

## Holy Smoke



## Faith as deep as the rivers Deacon John has crossed

By Christine Bordelon  
*Clarion Herald*

When consummate entertainer, musician and cradle Catholic Deacon John Moore talks about growing up in New Orleans, his life story is intertwined with the Catholic faith.

"The Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes – all that I learned coming up in Catholicism – were fruitful to me to becoming a success in doing what I did," Moore said.

His faith began at home as the fifth of 13 children. His said his mother, Rilda Augustine Boudreaux Moore, was an angel – literally touched by St. Katharine Drexel, who established the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and founded Xavier Preparatory School and, later, Xavier University of Louisiana. His mother attended both schools and was valedictorian of the first graduating class of Xavier University, he said.

She also was choir director at Holy Ghost Church, where she played piano and organ, and was the first lay teacher at Holy Ghost School. She and her mother, Viola Boudreaux, received the Order of St.



Photo by Frank J. Methe | CLARION HERALD

Deacon John Moore, a long-time New Orleans singer and guitar player, will receive an honorary doctorate from Loyola this May.

Louis the same year.

"My mother was a very devout Catholic and lived her life according to her religion," Moore said, ensuring her children followed suit at daily Mass and confession on Saturday.

"Your whole life was centered around religion," he said.

Moore joked that his mother discovered his vocal talent.

"My mother recognized I had an amazing voice when I was infant," he said. "She said, of all her children, I cried the loudest, and she knew that I would become a singer," Moore jested.

To solidify her beliefs, Moore said she followed an old Creole legend that if you cut a child's fingernails by a fig tree in the backyard, he would grow

See **DEACON JOHN** page 10 ►

## Butternut Squash Soup



- 6 tablespoons chopped onion
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 6 cups peeled and cubed butternut squash
- 3 cups water
- 4 cubes chicken bouillon (or veggie stock during Lent)
- ½ teaspoon dried marjoram
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese

## Directions

In a large saucepan, sauté onions in margarine until tender. Add squash, water, bouillon, marjoram, black pepper and cayenne pepper. Bring to boil; cook 20 minutes, or until squash is tender.

Puree squash and cream cheese in a blender or food processor in batches until smooth. Return to saucepan, and heat through. Do not allow to boil.

## Casey Sprehe

NOLA Catholic Parenting columnist

St. Benilde Parish, Metairie

Recipe attributed to

<http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/butternut-squash-soup/Detail.aspx>

## 7-Ingredient Spinach Artichoke Dip



- 1 (14-ounce) can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped
- 2 ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 3 ½ cup mayonnaise

See **7-INGREDIENT DIP** page 10 ►

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See **BLACK BEANS** page 10 ►

heat the remaining olive oil over medium heat. Sauté the onion, green or red pepper, and garlic until the vegetables have softened, about 5 minutes. Add the beans, broth, vinegar, bay leaves, black pepper, cumin and remaining salt. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and let simmer for 10 minutes; remove the bay leaves. Spoon the beans over the rice and sprinkle with the scallions, if desired. Serve warm. Optional condiments to sprinkle on top: cheddar cheese shreds, sour cream, chopped avocado or fresh chopped cilantro. Serve with cornbread or tortilla chips. Yields: 4 to 6 servings

### Stacy LaMorte

**NOLA Catholic Parenting columnist**  
**St. Francis Xavier Parish, Metairie**

*Recipe attributed to*  
*Real Simple Magazine*

## Mac and Cheese Soup



Kosher salt

- 1 cup (4-ounces) elbow macaroni

Cooking spray

- 2 plum tomatoes, sliced ½-inch thick

- 4 ½-inch-thick slices baguette

Freshly ground pepper

- 3 shallots

- 1 carrot, cut into 1-inch pieces

- 1 stalk celery, cut into 1-inch pieces

- ¼ cup all-purpose flour

- 3 ¾ cups fat-free low-sodium vegetable broth

- 1 ¼ cups 2-percent milk

- 1 ½ cups about (6-ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese

### Directions

Position a rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat to 450°. Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to a boil. Add the macaroni and cook as the label directs; drain. Mist a baking sheet with cooking spray and arrange the tomato and baguette slices on it in a single

layer; season with salt and pepper. Bake until the bread is golden brown, about 7 minutes. Mince the shallots, carrot and celery in a food processor. Mist a saucepan with cooking spray. Add the vegetables and cook over medium-high heat until softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Gradually stir in the broth and bring to a boil; cook, stirring, until thickened, 6 to 7 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the milk, cheeses and macaroni and stir until the cheeses melt. Season with pepper. Top the toasts with tomatoes; serve on the soup. Serves: 4

### Casey Sprehe

**NOLA Catholic Parenting columnist**  
**St. Benilde Parish, Metairie**

*Recipe attributed to*  
*Food Network Magazine*

## Cajun Smashed Red Potatoes

- 1 bag red potatoes quartered (about 3 pounds)

- 1 head garlic peeled

- 1 pouch of Zatarain's crab boil

- 1 stick of butter

- 1 pint heavy whipping cream

- 2 tablespoons freshly chopped parsley

- 1 small yellow onion quartered (optional)

- 2 tablespoons kosher salt

- 1 tablespoon creole seasoning (Tony's Essence, Tiger Dust, etc...)

Cracked black pepper, to taste.

### Directions

Bring just enough water to cover the potatoes to a rolling boil. Add Zatarain's pouch and 1 tbsp of kosher salt. Boil 3-4 minutes. Add garlic, potatoes and onion. Boil until potatoes are fork tender. Strain potatoes, garlic and onion and return them to warm in pot (this allows excess water to cook out of the potatoes). Throw Zatarain's bag away. Add butter and cream and smash the potatoes. Add remaining salt, creole seasoning, black pepper, and parsley. Mix thoroughly and serve Notes: You can add more cream or butter to get the potatoes to the consistency that you like. Also, you can add a tablespoon of liquid crab boil at the beginning or ½ tablespoon of cayenne pepper at the end to add desired spice.

### Casey Sprehe

**NOLA Catholic Parenting columnist**  
**St. Benilde Parish, Metairie**

## DEACON JOHN

► From **PAGE 10**

He realized his demand would increase if he sang and played an instrument.

"So, I began my curiosity about playing guitar" and borrowed his friend's guitar to learn before he bought his own.

During high school, he joined pick-up bands that performed at dances, fraternity parties and the famous Dew Drop Inn, which Moore affectionately called "the desired location for the duration" because of its varied talent acts, floor shows and top-notch bands. The Ivories was one of these.

"I exhibited a degree of talent at an early age, so everybody wanted me to play with them."

The Ivories at one time were the hottest band in town, Moore said, and became the house band at the Dew Drop.

By 1960 after high school graduation from St. Augustine – he wears his high school ring proudly – he formed Deacon John and the Ivories. Since lead singers had catchy names at the time, his drummer Al Miller suggested "Deacon John." Moore believes it comes from a popular local R&B song "Good Rockin' Tonight" by Roy Brown with whom Miller played.

"I was the front man, singing and playing guitar ... and rhythm and blues at the time had a lot of preaching in it. Ray

Charles was the high priest and would be preaching in his songs," he said. "Yeah, he looks like a deacon," Miller recalled his bandmates saying. Moore was concerned people might think the band only played Gospel music due to the name.

"But it stuck. ... It took me a while to figure it out it was a God-given name," he said.

Up-and-coming record producer Allen Toussaint, who had a core of musicians to accompany him on recording sessions, dug Moore's sound one night at the Dew Drop.

"I was playing and knew Allen was doing recording sessions – getting established as producer and songwriter – and he liked the way I played and asked me if I'd like to play on a recording session," Moore said. "If you got to play on a recording session, that let everybody know you were exceptional. Most of the people who played on recording sessions were the best musicians in town. You had arrived."

He recalls his first session with Ernie K-Doe, before his hit, "Mother-in-Law," and the days when singer Irma Thomas would ask to sing with his band while waitressing at a club where the Ivories played.

His one big single, the 1970 "Many Rivers to Cross" is considered his signature song. Written by Jimmy Cliff, it is a blues ballad, Moore's favorite type of music to sing.

"I could sing ballads that

make you cry, make you think, make you fall in love."

Through all of his travails, Moore said his sense of faith and giving to others – following the example of religious men and women – stuck with him. Faith taught him how to treat others, something that contributed to his life's successes. He said he hopes his legacy is helping others. After all, he's "Deacon" John.

"I have a lot to thank religion for," he said. "There are two things I value most in my life – I comfort people in times of sorrow – I sing at a lot of funerals, a lot of them comrades in the music business (Toussaint, K-Doe) and bring joy to celebrations in their life ... That's what I do the most and why God has chosen this name for me because I'm doing God's work. That's why he lets me stay a little while longer, because my work isn't done yet."

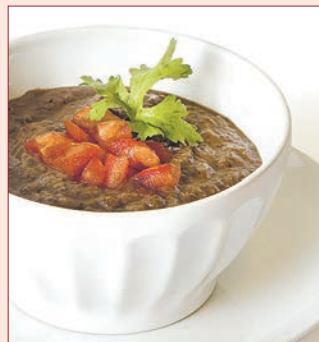
*Deacon John and The Ivories will perform as part of the Friends of the Cabildo Concert Series March 15 at 7 p.m. at the New Orleans Jazz Museum (the Old U.S. Mint). Tickets are \$25 general admission at 523-3939, friendsofthecabildo.org. Moore also will receive an honorary doctorate of music from Loyola University New Orleans at its graduation ceremonies in the Superdome.*

*Christine Bordelon can be reached at cbordelon@clarionherald.org.*

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### BLACK BEAN SOUP – Guatemala



- 1 tablespoon fair trade olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cups water or vegetable broth
- 3 cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 green chili, diced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Cilantro, minced (optional)

### Directions

In a large pot, sauté onion and garlic in oil until brown. In a blender, combine 1 cup water/vegetable broth and 2 cans of beans. Blend until smooth. Add to onion mixture. Stir in tomatoes, chilis, remaining beans, spices and remaining water/broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Serve with cilantro. Makes 4-6 servings





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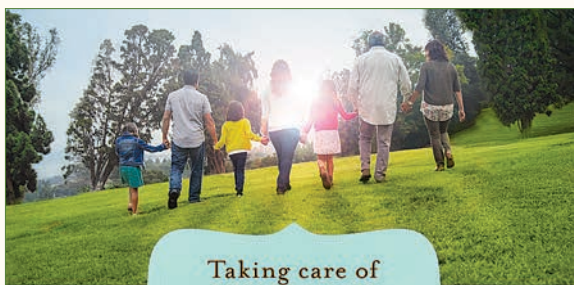
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## DEACON JOHN

➤ From PAGE 9

up to be a singer.

"And, that's exactly what happened," he said.

His skills were sharpened as a boy soprano in Corpus Christi Catholic Church's choir, practicing every day after school and often taken out of class to sing at weekday funeral Masses, which during his childhood, were in Latin. Moore said liturgical music helped develop his style.

"When you sing about Jesus and God, you sing with a whole lot of passion and soul, and spirituality becomes a part of your music," he said. "A lot of it came from my experiences of singing church music. It all comes out in your voice, and you are able to communicate with those listening to you and affect their emotions."

He said his mother was blessed with musical talents from her father, John Boudreaux, a banjo player from New Roads, after whom he is named. His large, expressive eyes well up with tears when he speaks of the musicianship of his grandfather, whose 100-year-old banjo is one of Moore's prized possessions.

"It's just a genetic affinity – when you come from a musical family, there is just a genetic pre-disposition," Deacon John said about his musicality. "It's



Photo | COURTESY MOORE FAMILY

The Moore family. Deacon John is in the back row, upper left.

passed on. ... God gave everybody a talent."

### Discovered music as a chaperone

Moore also recalls his mother entering him in numerous singing competitions and she would accompany him.

"When they put me in, I would always win," he said, laughing. "My mother would say, 'It's a tough act to follow when you follow a kid.'" He also was the opening act at his aunt's dancing school revue.

"People would throw money on the stage, and I thought, 'Wow, you could make money at this.'"

And, he fondly recalls being cast with his siblings in his mother's annual Nativity play – staged at their home – with an audience of religious sisters and priests. The priests and nuns often showed the large Moore family generosity by supplying government surplus cheese, milk and goodies that were bestowed on

them by the public.

"Every year at Christmastime, she conducted a re-enactment of the Nativity story at her home before an audience of priests, nuns and friends."

But probably the most influential move his mother made for his music was making Moore a chaperone at teen dances.

"I got bit by the bug when I was going to high school dances with my older sisters," Moore said, "And, guess who was playing? Art Neville and Hawkettes, Snooks Eaglin, Allen Toussaint and Dave Bartholomew – all sorts of bands made from people going to the high school. Doo-wop bands were popular. I would just go to the stage and watch the guitar player all night."

In elementary school, he was singing with a band called the Rockettes in addition to the church choir.

"We would play all the rhythm and blues music – the Top 10," he said.

See **DEACON JOHN** page 11 ➤

### 7-INGREDIENT DIP from pg. 9 ➤

- 4 (8-ounces) cream cheese, room temperature
- 5 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
- 6 1 clove garlic minced
- 7 1 ¼ cup fresh spinach, washed, coarsely chopped and stems trimmed

### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place all of the ingredients (reserve ¼ cup of the cheese) in a covered oven and combine well until smooth. (I usually place mine in an 8" diameter ceramic covered oven dish) Sprinkle remaining ¼ cup of parmesan cheese on top. Bake in preheated oven for about 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Serve warm with tortilla chips, crackers or bread.

### Ana Borden

NOLA Catholic Parenting columnist  
St. Francis Xavier Parish, Metairie

## Black Beans and Brown Rice



- 2 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 2½ tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups long-grain brown rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 large green or red bell pepper, chopped (1½ cups)
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced (1 tablespoon)
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoon red wine vinegar (white wine vinegar or apple cider will work in a pinch)
- 2 to 3 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ cup sliced scallions (optional)

### Directions

In a medium saucepan, combine 4 cups of water with 1 teaspoon of the salt and 1½ teaspoons of the olive oil. Bring to a boil. Stir in the rice, cover and reduce heat to low. Cook for 20 minutes until rice is tender, then fluff with fork. In a large saucepan,

See **BLACK BEANS** page 11 ➤

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