



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK: JAN. 30-FEB. 5

A snapshot of Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native-born American to be declared a saint, established the first Catholic school in the nation in 1808. Today, there are 5,981 Catholic schools in the U.S., six of which are in the Diocese of Lake Charles. Those schools will join others across the country January 30 – February 5 to celebrate National Catholic Schools Week.

Throughout the school year, Bishop Glen John Provost makes annual visits to the six schools and is aware of the eagerness on the part of the students to learn and their openness to instruction.

“The Catholic students I meet are enthusiastic. They are excited about being in a classroom,” Bishop Provost observed. “They want knowledge, which includes knowing Jesus Christ Himself. This, in my opinion, is the hallmark of Catholic students.”

Kimberlee Gazzolo, Superintendent in the Diocese of Lake Charles, said that Catholic Schools Week is the perfect time to celebrate the gift of a Catholic education.

“Through the sacrifice of parents, the dedication of Catholic school employees and the support of religious and clergy, students of Catholic schools will emerge as strong members of their communities living their faith on a daily basis,” said Gazzolo.

Catholic schools are committed to the development of the whole person — mind, body and spirit.

“Students not only learn the tenets of the Catholic faith, but their entire spiritual and academic formation is based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” Gazzolo continued. “Students celebrate Mass weekly and participate in a variety of liturgical celebrations. Each school’s Religious Education department plans time for Eucharistic Adoration, prayer, and celebration of Holy Days of Obligation.”

The mission of Catholic education is to prepare the student to face the challenges of the future as a Catholic Christian, firmly rooted in the faith filled with hope, and living charity. Bishop Provost said that the key to formation of students as disciples in Christ is the teacher.

“The one who instructs must imitate Christ in a special way,” he said. “Students learn as much, if not more, from example than by words, although verbalization is necessary. It is a total picture. The more Christ-like the teacher, the more likely the student will imitate Christ.”

Catholic Schools offer an opportunity with an approach to education which is, as Bishop Provost describes, “unapologetically Catholic and Christian.”

“The world is a challenging place,” the bishop continued. “However, the leaders of the Catholic School community — the administrators and teachers, primarily — must always strive to achieve an environment which fosters the growth of our youth in sound Catholic teaching and Christian values.”

To highlight Catholic Schools Week, Bishop Provost will be the celebrant for a Mass with St. Louis Catholic High School seniors at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 2, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Here is a look at each of the six Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles:

St. Louis Catholic High School

- **Address:** 1620 Bank Street, Lake Charles
- **Contact:** 337-436-7275
- **Website:** www.slchs.org
- **Founding history:** St. Louis Catholic High School — the only Catholic high school in the Diocese of Lake Charles — was founded in 1971 when its parent institutions — St. Charles Academy, Landry Memorial, and Sacred Heart High School — came together. Since its commencement in 1971, more than 5,000 students have graduated from St. Louis High.

• **Mission statement:** Called as friends of Jesus Christ and led by the knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we gather to honor and praise God the Father. VISION- St. Louis and its community will be a light, rooted in our Catholic faith and bound together by our shared experiences. The education will be unmatched, and our Saints will share a camaraderie that, regardless of grade classification or group affiliation, will remain for a lifetime. Every graduate will excel spiritually, socially, and professionally as they remain positively tethered to St. Louis Catholic High School, a place they can always call home.

- **Grade levels:** 9th-12th
- **Total enrollment:** 565 students
- **Patron:** St. Louis King of France
- **Mascot and Colors:** Saints; Orange and Royal Blue
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** 16 owner parishes across the Diocese of Lake Charles

• **From the Principal’s Desk:** “St. Louis Catholic High School is a community of educators, students, parents, and alumni. It is a community of leaders, believers and, above all, a community of the faithful. At St. Louis, every student will receive a strong education, a place to belong and a firm foundation rooted in our Catholic faith. Whether you are a parent, a student, or an employee; whether you want a vibrant student life, a challenging college preparatory curriculum, a competitive sports program, a Christ-centered campus, or just to be part of the community — you belong at St. Louis Catholic High School.” — **Mia Touchet, Principal**

• For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Heather leyoub, Director of Admissions, at hieyoub@slchs.org

Immaculate Conception Cathedral School

- **Address:** 1536 Ryan Street, Lake Charles
- **Contact:** 337-433-3497
- **Website:** www.iccschool.org
- **Year Founded:** 1882; ICCS is the second successor to the Convent School that began in 1882
- **Mission statement:** Strengthening Spirits...Minds... Bodies... Through the Teachings of Jesus Christ.
- **Grade levels:** PK4-8th Grade
- **Total enrollment:** 385 students
- **Patron:** Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception
- **Mascot and Colors:** Panthers; Red and Black
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

• **From the Principal’s Desk:** “ICCS is committed to excellence in education where the spiritual development, academic growth, and physical well-being of our learners are central to our shared commitment and focus. Our highly qualified faculty and staff are called to prepare students for both the challenges and successes that await them and use project-based curriculum learning modules to provide challenging learning opportunities that foster reflection, revision, proof of thinking, and mastery of standards. At ICCS, we are driven by the model of Jesus to strengthen spirits, minds, and bodies in meaningful, challenging, and diverse ways.” — **Blair Tadlock, Interim Principal**

• For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Kay Morgan, Director of Development, at kmorgan@iccsweb.com.



St. Louis Catholic High School



Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School



Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School



Immaculate Conception Cathedral School



Our Lady’s Catholic School



St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School

- **Address:** 3908 Creole Street, Lake Charles
- **Contact:** 337-477-7349
- **Website:** www.olqhs.org
- **Year Founded:** Established in 1958 by Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church and shortly after guided by the School Sisters of Notre Dame
- **Mission statement:** Learning and Living the Good News; Fostering Academic Success for All Students
- **Grade levels:** PK-Grade 8; Early Childhood Center: 6 weeks old to 4 years
- **Total enrollment:** 647 students
- **Patron:** Our Lady Queen of Heaven
- **Mascot and Colors:** Barons; Navy and Light Blue
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church
- **From the Principal’s Desk:** “Our Lady Queen of Heaven School is a faith-filled school community where the joy of Christ is celebrated each day. As a parish, we firmly believe that Catholic education begins at birth and we are grateful to work with parents in a life-long partnership, starting with our youngest students at our Early Childhood Center, as young as 6 weeks old. With each student, our focus is on developing the whole child, providing them with hands-on learning, leadership opportunities, and enrichment programs which help them to discover their unique and God-given gifts and talents. Fine arts, including band, choir, art, language are important experiences and opportunities for students, and our faculty truly believes in the importance of these programs. As education and technology continue to evolve, our teachers remain on the cutting edge, providing all students with continual support and the most innovative learning opportunities, which include a 1:1 program for our 7th and 8th graders. Above all else, our goal is to provide a faith-filled, safe, and loving community for our students and families, one in which they will call “home” for the rest of their lives.” — **Trevor Donnelly, Principal**
- For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Megan O’Quin, Director of Advancement, at moquin@olqhs.org.

St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School

- **Address:** 2510 Enterprise Boulevard, Lake Charles
- **Contact:** 337-436-7959
- **Website:** www.stmcs.com
- **Year Founded:** 1949 under the direction of the Reverend George A. Bodin and the Marianites of the Holy Cross
- **Mission statement:** Nurturing all children and achieving academic success through the spirit of Christ
- **Grade levels:** PK3-Grade 8
- **Total enrollment:** 287 students
- **Patron:** Saint Margaret of Scotland
- **Mascot and Colors:** Vikings; Blue and Gold
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church
- **From the Principal’s Desk:** “At SMCS we pride ourselves in the fact that when students, families, and visitors walk through our doors, they feel the love and presence of God. We work very hard in providing our students with a strong educational foundation that is rooted in faith. We recite and apply the ‘7 Habits of Highly Effective People’ daily into our lessons, school programs, and clubs. We offer a variety of clubs and sports that encourage teamwork, discipline, dedication, and time-management, such as football, volleyball, track, and cheer, student council, recycling club, hospitality, morning helpers, inspirational leaders, and much more. Despite the very difficult couple of years we have endured, our families have remained loyal, faithful, and resilient. We are excited to continue expanding and welcoming new faces aboard our Viking Krewe.” — **Wendy Wicke, Principal**
- For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Toni Chapman, Director of Institutional Advancement, at TChapman@stmcs.com.

Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School

- **Address:** 600 Roberts Avenue, Jennings
- **Contact:** 337-824-1743
- **Website:** www.olischool.org
- **Year Founded:** 1958 by the Teresian Sisters as Our Lady Help of Christians School under the direction of Mother Odette Daigle and Father Charles Marin
- **Mission statement:** Educating the mind and spirit with Opportunity, Leadership, and Integrity
- **Grade levels:** PK3-Grade 8
- **Total enrollment:** 210 students
- **Patron:** The Blessed Mother Mary
- **Mascot and Colors:** Crusader; Navy and White
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings (Note: students come from more than 15 church parishes)
- **From the Principal’s Desk:** “Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School is an exciting, educational environment infused with the Christian precepts taught and displayed by Jesus Christ. Our positive atmosphere is focused on teaching, learning and the production of future leaders, who embrace charity and service. OLI is unique in its location. We are the only Catholic School in Jeff Davis Parish. Our students come from six different civil parishes. It’s really a beautiful thing to have people from near and far gathered because we all share the same faith and the same mission to educate both mind and spirit.” — **David Dupuis, Principal**
- For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Sarah Boudreaux, Director of Development, at sboudreaux@olischool.org.

Our Lady’s Catholic School

- **Address:** 1111 Cypress Street, Sulphur
- **Contact:** 337-527-7828
- **Website:** www.olcs.org
- **Year Founded:** Built in 1952 on land donated by Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Stelly, under the pastorate of Father Eugene Veillard. The school went into operation in the 1954 school term under the administration of Father Paul E. Denis. Our Lady’s School was the first parochial school in the Diocese of Lafayette to open, staffed by all lay teachers with no nuns in residence.
- **Mission statement:** Building the future of all students through the grace of God and academic excellence. We are dedicated to developing the total child.
- **Grade levels:** PK3-Grade 8
- **Total enrollment:** 247 students
- **Patron:** The Blessed Mother Mary
- **Mascot and Colors:** Tiger – named PAWS; Royal Blue and White
- **Church Parish Affiliation:** Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of LaSalette, all in Sulphur; St. Theresa in Carlyss; St. Joseph in Vinton; and St. John Bosco in Westlake
- **From the Principal’s Desk:** “The charism of Our Lady’s School is our faith. Our little Catholic school has big faith that never seems to fail. We have, literally, lost our physical structure while never losing our spiritual strength. The students, families, and faculty of Our Lady’s School are a perfect example of unconditional love and faith. We are a family. Families stay hopeful and remain faithful while never giving up or turning away. We have learned to keep our faith and trust in our Lord and Blessed Mother for the protection and guidance that keeps Our Lady’s School so special!” — **Nichole Tanner, Interim Principal**
- For information on enrollment opportunities, contact Katy Castille, Director of Admissions and Advancement, at kcastille@ourladysschool.org.

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Follow the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page for more highlights during National Catholic Schools Week.



Pope Francis confers honors on 17 for exceptional service to the Catholic Church

The Diocese of Lake Charles is proud to announce that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, has conferred Papal Honors on 17 individuals for their dedication and exceptional service to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Honors will be formally conferred upon the individuals by The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, during a Solemn Vespers service at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, February 13, 2022, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street.

Six have been named Knight in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great; two will receive the Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* (Cross for the Church and Pontiff); and nine will receive the Papal Medal *Benemerenti* (Well-Deserving).

Papal Honors are granted to clergy and laity who have distinguished themselves in one way or another in service to the Universal Church or the Church in a particular diocese.

Pope Francis conferred the Honors at the request of Bishop Provost who remarked, "In the Gospel of St. Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ admonishes us: 'Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father' (Matthew 5:16). We should never do 'good deeds' for human recognition. However, the Church in its own way has always felt an obligation to acknowledge the good work of Catholic laity who contribute to the spread of the Gospel. In so doing, our Lord invites us to give glory to our heavenly Father and Creator."

Bishop Provost continued, "In the Diocese of Lake Charles, there are so many good men



Order of Saint Gregory the Great

and women who labor in their Church parishes and at the diocesan level, assisting the needy, teaching the Gospel message, and fostering the Christian life in their families, schools, and communities. From time to time, one way of showing our gratitude is to request from the Holy See acknowledgement of these services. I sincerely congratulate our recipients of these Papal Honors and ask you to rejoice with me. God bless them all!"

Order of Saint Gregory the Great

The Order of Saint Gregory the Great, one of the five pontifical knightly orders, was founded by His Holiness, Pope Gregory XVI in September of 1831 as a reward for subjects of the Papal States. In 1905, it was reorganized by Pope Pius X as a worldwide Order, available

to those laymen who have contributed in an outstanding way to the welfare of Church and Community and who have displayed indisputable zeal in service to the Holy See.

Those named Knight in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great are:

- ❖ **Robert "Bob" McCall:** Mr. McCall and his wife, Brenda, are parishioners of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles.
- ❖ **Jared Watson:** Mr. Watson is a parishioner of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles. He and his wife, Jennifer, are the parents of five children.
- ❖ **Neill Rowland:** Mr. Rowland is a member of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles. He and his wife, Sheri, are the parents of three children.
- ❖ **Kevin Leonard:** Mr. Leonard is a member of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. He and his wife, Cathy, are the parents of three children, one of whom began studies for the priesthood in the fall of 2021.
- ❖ **David DesOrmeaux:** Mr. DesOrmeaux is a parishioner of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles. He and his wife, Courtney, have five children, one of whom began studies for the priesthood in the fall of 2021.
- ❖ **Derek Conner:** Mr. Conner is a member of St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Bell City. He and his wife, Kimberly, are the parents of three children.



Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice

The Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* honor was established by Pope Leo XIII in July of 1888. The medal is awarded to Catholics aged 45 and above for distinguished service to the Catholic Church and to the Papal office. Also known as the Cross of Honor, it comes directly from the Holy See. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Cross is presented for services and contributions to the Catholic Church at the Diocesan level over a period of 10 years or more.

Those honored with the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* are:

- ❖ **Mitch Martin:** Mr. Martin was married to the late Betty R. Martin and is a parishioner of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.

❖ **Connie Dronette:** Mrs. Dronette and her husband David are parishioners of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.

Papal Medal Benemerenti

The *Benemerenti* honor was established by Pope Pius VI (1775-1799) as recognition for military service to the Holy See. Later, the recipients were expanded to include members of the clergy and laity for exceptional service to the Catholic Church. It can be granted to persons as young as 35, and its reception is open to Catholics as well as members of other faith traditions. In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the medal is presented for services and contributions at the Deanery level over a period of 10 years or more.

Those honored with the Papal Medal *Benemerenti* are:

- ❖ **Michael Richard:** Mr. Richard and his wife, Gwendolyn, are parishioners of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.
- ❖ **Sharon Jones:** Mrs. Jones and her husband, Albert, are parishioners of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Lake Charles.
- ❖ **Suzanne Hebert:** Mrs. Hebert and her husband, Randall, are members of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.
- ❖ **Lea Poncho:** Mrs. Poncho and her husband, Derek, are the parents of four children.



Benemerenti

They are parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles.

- ❖ **Arnold Bellow:** Mr. Bellow and his wife, Linda, are parishioners of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles.
- ❖ **Blaine and Denise Wyninger:** Mr. and Mrs. Wyninger are parishioners of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. They are the parents of seven children.
- ❖ **Martha Simmons:** Ms. Simmons is a parishioner of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles.
- ❖ **Deborah Richard:** Ms. Richard is a member of St. Henry Catholic Church in Lake Charles.

Catholic Charities sets goal to reach more people in 2022

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

With the spirit of generosity they are known for, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana is looking forward to broadening their assistance in 2022 to the communities they currently serve in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

"Our New Year's resolution is to raise awareness that Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana serves the entire five-parish region including the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Cameron, and Jeff Davis, in addition to Calcasieu Parish," said Sister Miriam, R.S.M., Executive Director of Catholic Charities of SWLA.

January is Poverty Awareness Month, the perfect time to share the mission of Catholic Charities and shine a spotlight on the needs of many in neighboring parishes.

In 2021, Catholic Charities distributed \$485,000 of assistance with things like rent, utilities, and home repairs. However, Sister Miriam's goal is to make sure people outside of Calcasieu Parish know that assistance is available for them as well.

"Our mission of being Christ's presence in this area is something we take seriously," Sister Miriam said. "We want people to have hope and to know that we are sign of Christ's love for them."

While the COVID-19 pandemic still affects people's need for rental and utilities assistance, Sister Miriam said that she continues to see an increase in help for home repairs due to multiple natural disasters that hit the area in 2020 and 2021.

"For anyone needing home repairs, Catholic Charities works closely with United Way," she said. "People can call 211 and United Way will put us in touch with those needing support. We can also assist with ID cards, birth certificates, funeral expenses, medical transportation, and other services."

In an ongoing effort to fight hunger, the monthly food distribution sites offered by Catholic Charities allow

individuals and families to receive either donated food or USDA food provided by Second Harvest.

"We give out about 1,100 bags of food per month, which are packed by volunteers that we rely on greatly," Sister Miriam noted. "We are also in need of volunteers to help coordinate at the extra food distribution sites in Big Lake, Creole, DeRidder, Elton, Jennings, Kinder, Ragley, and Vinton each month."

In 2021, Catholic Charities of SWLA distributed approximately 650,000 pounds of food across the five-parish region. Nearly half of that was donated from people either dropping off at the Catholic Charities warehouse or ordering food through the Amazon website.

A total of 1,679 households (3,727 individuals) were served with food in 2021 from Catholic Charities, according to figures provided by Sister Miriam:

- **Allen Parish:** 130 households, 318 individuals
- **Beauregard Parish:** 198 households, 406 individuals
- **Calcasieu Parish:** 914 households, 2,040 individuals
- **Cameron Parish:** 122 households, 242 individuals
- **Jeff Davis Parish:** 315 households, 721 individuals

Despite not being able to host the annual Jazz Brunch

fundraiser the past two years, Sister Miriam said she is "continually humbled by the little checks and bigger checks that come in from the faithful who know about the work that is being done and trust that giving to Catholic Charities will bring benefits to the poor."

Major donors who contributed in 2021 include:

- Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word — \$50,000
- Chevron — \$50,000
- Cheniere Foundation — \$36,000
- The Westerman Foundation — \$35,000
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation — \$15,000
- Community Foundation of Southwest Louisiana — \$10,000
- Stine's — \$10,000
- CenterPoint Energy Foundation — \$10,000
- Calcasieu Mechanical Contractors — \$7,500
- Southside Machine Works — \$5,000

"The Catholic Church has an obligation to the poor and being a sign of the Lord's care, love, and mercy for his people," Sister said. "It is our job to help others to realize the dignity of the poor in our midst."

For more information on assistance, call Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana at 337-439-7436, or visit www.catholiccharitiesswla.com.



In addition to Lake Charles, monthly food distribution sites include Big Lake, Creole, DeRidder, Elton, Jennings, Kinder, Ragley, and Vinton. Catholic Charities also offers rental and utilities assistance in the five-parish region, along with other services.

Bishop Provost appoints CFO; Director of Fiscal Affairs

His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, has announced two appointments dealing with the fiscal affairs of the Diocese of Lake Charles. Both appointments were effective at the beginning of the new year.

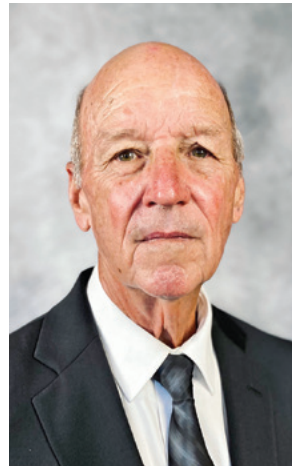
Deacon George Stearns, who also serves as the Chancellor, was named to the position of canonical Chief Finance Officer for the diocese.

"Deacon Stearns needs

no introduction for he has faithfully and selflessly served the Diocese in various capacities over the forty-one years of its history," Bishop Provost said. "His experience and expertise in areas vital to the financial administration of the Diocese have proved invaluable. I am certain that he will work conscientiously with the staff of the Fiscal Office, the Diocesan Finance Council, and me to continue the mission and ministry of the Church in Southwest Louisiana."

The Bishop has also named Mr. Jacob Troutman, C.P.A., MAcc as Director of Fiscal Affairs for the diocese. His duties will include the daily administration of all fiscal matters and personnel involved with the diocesan Finance Office.

"I wish to express my appreciation to the Diocesan Finance Council and the *ad hoc* Search Committee, chaired by Monsignor Daniel Torres, for their conscientious work advertising the position, interviewing the applicants, and making the final recommendation to me."



Deacon George Stearns



Jacob Troutman, C.P.A., MAcc

Pro-Life events on Jan. 22 include Mass, March, Candlelight Vigil

January 22, 2022, begins the 50th year of widespread abortion in the United States with the U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*.

All the faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles are invited to gather to celebrate God's gift of life for all human persons. A lunch will be held at 12 noon Saturday, Jan. 22, in the Immaculate Conception Cathedral's Ave Maria Hall, 935 Bilbo Street.

Following the meal, the movie *Unplanned* will be shown and discussed. At 4:00 p.m. in the Cathedral, Bishop Glen John Provost will celebrate a Respect Life Mass, which will also be a Saturday Vigil Mass. For more information, please email the Diocese of Lake Charles at andrea.ward@lcdiocese.org or call (337) 439-7400 ext. 220.

A Pro-Life March and Candlelight Vigil, sponsored by several Pro-Life groups, will follow the Mass. The March meets at the Veterans Memorial Park near the Lake Charles Civic Center at 5:30 p.m. and walks to the Courthouse steps for a Candlelight Vigil at 6:30 pm.