - Time flies! As we reach the end of the calendar year, we may hear someone ask, "Where has the year gone?" In our modern world of instant communication and news, it does seem that time goes by too quickly. We need to slow down and focus on the One by whom our time is measured.

And so, as we enter 2025, may we pause in prayer to recognize

that we are not observing just any year. Rather, we are measuring time according to the Incarnation and birth of Christ, the One whose birth literally split time in two, into the period before His birth (B.C.) and the period afterwards (A.D.) That is, it will be 2025 A.D. — Annon Domini, In the Year of Our Lord ... two thousand and twenty-five years since the Word became Flesh and Jesus entered our world (Jn. 1: 14).

May we arrive to the New Year with the joy of Christmas and may the Jubilee Year 2025 be one above all of hope, great HOPE in the LORD!

Along with our church and school staff, I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas Season and the blessings of the Jubilee Year of Hope that is beginning!

Sincerely in Christ,  
Fr. Rusty Rabalais

# Half-way point nears for weekly OCIA process

By Steve & Robin Gauthier

For adults desiring to become Catholic, the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults(OCIA) is the process normally taken to do that. A large part of the process is participating in weekly classes on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 in the Madonna Room. Catholics are also welcome to come and learn more about our faith, join in the discussions, welcome the participants into our community, and grow in our relationship with Christ together.

There are 15 people seeking to become Catholic, and several Catholics are coming to support them. We lead the classes. Steve began helping with the program in 2010 as a presenter and Robin joined him in 2020.

"It has been an incredible blessing in our lives," Steve says. "Ministering together as a married couple has proven that God will not be outdone in generosity for those who seek to serve Him."

"Participant Emily Baum said she originally decided to sit in on a few OCIA classes after her sister-in-law/best friend passed away in February. "She was attending the 2023-2024 classes," Baum said, "and was unable to finish before she passed on. While my intentions were to finish the classes for her, I ended up finding a profound comfort in the Catholic faith. I believe that through her intercession, she paved a way for me to find a home with the Church (with a capital "C", as she would say).

"Growing up Protestant," she continued, "I had a solid foundation rooted in Christ, but when I encountered the presence of God during Adoration, I was provided with more answers than I could have ever asked. What captured me the most about Catholicism is the Eucharist and how I have access to Jesus every single time I go to Mass.

"I'm counting the days until I can finally partake in the miracle!" Prompt Succor parishioner Cindy Naus said OCIA is a ministry worth checking out.

"As a cradle Catholic," Naus said, "I've found there is still a lot to learn about my faith. OCIA takes off where CCD left off. Steve and Robin present topics that we have little or no knowledge of. We get explanations of why we say and do certain things at Mass and in our

prayers. (Did you know that to "pray" means to "ask"?)The Gauthier's keep our group engaged and active. So far, they have answered all our questions or told us how to find the answers. So happy to be in this class!"

There are 28 classes from August to April. Topics already covered include the human search for God, where did the bible come from, the Mass, salvation history, and the saints. There was a Q&A session with Fr. Rusty in October.

After the first of the year, we'll be covering the sacraments, dogmas, mercy, prayer, and preparation for first confession. The class on January 14th will be an overview of the seven sacraments before covering each sacrament in detail in subsequent classes. That would be a good class to attend if you're interested.

Do you or someone you know have some questions about Catholicism or faith in general but haven't been attending OCIA? Steve and Robin would love to talk to you about that. Call or text Steve at (318) 308-3699.



Non-Catholics wanting to enter the Catholic Church, and some Catholics wanting to learn more, attend regular classes about the Catholic faith.

# Fun, faith, fellowship, food fuel Sr. High Youth Group

By Susan Harrison

Every Sunday about 40 teens meet at the Divine Providence Center from 6:30 to 8:30 pm for their weekly OLPS High School Youth Group meeting.

The youth come from around Rapides Parish, attending Menard, Tioga, Pineville, ASH and Northwood high schools. Some are home schooled. They all want to build a community of God-loving teens, a place to go where everyone thinks and feels like them about God, according to youth group leader Kevin Malone.

"I preach about fun, faith, fellowship and food, the four F's of youth group," Malone said. Most of the teens come directly from 5:30 pm Mass, so adults make sure they have a full meal waiting for them. Fun includes seasonal parties and games. Faith and Fellowship are the core of the group. The games reflect the theme of the talks. Occasionally the group leaves OLPS for their meeting, as when they visited Wayback Arcade earlier this year.

In addition to weekly meetings while school is in session, teens have opportunities to attend four Catholic youth activities over the summer. In 2025, the group will attend Steubenville South held every summer in Alexandria. The dates for 2025 are June 20-22.

There will be a Teen ACTS retreat July 31-August 3. They also will have an opportunity to attend Cove Crest Catholic camp July 13-19 in Georgia, and Catholic Heart Work Camp June 29-July 5 (location not yet determined).

To help defray the cost of youth group activities, they held a bake sale after Sunday Masses December 14-15, and will hold a golf tournament in March 2025. Malone said they are looking for sponsors for the golf tournament.



Members of the Sr. High Youth Group made mummies of each other before learning about incorruptible saints.