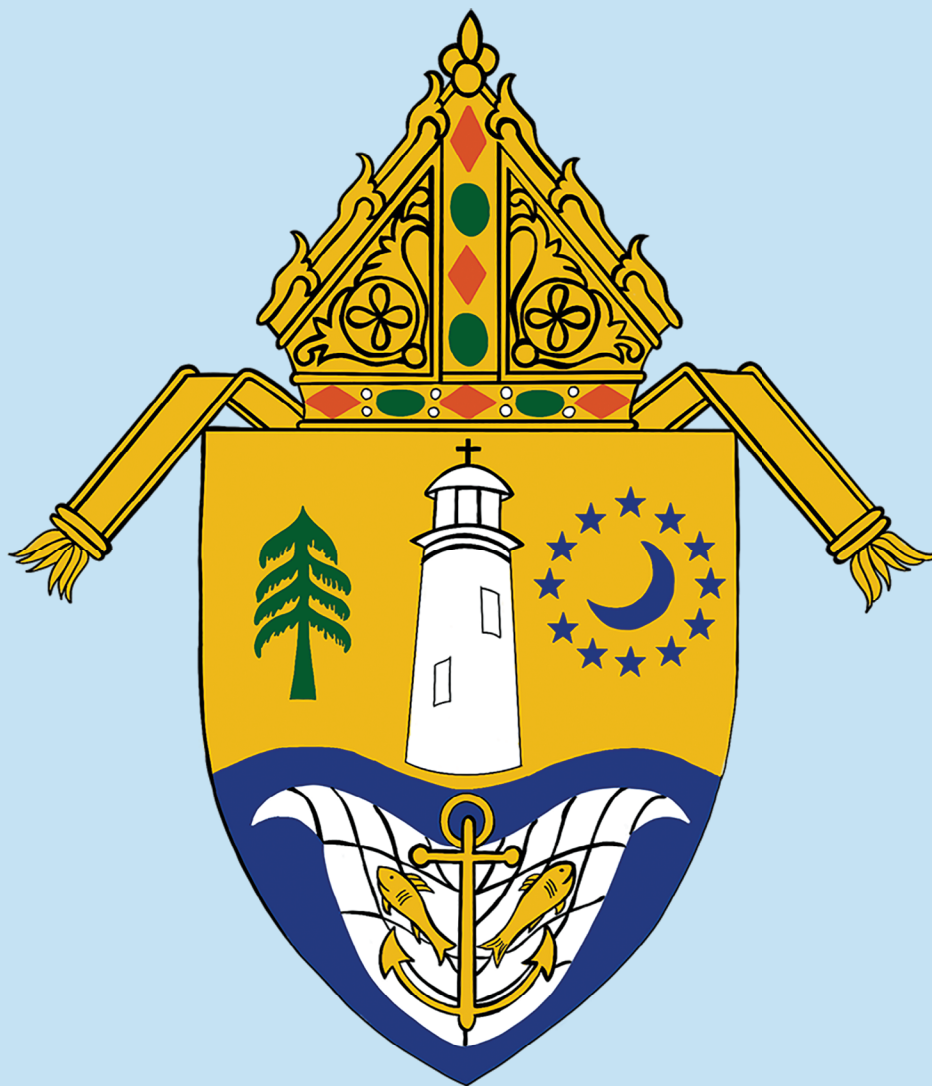


Diocese of Biloxi



State of the Diocese Report
for Fiscal Year Ending June 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in our Lord,

As we enter this new year of grace, my heart is filled with gratitude for the many ways I see the Lord at work throughout our Diocese. In our parishes, schools, and ministries, the light of Christ shines through your prayer, generosity, and faithful service.

We live in a time that challenges us profoundly. Our society has moved beyond Christendom, and we now find ourselves called to embrace once more the mission of an Apostolic Church, a Church that must proclaim the Gospel with renewed zeal, courage, and creativity. As your Shepherd, I thank you for walking with me as one family of faith, trusting that the Lord is indeed doing something new in our midst. Together we pray: Come, Holy Spirit, come!

Here in the Diocese of Biloxi, we face cultural and financial challenges, as well as a decline in active priests and in holy vocations. Yet, even amid these realities, our hope remains firm, for we have seen God's grace at work in remarkable ways. This past May, through your prayerful and financial support, we celebrated the ordination of fifteen men to the Permanent Diaconate -- seven of whom are Spanish-speaking. In June, we rejoiced at the ordination of one new priest. These are moments of celebration for our diocese!

At the same time, the challenge of adequately staffing our parishes remains real. The shortage of priests, along with our growing reliance on the ministry of foreign-born missionary priests, has been further complicated by immigration laws and policies that affect both our priests and our lay faithful. These challenges are not theoretical; one of our pastors has already been required to leave the country, and several more of our priests will be required to leave in the near future. Yet even amid these struggles, which also weigh heavily on our Hispanic brothers and sisters who face their own immigration uncertainties, we still find signs of grace. We currently have five seminarians preparing for the priesthood, and our newest formation class for the permanent diaconate includes eighteen candidates, seven of whom are Spanish-speaking. Their generous response strengthens our ministry in our faith communities and stands as a reminder that, even in difficult times, the Lord continues to call laborers into His harvest.

Our Vocations Office has renewed efforts to foster a culture of discernment in our families and parishes. Your support, both through praying for holy vocations and by submitting the names of those in your community whom you believe may have a calling, more are actively discerning Holy Vocations. I ask you to continue praying intentionally for vocations to the priesthood, permanent diaconate, consecrated life, and for holy marriages and dedicated single life.

We are also deeply aware of the need to reach our youth and young adults who are no longer participating in Mass or the Sacraments. Our Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry Office continues to invite them into encounters with Christ through retreats, leadership formation, mission experiences, and personal accompaniment. Our Catholic schools, together with the Offices of Evangelization and Faith Formation, remain committed to forming missionary disciples at every age. Parishes and schools are building Leadership Teams and developing Faith Formation Plans to help our families grow together as disciples of Jesus.

The Office of Marriage and Family Life supports couples preparing for marriage and strengthens families who face increasing pressures in today's culture. Our Respect Life Ministry continues to witness to the dignity of every human person. Through Walking with Moms in Need, parishes accompany expectant mothers with compassion and practical support. Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer hope and healing to women and men grieving the loss of a child during pregnancy.

Because of our belief in the sanctity of life, we continue to care for the poor and vulnerable. The Mercy Cross Center is a day center for the homeless and serves as a beacon of Christ's mercy -- feeding 80-100 people daily, offering clothing, counseling, and access to medical care and other services through our ministry partners. Since its opening on May 28, 2024, 200 individuals have transitioned from the streets into stable living. We have acquired property in southern Stone County and are working to open a Farm of Hope in 2026, to minister to men with addictions to enable them to live a life of prayer, community, hard work, and sobriety.

Catholic Charities continues to be on the front lines of service. This past year we distributed nearly two million pounds of food through the 12 Baskets Food Bank and provided hundreds of counseling sessions to those in emotional and spiritual need. The Tabitha Project offers spiritual and practical support for individuals and families with special needs, and our de l'Epee Deaf Center faithfully serves the deaf and hard of hearing.

Our priest and deacon chaplains and lay ministers bring the love of Christ to the sick, the hospitalized, and the imprisoned, ensuring that no one in our Diocese is forgotten. Through the *Gulf Pine Catholic* and our social media outreach, we continue to share these stories of hope, reminding us that we are one Church, united in mission.

Jesus gives us our mission in Matthew 28:19-20: *"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."* Through your faithful stewardship, we are meeting the spiritual and material needs of our people and forming new generations of disciples for South Mississippi.

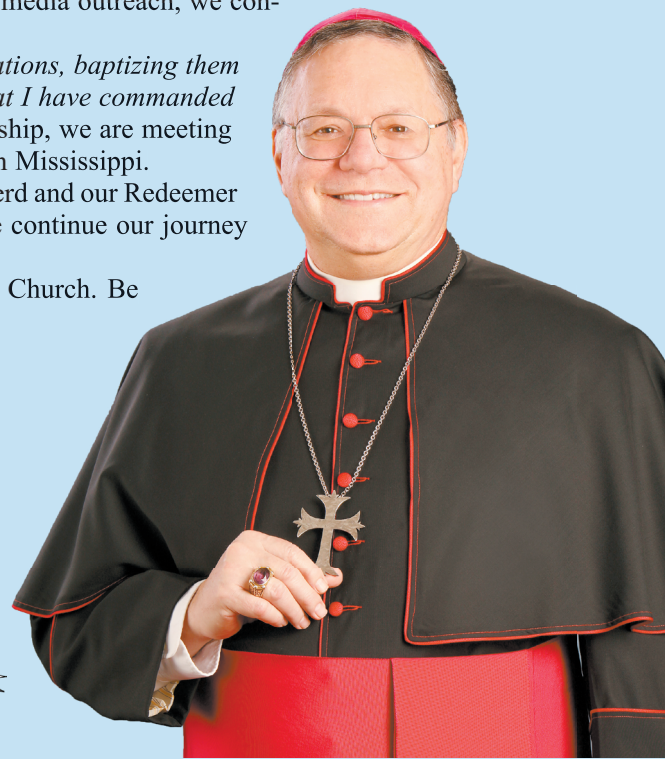
As we conclude this Jubilee Year of Hope, let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the Good Shepherd and our Redeemer (John 10:11). Strengthened by the Eucharist, united in prayer, and sent forth in service, may we continue our journey together as one family of faith.

Please know of my deep gratitude for your generosity, your witness, and your love for the Church. Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Louis Kihneman

Most Reverend
Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi





DEANERIES OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BILOXI

NORTHERN DEANERY					
Bassfield St. Peter Parish	Hattiesburg Sacred Heart Parish	Laurel Immaculate Conception Parish	Lucedale St. Lucy Mission	Monticello St. Lawrence Mission	Waynesboro St. Bernadette Parish
Columbia Holy Trinity Parish	St. Fabian Parish	Leakesville Holy Trinity Mission	Lumberton Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish	Poplarville St. Joseph Mission	Wiggins St. Francis Xavier Parish
Hattiesburg Holy Rosary Parish	St. Thomas Aquinas Parish			Tylertown St. Paul the Apostle Mission	

WEST COAST DEANERY	
Bay St. Louis Our Lady of the Gulf Parish	Pass Christian Our Mother of Mercy Parish
St. Rose de Lima Parish	Holy Family Parish
Clermont Harbor St. Ann Parish	Pearlington St. Joseph Chapel
Dedeaux Sacred Heart Parish	Picayune St. Charles Borromeo Parish
Kiln Annunciation Parish	Waveland St. Clare Parish
Pass Christian Most Holy Trinity Parish	White Cypress St. Matthew the Apostle Parish

CENTRAL COAST DEANERY
Delmas Our Lady of Chartres Mission
Gulfport St. James Parish
St. John the Evangelist Parish
St. Joseph Parish
St. Therese Parish
Lizana St. Ann Parish
Long Beach St. Thomas the Apostle Parish

EAST CENTRAL COAST DEANERY
Biloxi Nativity B.V.M. Cathedral Parish
Our Lady of Fatima Parish
Our Mother of Sorrows Parish
Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Parish
St. Mary Parish
St. Michael Parish
Vietnamese Martyrs Parish
D'Iberville Sacred Heart Parish

EAST COAST DEANERY
Gautier St. Mary Parish
Hurley St. Ann Mission
Latimer Christ the King Mission
Moss Point St. Joseph the Worker Parish
Ocean Springs St. Alphonsus Parish
St. Elizabeth Seton Parish
Pascagoula Our Lady of Victories Parish
Sacred Heart Parish
St. Peter the Apostle Parish
Vancleave Holy Spirit Parish

PARISH LIFE

58,098
Parishioners

18,637
Families

SACRAMENTAL LIFE



Baptisms
801



First Communions
839



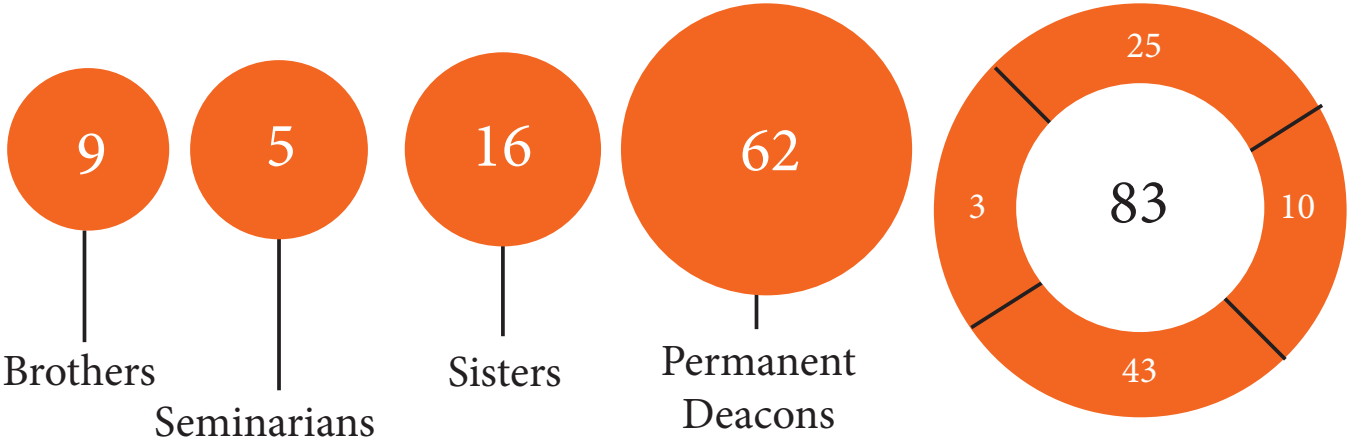
Confirmations
695



Marriages
184



Christian Burials
591



43 Diocesan Priests
25 Religious Order Priests

10 Retired/Inactive Priests (DOB)
3 Extern Priests

Bishop 1

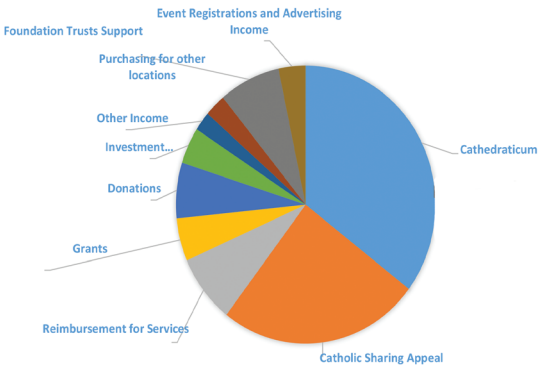


The Administrative Offices of the Diocese of Biloxi

Total Assets of the Administrative Offices \$11,180,831

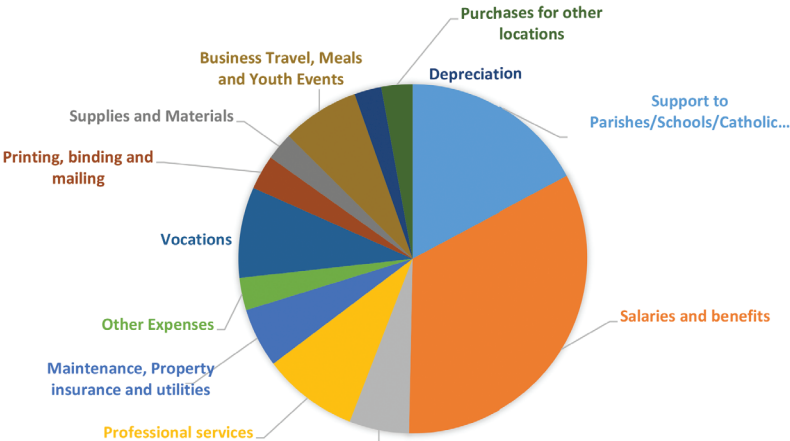
REVENUES 2024 - 2025

Cathedraticum	\$2,111,004.99	35%
Catholic Sharing Appeal	\$1,498,320.63	25%
Reimbursement for Services	\$475,616.58	8%
Foundation Trusts Support	\$456,372.33	8%
Donations	\$386,222.83	6%
Grants	\$296,900.00	5%
Investment Income	\$253,040.32	4%
Event Registrations and Advertising Income	\$200,811.64	4%
Purchasing for other locations	\$157,719.59	3%
Other Income	\$133,209.67	2%
Total Revenues	\$5,969.219	100%

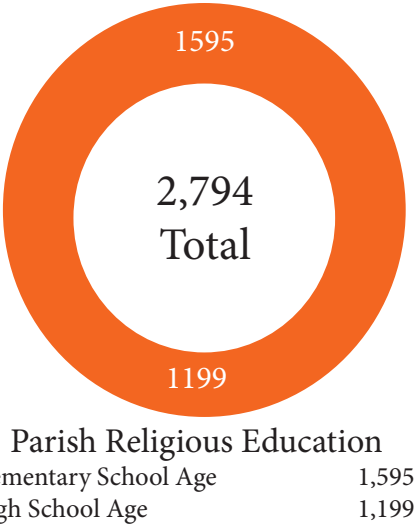
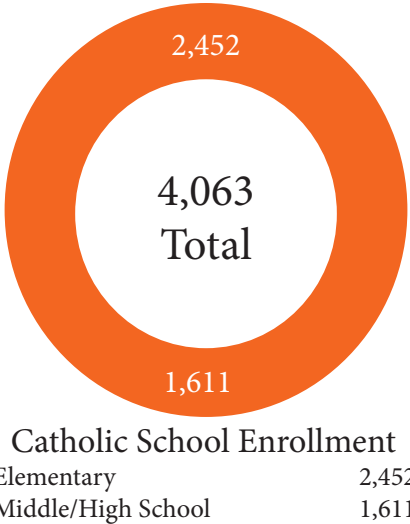


EXPENSES 2024 - 2025

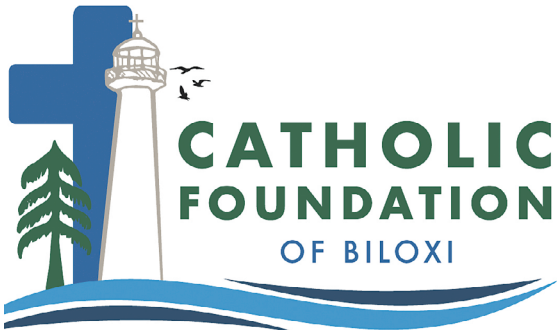
Salaries and benefits	\$1,808,157.70	29%	Business Travel, Meals and Youth Events	\$392,166.12	5%
Support to Parishes/Schools/Catholic Charities/de l'Epee	\$939,799.81	24%	Printing, binding and mailing	\$164,326.20	4%
Professional services and fees	\$484,136.41	9%	Other Expenses	\$163,712.57	4%
Retired Clergy benefits*	\$302,947.67	7%	Purchases for Other Locations	\$157,669.59	2%
Vocations	\$458,841.69	6%	Supplies and Materials	\$140,497.82	2%
Maintenance, property insurance and utilities	\$300,524.00	6%	Depreciation	\$137,397.44	2%
Total Expenses	\$5,460,177.02	100%			



Finance is helping our parishes and schools in observing best practices for faithful stewardship of the temporal goods in their care.



Catholic Foundation Report



2024-2025 Fiscal Year

Trust Balances

Perpetual Funds	\$29,093,463
Non-Perpetual Funds	\$4,644,150
Total Funds Under Management	\$33,737,613

Return on Investments

Perpetual Funds	11.29%
Non- Perpetual Funds	4.36%

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

In the Gospel of Matthew, as the Lord Jesus was about to ascend to the Father, He gave the Great Commission to the Apostles, commanding them to ***“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. * And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Mt. 28:19-20).*** Jesus established the Catholic Church to evangelize, and He gives us His Great Commission in Matthew’s gospel to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them, to teach all He commands us,

and to trust that He is with us always. The reason we exist as a Church is to evangelize. To evangelize is to welcome people into a personal relationship with God that will transform them completely inside and out. Living out the Great Commission of Jesus is both personal and communal. Each of us is called personally not only to witness to our faith but also to accompany others in faith. Each of our parishes, schools, and ministries have the same mission, and it should be fostered each time the community comes together.

Catholic Charities of South Mississippi

Diocesan Director: Jennifer Williams



Catholic Charities of South Mississippi is blessed to serve individuals and families throughout the Diocese of Biloxi. Our services are wide-reaching and include:

- Case management & financial assistance
- Infant and maternity care
- Representative Payee Services
- Disaster Relief
- Social Service Coordination for Seniors
- Counseling services
- Mercy Cross Day Center
- Food Bank operations
- Adoption services
- Loaves and Fishes Food Bank

Through these ministries, we are privileged to walk with people during some of the most difficult and vulnerable moments of their lives. As the hands and feet of the Church, our mission is rooted in dignity and compassion -- affirming the value of every person as a child of God and helping them experience His love through our care and service.



de l’Epée Deaf Center

Director: Greg Crapo



de l’Epée Deaf Center continues as the quiet jewel in the Diocese of Biloxi. Honoring our founders: Sr. Dolores Coleman, D.C., and Bishop Joseph L. Howze, we continue the mission to provide spiritual well-being, promotion of independence and inclusion in the commu-

nity for the deaf, hard of hearing and disabled.

de l’Epée provides qualified interpreters to bridge the gap between the deaf and hearing communities. This past year, we provided over 2,000 hours of communication and over 4,200 hours of service, giving equal access in medical, educational, legal, work and religious settings 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Teaching sign language on a quarterly basis and one-on-one tutoring provided new opportunities to over 100 individuals and families for interaction with deaf family, friends, and co-workers.

As a national testing sight for interpreters, hosting CEU workshops, and providing intern work opportunities for interpreting students, **de l’Epée** leads the way in promoting the need for more and better skilled interpreters.

Supported by volunteers, **de l’Epée** hosted three summer youth camps for both deaf and hearing children, ages 5-16. Camps benefited 75 plus families with learning and association opportunities. Food Pantry program provided supplemental groceries and necessities for over 190 families across the dio-

cese.

Our Faith Formation continues to thrive with monthly events including: Signed Way of the Cross, Bible study in ASL, signed Dinner & Chat, creative prayer workshops and signed Mass in our chapel. Interpreters are available at several churches within the Diocese and not just Catholic. We are proud to promote St. Francis de Sales, the patron saint of the deaf, with his medal and prayer card, available at the Deaf Center. The 1/8th mile Stations of the Cross walking path is available week days for anyone wishing to experience. Father James Smith, our chaplain, is available for counseling and reconciliation in both sign and voice.

Our digital ministry has grown and promotes all the happenings at **de l’Epée**, but most importantly contributes to the journey for Intentional Discipleship. Our mailing list is over 850 strong and growing each day. To receive communications, please drop a note to delepee@deafcenter.org to subscribe.



Housing Ministry

Board Member: Greg Crapo



The Housing ministry of the Diocese of Biloxi consists of nine properties located throughout the region with almost 700 apartments. Eight of the properties provide HUD subsidized housing for seniors.

These include:

- Gabriel Manor 1 & 2 with a total of 72 units in Biloxi.
- Santa Maria del Mar with 209 units in North Biloxi
- Villa Mara with 198 units in Ocean Springs
- Samaritan Housing with 50 units in Ocean Springs
- Notre Dame de la Mar with 60 units in Bay St. Louis
- Caritas Manor with 32 units in Petal
- Carlow Manor with 40 units in Gulfport

In addition, the diocese sponsors one HUD subsidized property for persons with physical disabilities: Wofford Park with 15 units in Hattiesburg.

In addition to providing a clean, safe, quality living space, the Senior Adult Ministries committee provides a path for Intentional Discipleship with programs such as *Rescue Project*, counseling and regular Mass provided at each property. Many faiths in addition to Catholic provide programs at each property to accommodate the diverse populations.

Waiting lists are common for residency at our properties, so don’t wait to decide this is the place for your retirement years. Contact the property of your choice direct for more information.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 14

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 13

Office of Lay Personnel -- From Job to Calling

Director: Dave Wyrwich

The **Office of Lay Personnel** continues to strengthen the heart of diocesan life by focusing on the people who make the ministry of the Church possible. Recognizing that each employee serves not only in a professional capacity but also in a sacred mission, the office works diligently to foster both the spiritual and professional development of diocesan team members.

One of the most meaningful initiatives this year has been the continuation of the *Lunch and Learn* series -- informal gatherings that combine spiritual reflection with opportunities for shared learning. These sessions have become moments of genuine connection, allowing team members from across the diocese to pause, pray together, and deepen their understanding of how faith influences their daily work.

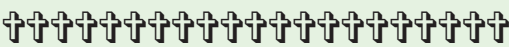
The **Office** has also promoted participation in spiritual retreats and faith-formation opportunities, encouraging employees to step away from their busy schedules to encounter Christ in new and refreshing ways. Open communication remains at the center of these efforts, ensuring that each team member feels valued, heard, and supported.

On the practical side, the office is streamlining the onboarding process for new diocesan employees. By simplifying paperwork, clarifying procedures, and ensuring new hires are welcomed into the diocesan family with care, the office helps new team members feel at home and ready to serve effectively from the start.

Yet, beyond systems and structure, the deeper goal is transformation. The **Office of Lay Personnel** is guiding a shift in perspective -- from viewing Church employment as simply a job to embracing it as a calling. This mindset

invites every diocesan employee to see their daily responsibilities as part of God's work in the world. It is a movement toward vocation, rooted in the understanding that each act of service -- whether administrative, pastoral, or technical -- is an offering of love to Christ and His Church.

In all these ways, the **Office of Lay Personnel** is helping to form a diocesan culture where professional excellence and spiritual depth go hand in hand -- where faith shapes work, and work becomes prayer.



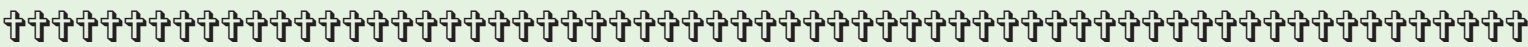
Office of Mission Advancement -- Strength in Stewardship

Director: Dave Wyrwich

The **Office of Mission Advancement** serves as the bridge between the mission of the Bishop, the faithful of our diocese, and the ministries that depend on their generosity. Through its leadership of the *Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA)*, this office helps make possible nearly half of all diocesan programs and operations -- fueling the Church's mission across 17 counties in South Mississippi.

Each year, the *Catholic Sharing Appeal* invites the faithful to come together in a tangible expression of discipleship. The funds raised support essential ministries: providing food and shelter to those in need, forming seminarians, forming and supporting Catholic educators, and sustaining the work of ministries and outreach programs that bring the Gospel of Christ to life in our communities.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 15



The Tabitha Project

Coordinator: Rachel Ryan



This past year has been one of growth, outreach and advocacy for **The Tabitha Project**, as we continue to live out our mission of devotion to good works and acts of mercy by providing spiritual well-being, promotion of independence and inclusion in the community. In November of 2024, we welcomed Rachel Ryan as our Coordinator. Since that time, the ministry has expanded across four counties in our Diocese: Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, and Pearl River. Over the past year, **Tabitha Project** has served a total of 26 individuals and families. Each encounter has reflected the heart of our ministry: to serve others with dignity, compassion and importance.

Over the past year, we have provided a variety of support services including advocacy for caregivers, parents and the elderly, as well as assistance with clothing, food, transportation all while building faith-centered relationships with our **Tabitha Project** families. Through ongoing case management, prayerful guidance and practical assistance, we've helped individuals navigate daily challenges, disability claims and religious education while strengthening

their connection to parish life.

One of the most meaningful initiatives this past year has been the creation of an *Individualized Religious Education Plan (IREP)* for CCD students with disabilities and unique learning needs. This plan will serve as the foundation for a Diocesan-wide *Religious Special Education Program*, ensuring that every child will have equal access to meaningful, inclusive faith formation.

To promote awareness and inclusion throughout the diocese, **The Tabitha Project** launched "*Tabitha Tips*", a weekly resource distributed to all parishes offering short, practical insights on disability, etiquette and awareness. These tips have sparked valuable conversations and strengthened understanding among parish communities.

Our outreach has also flourished through collaborations with St. Alphonsus Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary, Order of Alhambra, Walking with Moms in Need, Catholic Charities of South Mississippi, MS Hearing-Vision Project and many dedicated parish volunteers across the Diocese who faithfully serve our Tabitha families. Their partnership and generosity continue to make our ministry possible!

As we look toward the coming year, **The Tabitha Project** remains committed to expanding our support network, speaking at Mass to strengthen our parish inclusion and deepening our spiritual and practical outreach. Together, with your prayers, participation and encouragement, we will continue to reflect Christ's compassion to those in need of His healing presence.

If we can be accessible, then our future is accessible,
Rachel Ryan, Tabitha Project Coordinator

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 14

The generosity of the people of the Diocese of Biloxi continues to inspire. As of this year, **one in four active Catholic families** in the diocese contribute to the annual appeal -- a powerful testament to faith in action. Their contributions enable the Church to serve thousands, reminding us that every gift, no matter the size, makes a real difference.

Yet, as the **Office of Mission Advancement** looks to the future, it also invites the faithful to dream bigger. What could the Church accomplish if one in two families participated? Imagine the expanded outreach, the strengthened ministries, the new possibilities for evangelization and service. Doubling participation could transform not only diocesan finances but the very fabric of Catholic life in South Mississippi.

Through continued education, parish collaboration, and personal testimony, the **Office of Mission Advancement** is helping Catholics understand that stewardship is not merely about giving money -- it is about sharing in the mission of Christ. Every gift reflects gratitude for God's blessings and a desire to see His love shared more widely.

The Catholic Sharing Appeal stands as a reminder that when we come together as one diocesan family, our collective generosity becomes a powerful force for good--sustaining ministries, inspiring hope, and extending the mercy of Christ to those who need it most.



Office of Pastoral Services

Director: Deacon Richard Smith



The Diocese of Biloxi's **Office of Pastoral Services** plays a vital role in nurturing the spiritual life of the local Church community. Rooted in the compassionate presence of Jesus, the ministry seeks to imitate His care for others -- especially those who are hurting, in need, or searching for deeper spiritual meaning. This office embodies Christ's healing and guiding presence, offering spiritual support, growth opportunities, and accompaniment to parishes and their leadership teams across the diocese.

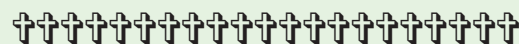
Beyond direct ministry, the **Office of Pastoral Services** serves as a key liaison between the bishop and all Catholic lay organizations within the Diocese. It fosters communication, collaboration, and shared mission, ensuring that the various lay ministries are aligned with the vision and guidance of the bishop while responding to the needs of the faithful.

In the past year, the **Office of Pastoral Services** has actively supported and walked alongside several parish communities. Through programs like *Ananias Training*, which helps form parishioners to accompany others on their spiritual journeys, the office has ministered to St. John the Evangelist Parish in Gulfport, as well as the leadership team of Holy Spirit Parish in Vancleave and Christ the King Mission in Latimer.

Additionally, the *Called & Gifted* discernment process, which helps individuals recognize and develop their spiritual gifts, has been implemented at St. Joseph Parish in Gulfport, Holy Family Parish in Pass Christian, and Our Lady of the Gulf Parish in Bay St. Louis. These initiatives reflect the office's commitment to equipping lay leaders and parishioners for active and fruitful ministry.

Through these efforts, the **Office of Pastoral Services** continues to be a cornerstone of pastoral care and spiritual development in the Diocese of

Biloxi, empowering communities to grow in faith and serve one another in love.



Office of Finance

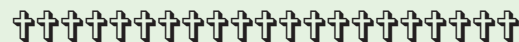
Director: Tammy DiLorenzo



Being mindful of God's blessings and gifts to His Church, the **Finance Office** is called to demonstrate discipleship and good stewardship of the financial assets of God's Church in the Diocese of Biloxi. This year brought about several changes within the **Department of Finance**.

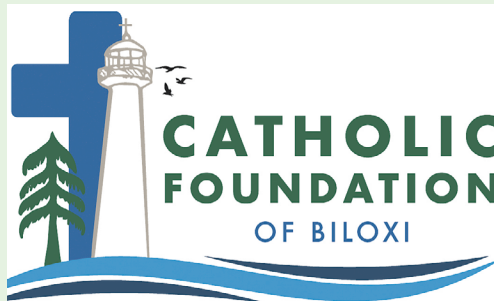
A team was formed to review the long-standing Best Practices for parishes and schools that had been in place for many years. Meeting every other week for several months, this group of priests, principals, parish and school bookkeepers, along with members of the Chancery offices worked together to formulate an updated fiscal policy which became particular law in the Diocese of Biloxi. The final document, the *Particular Law of the Diocese of Biloxi* on the Administration of Temporal Goods was presented to Bishop Kihneman and was promulgated effective July 1, 2025.

We are continuing to examine options to streamline the financial management process in the **Finance Office** as well as working toward options for improving financial reporting at the parishes and schools.



Catholic Foundation of Biloxi -- Building a Legacy of Faith

Director: Dave Wyrwich



The **Catholic Foundation of Biloxi** continues to be a cornerstone of financial stewardship and faith-based generosity for the Diocese of Biloxi. With more than **\$33 million in managed assets**, the **Foundation** ensures that parishes, ministries, and **Catholic educators** have the long-term financial

support they need to fulfill their mission for generations to come.

In the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025, the **Foundation Board** authorized its **third dividend grant of \$1 million** to endowed funds, bringing the total amount reinvested into client funds over the last three years to **more than \$2.4 million**. These distributions strengthen the very ministries that the **Foundation** serves, reflecting the success of its prudent investment strategies and its unwavering commitment to stewardship -- **including forming and supporting Catholic educators**.

Financially, the **Foundation** reported strong performance for FY 2025 with a **return of 11.29%** on endowed funds and **4.36%** on non-endowed funds. Even more noteworthy, **Foundation** clients continue to enjoy **fee-free management** on all funds held within the Catholic Foundation -- an expression of the **Foundation's** dedication to service over profit.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 16

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 15

This year also marked the introduction of the first annual **“Legacy Sunday,”** celebrated in six parishes across the diocese. The goal of Legacy Sunday is simple yet powerful: to inspire the faithful to consider leaving a lasting gift to their parish, school, or favorite ministry through the Catholic Foundation. These legacy gifts provide enduring support for the Church’s mission, ensuring that faith and generosity will continue to bear fruit long after we are gone.

As the **Foundation** grows, it remains guided by the values of transparency, trust, and Catholic stewardship. The **Foundation’s** success is not merely measured in numbers but in the lasting impact it enables -- the scholarships awarded, the ministries sustained, and the lives touched by Christ’s presence made visible through the generosity of His people.

The **Catholic Foundation of Biloxi** stands as a living witness to the belief that what we give to God, He multiplies abundantly -- for His Church, for His people, and for the generations to come.



Office of Communications

Director: Terrance P. Dickson



Since 1983, the **Office of Communications** has been privileged to publish the *Gulf Pine Catholic*, the official newspaper of the Diocese of Biloxi. Mailed twice a month to every registered Catholic and available online, the *Gulf Pine Catholic* continues its mission of proclaiming the Good News and keeping the faithful informed

about the life of the Church -- locally, nationally, and around the world. More than a source of information, the *Gulf Pine Catholic* serves as a tool for **formation and faith enrichment**. Each issue features reflections and commentaries that help readers grow in understanding and love of the faith. Regular contributions from **Pope Leo, Bishop Louis F. Kihneman III, Father Michael Tracey, Deacon Ralph Torrelli, Deacon Justin Mitchell and Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.,** Senior Ethicist with the National Catholic Bioethics Center, invite readers to see the world through the lens of Gospel truth.

Over the past year, the *Gulf Pine Catholic* has chronicled the historic shift in the Church’s leadership -- from the long, prophetic papacy of Pope Francis to the election of Pope Leo XIV on May 8. The newspaper reported on Pope Francis’s legacy of mercy, missionary zeal and reform, and provided in-depth coverage of the conclave that followed his reign, highlighting the election of the first American pontiff and the new direction under Pope Leo XIV. By offering commentary, interviews and analysis, the paper helped readers of the Diocese of Biloxi understand the significance of this transition -- not only for Rome, but for our local Church and our common Catholic identity.

In an age defined by rapid communication and fleeting headlines, the launch of our **new website**, gulfpinecatholic.com, has allowed us to expand our reach, ensuring that the timeless message of Christ finds a home in the digital world.

The Catholic press has always been more than a means of sharing news -- it is a ministry of truth and charity. **St. Francis de Sales**, patron saint of journalists, taught that words rooted in love can transform hearts. Likewise,

St. Titus Brandsma, a modern martyr and defender of Catholic journalism, reminded us that faithful communication is an act of courage and witness in a world often clouded by falsehood. Their examples inspire our mission to communicate with clarity, compassion, and conviction.

Finally, the **Office of Communications** continues to produce the **annual Diocesan Directory**, a trusted guide to our parishes, schools, offices, and ministries -- another way we serve to connect and strengthen our Catholic family.

May the *Gulf Pine Catholic* always remain a beacon of truth, unity, and hope -- illuminating the path of faith for all who seek Christ in our times.



Office of Social Media

Director: Paul Blanchard



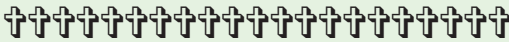
Our team in the **Office of Social Media Outreach** continues to grow ways to share your photos, news, and events through social media. We’d love to share your stories!

From witnessing your personal faith journey or highlighting your parish community, every story can inspire someone. A new submission process located at gulfpinecatholic.com lets anyone submit stories and photos right from our website without the need to log in or create an account. We’ve gotten over 132 story and image submissions and nearly 200 calendar events submitted to us this way since piloting the process. Help us celebrate with you!

We continue to grow the **“Friday Updates”** email newsletter to all registered parishioners’ emails. This has been immensely helpful in sharing what is happening in our diocese. We average a 70% open rate to nearly 12,000 weekly emails. Our primary goal is to make sure no matter where you look, you’ll find a pathway to discipleship.

We’re also developing ways to better intercommunicate between departments, parishes, and schools to ensure consistency. A lot of things are happening around our diocese and sometimes they can all happen at the same time. This has caused us to pilot different data driven solutions to find what works best for our target audiences. Better calendar collaboration and event coordination is a goal we’re moving toward as we examine the ways in which we’ve always done things. Please keep us in your prayers; you are in ours and thank you for being open witnessing your story.

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” Pope Paul VI’s 1975 apostolic exhortation, Evangelii Nuntiandi



Office of Education

Director: Jennifer Broadus



Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Biloxi continue to be a vital part of the mission and ministry of the Diocese. This year, our schools collectively served over 4,000 students and were supported by more than 500 dedicated faculty and staff members. Through a renewed commitment to excellence in faith

formation, academics, and leadership, our schools continue to embody the mission of Catholic education.

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 16

Over the past few years, our schools have developed *School Leadership Teams* to accompany and support our principals in advancing the mission and vision of Catholic education. These collaborative teams play a critical role in fostering a culture that is rooted in Gospel values, academic excellence, and service to others.

The guiding theme for this school year, *Renewed on Mission*, has inspired a spirit of reflection, healing, and recommitment to our shared purpose. We began the year with a Diocesan-wide retreat focused on healing and spiritual renewal. All faculty and staff from across our schools gathered in unity for Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and Confession, followed by opportunities for collaboration and fellowship. This sacred time allowed us to begin the academic year grounded in prayer and strengthened in community.

Individual Faith Formation Plans have been fully implemented for all administrators, faculty, staff, and students. One of the main goals of our *Faith Formation Plans* is the concept of accompaniment -- walking with one another on our journey of faith. Through intentional efforts to nurture spiritual growth, discipleship, and a deeper relationship with Christ, our schools continue to form hearts and minds in the Catholic tradition.

Academically, our **Catholic Schools** continue to demonstrate exceptional strength and achievement. Student performance continues to surpass both state and national averages, a testament to the dedication of our teachers, the rigor of our curriculum, and the supportive partnership of families. All schools are fully accredited by the Mississippi Department of Education and Cognia, ensuring the highest standards of educational quality and continuous improvement.

We strive for every student to leave our schools not only as confident and capable scholars, but as committed disciples of Jesus, ready to live their faith fully each day.



Office of Faith Formation

Associate Director: Amber Buckley



This year has been one of growth, collaboration, and renewal within the **Office of Faith Formation**. Guided by the vision of *Missio Nostra* and our diocesan call to form intentional disciples, our office has continued to unify efforts across schools and parishes to help every person

know, love, serve, and witness God more intentionally.

A major accomplishment has been the implementation of *Faith Formation Plans* across the Diocese of Biloxi. These personal and family-based plans invite Catholics to reflect on their faith journey and make tangible commitments to grow in the four pillars of discipleship: to know God, to love God, to serve God, and to witness God. This year marked the creation of distinct plans for adults, young children, and families, ensuring that formation is consistent and accessible for all ages. These plans are now being used in schools and parish programs, fostering greater intentionality and shared mission throughout the diocese.

Significant progress has also been made in the renewal of *New Wine*, our diocesan adult formation and leadership program. The updated curriculum, set to launch in August 2026, places renewed emphasis on missionary discipleship, accompaniment, and practical ministry. Drawing from *Missio Nostra* and

the lived experience of participants, *New Wine* now offers a stronger integration of spiritual growth, communication, and evangelization -- forming leaders who are both rooted in prayer and ready for mission.

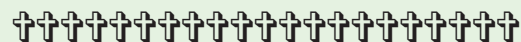
Our Safe Environment efforts through *Virtus* remain strong, with 74% of the entire diocese currently in compliance -- our highest rate yet. Every parish and school has successfully transitioned to the *Virtus Children's Program*, providing consistent and age-appropriate formation on personal safety and dignity. These milestones reflect our continued dedication to maintaining a safe, accountable environment for all God's people.

The **Office of Faith Formation** website continues to expand, offering new and practical resources for parishes, schools, and families. Among this year's additions are children's books inspired by *Missio Nostra*, OCIA support materials, and Catechetical Goals by age level and sacrament. The site serves as a central hub for formation -- supporting catechists, teachers, and families with accessible tools for living out our diocesan mission.

In addition, a series of ministry-specific workshops has strengthened collaboration between schools and parishes. These gatherings have provided training, spiritual renewal, and shared best practices for catechists, youth ministers, OCIA coordinators, and school religion teachers -- building unity and confidence among those serving in the field.

Finally, we have streamlined religion textbooks in our Catholic schools to ensure all are diocesan-approved and aligned with our mission. For parish programs, a vetted list of recommended materials is now available, providing flexibility while ensuring theological consistency and quality.

As we look forward, the **Office of Faith Formation** remains committed to forming disciples and supporting those who form others. Through collaboration, creativity, and faithfulness to *Missio Nostra*, we continue to build a culture where faith formation is intentional, personal, and alive in every corner of our diocese.



Office of Youth Ministry

Director: Marianne Schmidt



The **Office of Youth Ministry** serves youth, young adults, and campus ministry and this past year we were full of events, programs, formation, and much more.

2024-2025

For youth ministry we started the year with our dodgeball kick off held at St. James. We changed our approach this year and instead had youth groups compete in a series of minute-to-win-it-style games in an effort to receive the most points. After that, we gathered inside to play some trivia, hear about the events coming up, reveal the coming up DBYC theme, and take time to pray in community during a time of Eucharistic Adoration in the Church. Our kick off is planned by our **Diocesan Spirit Movers**. **Spirit Movers** are a group of students 10th-12th grade who apply and put on our diocesan events. They meet monthly and we work to form them to be leaders in their youth group. They also planned the middle school retreat. The middle school retreat was held at St. Vincent de Paul and we talked about what it means to have life that is overflowing. We had our spirit mover adults give the talks while the *Spirit Movers* led games, small groups, and gave testimonies. The *Spirit Movers* also helped prepare the *Rosary Rally* and *Walk for Life* held in January. We start with a rosary and Mass at the Cathedral and then make our way to the Lighthouse Park in Biloxi where we hear from the different pro-life ministries in our Diocese and have a time of Eucharistic Adoration to pray for the end to abortion.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 18

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 17

And of course, our *Spirit Movers* are vital to planning and executing our Diocesan-wide Youth Conference held in March. The *Spirit Movers* come up with the theme, sessions, games, small groups, and the overall environment of the weekend. We had Jackie Angel and Ennie Hickman as keynote speakers and the theme was *Made New*. Friday, almost 30 parishes came together (in costume) to start the conference. Upon being called up by the Bishop, they presented him a gift that had to do with their theme. On Saturday during the conference, we had the main hallway lined with universities, *EWTN*, eucharistic miracle posters, religious sisters, and all of our seminarians. They had freebies for the teens and were overall a great resource to the teens on vocations, how to stay Catholic in college, and more. Saturday night was a night full of prayer and reconciliation with several priests there to offer the Sacraments. We closed the conference on Sunday with Mass and awards and then quickly got ready to do a day rally for the middle schoolers.

Our *SEARCH* team began meeting in August with a team retreat and then weekly meetings on Thursday evenings. We had a team of 14 with eight girls and six boys, all seniors in high school, representing nine different parishes in our diocese. Each week we would dive deeper into the retreat, practice giving talks, share a meal, and end in prayer led by the team. All of these meetings led to two different *SEARCH* weekends held at the beginning of the year. Both weekends were full and our team perfectly balanced prayer, play, and fellowship in order to make space for their peers to encounter Christ.

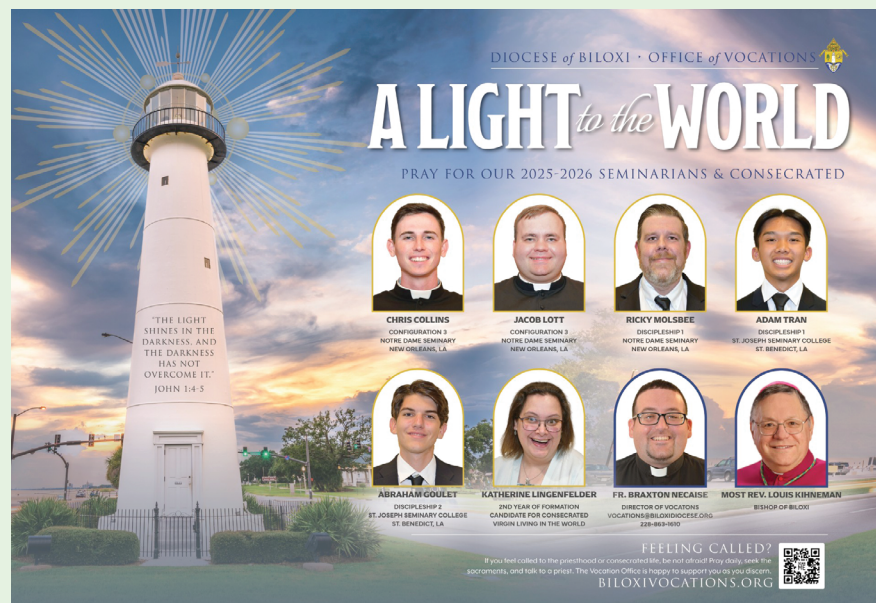
Campus ministry leaders attended a bootcamp at the beginning of August to prepare for what it means to be a leader on their campus. Throughout the year they planned class retreats, school prayer services, and even help when the Bishop makes his school visits.

Young adult ministry also known as our *Frassati Fellowship* has continued to grow this year. With monthly *Theology on Tap* events we are continuing to grow community of young adults on the Coast.



Office of Vocations

Director: Father Braxton Necaie



The **Vocations Office** in the Diocese of Biloxi is continuing to make a cultural shift in having a more active presence within the diocese through providing resources, raising awareness and walking with potential discerners. The discernment process is a sacred time of listening to our Lord's voice to determine if priesthood or religious life is what they are being called to live.

It is not uncommon for a seminarian to discern out of the seminary. Just because a man has gone to seminary does not mean he will be ordained a priest. The discernment process helps him hear God's plan in his life just as the church is discerning whether he is called to the priesthood.

Part of our vital work in the **Vocations Office** is continuing to accompany men and women who are discerning God's call including those currently in formation. We have five men in formation discerning God's call for them as priests. Three men are studying at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, LA, and two men are studying at St. Joseph Seminary College in St. Benedict, LA. Additionally, we have a young lady who is in formation as a Consecrated Virgin Living in the World. We are hopeful for the possibility of an ordination of two of our men to the transitional diaconate in the Summer of 2026 and for the Consecration of our candidate for consecrated virginity also in the summer of 2026.

We recently ran *Called by Name* and had over one hundred submissions of young people's names. We will host a discernment dinner in December for those who were nominated and provide them with future opportunities to discern God's call including a discernment retreat for the men and a "*High Tea with the Sisters*" with our young ladies.

The **Vocations Office** continues to host quarterly Holy Hour for Vocations in the Deaneries throughout the Diocese. To date, we have hosted these at the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Biloxi, Our Lady of the Gulf in Bay St. Louis, St. Charles Borromeo in Picayune, St. James in Gulfport, St. Thomas the Apostle in Long Beach, St. Thomas Aquinas in Hattiesburg, and St. Elizabeth Seton in Ocean Springs.

Last year, we began sending to each of our priests in the Diocese of Biloxi cards acknowledging their birthdays and ordination anniversaries. It was met with very positive feedback from the priests. This year we now recognize our permanent deacons birthdays, ordination anniversaries, and marriage anniversaries. A high priority in our office is engaging those men who may be at a level of pre-discernment for the priesthood. We send out quarterly letters to discerners with discernment resources and meet with these men regularly. We are planning a weekend discernment retreat for men discerning the priesthood in February.

For our men currently in formation, we host an annual Christmas dinner with their families and a dinner with their pastors from their summer assignments. Our seminarians maintain an active presence and ministry at our annual Diocese of Biloxi Youth Conference where we also have different religious orders present for the teens throughout the conference.

In late January, our office will be hosting the first annual Diocesan Altar Server Awards Mass at Our Lady of the Gulf in Bay St. Louis. We are excited about this new annual award Mass that will allow us the chance to walk with potential young discerners.

Within our Diocesan schools, we have implemented vocation teams to walk with those young men and women who may be at various places in their discernment. Our teams were provided with a copy of *Pray 180*, a six-month guide to pray for vocations, grow closer to our Lord Jesus and become disciples. Each of our schools have a traveling crucifix program which travels from classroom to classroom so that our students can pray for those discerning but also their own vocations. We continue our *Adopt-A-Seminarian* program at our Diocesan schools. Each school is assigned a seminarian to include in their daily prayers and to write letters. Our seminarians visit their schools which provides an opportunity for witness and for the students to get to know the guys. At our high schools discernment racks with discernment resources and materials are available to our entire student bodies. We were excited to be present at St. Patrick High School's Vocation fair last year and speak to their student body along with several religious communities. We regularly go to various schools within the diocese to promote vocations.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 19

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 18

A Kindergarten through twelfth grade curriculum was introduced to all of our Catholic school teachers which helps young people to discern God’s call in their lives. For our younger students we provided *Little Convent in the Big City*, three books that introduce Sister Mary Andy and her lovable convent of sisters as they serve the poor in New York City!

We continue to pray for vocations here in the Diocese of Biloxi and for young people to have the courage to respond generously to God’s call. Should you or someone you know be feeling God’s tug please reach out to Fr. Braxton Necaie, Director of Vocations, or visit biloxivocations.org.



Office of the Permanent Diaconate

Director: Deacon Mike Harris



15 new Deacons ordained May 31

Front row l-r: Felix Diaz, Bill Oster, Edgar Flores, Charles Walden, Bishop Kihneman, James Balentine, Javier Marroquin, & David Hebert; top row l-r: Walter Ascencio, Elmer Hernandez, Roy Leonard, Gil Diaz, Eric Denmark, Paul Necaie, Robert Maynard, & Mike Martin.

The **Office of the Permanent Diaconate** had another amazing year full of God’s blessings. Through the grace of God, after four years of formation, 15 men were ordained permanent deacons by Bishop Kihneman on May 31. This number included six Hispanic Deacons who are critically needed to serve in the 10 large Hispanic Communities in our diocese. Additionally, because of the number of men ordained, several deacons were assigned to parishes that formerly did not have a deacon before.

Currently we have 55 active deacons (including two assigned to other dioceses) and eight retired deacons. These men serve in 33 parishes throughout our diocese. With a goal of providing a deacon to every parish, we have an additional 18 men in formation who anticipate ordination (God Willing) in June of 2028.

In addition to serving on the Altar, deacons are active in many ministries throughout the diocese including: Prison Ministry; Evangelization; serving as Advocates and Research Assistants for the Judicial Vicar; Marriage & Family Life; Marriage Prep; Liturgy; Chancellor; Charismatic Ministry; Housing Board; and several special projects and ministries.

To keep up with retirements, deaths and transfers Bishop Kihneman has authorized a New Diaconate Class, the Class of 2032. Recruiting for this class will begin in the Spring of 2026. If you know of someone who might be interested in the Permanent Diaconate, please let them know.

Our “Post Ordination Formation” program helps keep our Permanent Deacons up-to-date by providing continuing education opportunities. This past year we met quarterly and had presentations on the following:

-- Pope Francis’ declaration on the “*Infinite Dignity of Man*,” was presented by Father Don Bosco, PhD, along with an overview of the Eden Center in New Orleans which aids survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

-- The New Roman Ritual: “*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery Outside Mass*,” was presented along with a refresher on Mass rubrics. The new rite, approved by the USCCB, was obligatory as of

December 1, 2024.

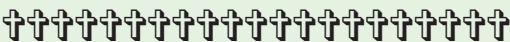
-- Deacon Justin Mitchell presented “*Marriage Prep 101*” as a refresher for deacons preparing couples for marriage.

-- And Deacon Norbert Lloyd (Coordinator for Charismatic Ministry) gave a presentation on the “*Charismatic Movement in our Diocese*.”

In addition to continuing education and a required annual retreat for each deacon, Bishop Kihneman organized a Convocation for our deacons based on an Encounter Ministries program. It was truly excellent. Essentially, the program covered how to live a supernatural lifestyle that is faithful to church teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Chris Molino, teacher at St. Patrick HS, gave a testimony of his instantaneous (miraculous) spine healing many months after a serious car accident. Bishop Kihneman welcomed everyone, spoke of the need for physical, spiritual and emotional healing involving the Holy Spirit. Father Godfrey spoke about overcoming obstacles to the Holy Spirit and Healing Ministry today. And Deacon Norbert taught us how to pray for healing along with cooperating with the Holy Spirit in Ministry.

During the past year the Diaconate Class of 2028 completed their second year of formation and received the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders (Diaconate). Two candidates added new babies to their families during the year, Jose (Maria) Damaso and Phil (Shirley) Hendrix! Professors from Notre Dame Seminary taught the English-speaking men and SEPI (USCCB’s SouthEast Pastoral Institute) provided instructors for our Spanish-speaking men. Dr. Olga Villar (Director of SEPI) met with the whole class and emphasized the importance of accepting people from different cultures into the Church and the workplace. As deacons one of our goals is to integrate our culturally diverse Church into something better than any single culture alone.

The Permanent Diaconate Program is possible due to funding received through grants from the Catholic Extension and Catholic Home Missions. However, the majority of program funding comes from the very generous donations given by Catholics throughout our diocese via the Catholic Sharing Appeal.



Office of Evangelization

Director: Ray Lacy



The state of the Diocese of Biloxi about **Evangelization** is defined by a strategic effort to shift from “maintenance to mission,” guided by a plan called *Missio Nostra* (*Our Mission*). Our efforts in forming Leadership Teams and their formation

are a top priority. We have lead team retreats in parishes and schools and continue to support leadership teams in their pathways to discipleship. We believe here in the Diocese of Biloxi that leadership teams alongside the pastor or the principle can create structures and processes that are fruitful in advancing the mission of discipleship. The diocese has established a dedicated **Office of Evangelization** to coordinate these efforts.

Key Aspects of Evangelization in the Diocese of Biloxi

* **Mission Statement:** The diocese is actively working to form intentional, missionary disciples of Jesus Christ who are prepared to spread the Gospel.

* **Missio Nostra:** Bishop Louis F. Kihneman III initiated this comprehensive, ongoing guide for evangelization. It outlines three pillars of focus:

1. **Led by the Holy Spirit:** Emphasizing daily prayer, fasting, and living in God’s word.

SEE MINISTRIES, PAGE 20

MINISTRIES

2. **Intentional Evangelization:** Seeking opportunities for personal witness, radical hospitality, and bold proclamation of the Gospel.

3. **Authentically Human:** Building Christ-centered relationships and meeting people where they are in their faith journey.

*** Pathways to Discipleship:** The Office of Evangelization promotes “Pathways to Discipleship,” which are initiatives designed to help parishes and schools move into mission by engaging in four critical areas: Knowing Jesus, Loving Jesus, Serving Jesus, and Witnessing Jesus in our daily lives.

*** Pathways and Resources:** The diocese utilizes various processes and programs such as *FORMED*, *Alpha*, *Ananias Training*, *The Rescue Project* among others. We had Encounter Ministries lead our October Priest Convocation at Our Lady of Hope retreat center on intercessory prayer. Two of the processes we continue to use is *The Called and Gifted Evangelization Charism* inventory and *Five Voices* inventory to help grow missionary disciples.

In summary, the Diocese of Biloxi is actively committed to fostering a culture of intentional evangelization and discipleship through structured programs, clear guidance, and a focus on both individual and community faith development.



Marriage and Family
Life is getting its footing, but not exactly where it needs to be. Marriage prep is getting better with inroads to finally accomplishing a Diocese of Biloxi *Engaged Encounter* program. The beginning of 2026 should kick off the Diocese initiation with men-

for couples trained in place. We have worked with *Engaged Encounter* in New Orleans, Birmingham, Kentucky, and have inroads with Mobile. We also have assisted marriage prep for several parishes in the Diocese needing direction. There was also a Deacon Continuing Education Program completed on May 3, called *Marriage 101*, at St. Joseph's in Gulfport with 13 deacons in attendance. There is also a program starting at Catholic Charities that The **Office of Family Life** is looking forward to partnering with. Catholic Charities has a program similar to our FOCCUS inventory and gives engaged couples' great information as to how the sacrament of marriage should be approached. *Natural Family Planning* is going well, but based on the current social tendencies, many who come for marriage preparation either have children or are sexually active. Our materials for marriage prep, *For Better and For Ever*, *Better Together and Beloved* are still good and relevant premarital guides.

My primary Marriage office initiative is to: (1) Establish and train mentor couples in each of the Deaneries. This will make consistent marriage prep available and accountable to all the Churches in the Deaneries. Many are doing a great job, but marriage prep needs consistency and this will be a priority. (2) Formally schedule *Catholic Engaged Encounter* weekends at the Kelly Retreat Center as well as other locations that would be convenient throughout the diocese for marriage prep. (3) Establish on-line marriage prep for distance-affected couples due to employment or military service. We have one up and running, but we need to promote its availability.

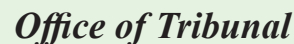
Walking with Moms in Need is going great and is expanding. We are looking forward to moving the operation into the old Morning Star facility

after October 31. The number of clients served is increasing and the need for infant formula, diapers, clothing and car seats is at a high level. Margaret Miller is doing a great job and can grow the program as finances permit. Thus far, the large increase in Hispanic clients has increased the need for bilingual participation and the program has accommodated this well from a staffing position. We need to continue to get the parishes to get the word out about this much needed ministry.

Rachal's Vinyard is going strong under the direction of Deacon Johnny Williams. He completed a session this past May and September and said it was one of the most successful ever. His volunteers are well trained and Christ centered and this really makes the program go. Funding is great and it is not a problem for the Diocese, and I would like maybe to have more than one session per year. It really is a magnificent program for all who not only attend but serve.

The prolife ministry is going along well and Deacon Fink is doing well. We are steady and are moving the program along under the principles and direction of the Catholic Church. We have many billboards supporting the values of the Catholic Church and take the Diocese of Biloxi.

This is the first year that the **Office of Marriage and Family Life** has done the annual Anniversary Mass. It is an enormous undertaking but truly a labor of love. Next year, we plan to start earlier and advertise throughout the diocese to increase awareness of the magnificent married couples throughout the diocese. I would also like to generate more support from other deacons to decrease the workload.



Director: Father Bartosz Kunat, J.C.L.



Ecclesiastical tribunals are courts of law that operate in the name of the Church, rendering judgments according to canon law. They have existed since the earliest days of Christianity, with the foundations of today's judicial procedures taking shape in the Middle Ages. The current structure and method of operation were refined through the

20th-century reform of the Code of Canon Law.

Among the various Church tribunals are diocesan courts, metropolitan courts, and the highest of them all -- the Tribunal of the Roman Rota.

Our diocesan tribunal serves as the court of first instance, with the bishop as its chief judge. In practice, however, each bishop traditionally entrusts his judicial authority to a judicial vicar, whom he appoints to oversee the proper administration of justice.

In the Diocese of Biloxi, the tribunal is led by Msgr. John McGrath, Judicial Vicar, with Father Bartosz Kunat serving as Adjunct Judicial Vicar and Director of the Tribunal. They are supported by Mary Beth Broussard, Administrative Assistant and Ecclesiastical Notary, and by Father Tommy Conaway, who serves as Defender of the Bond.

Ministries of the Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

MINISTRIES

From page 21

The primary mission of every ecclesiastical tribunal is to issue just and equitable decisions rooted in the Christian values of justice and mercy.

Most cases heard by our diocesan tribunal concern petitions for the declaration of the invalidity of a marriage. The tribunal examines whether a marriage was validly or invalidly contracted. Grounds for a declaration of invalidity may include simulation of consent, coercion or fear, deceit, lack of due discretion, or psychological incapacity to assume the essential obligations of marriage, among other factors.



Hispanic Ministry

Director: Father Daniel Martinez Patiño



The Diocese of Biloxi's **Office of Hispanic Ministry**, under the direction of Father Daniel Martinez-Patino, accompanies and serves Hispanic Catholic communities across the Gulf Coast. Through the leadership of the

Missionary Sisters of the Holy Infant of Good Health and the **Office of Hispanic Ministry** staff, the ministry provides sacramental preparation for children and adults, faith formation, retreats, marriage support, and pastoral outreach to families facing separation or crisis. They offer catechesis, spiritual guidance, and community-building opportunities in multiple parishes, helping individuals and families grow in their relationship with Christ and remain connected to the life of the Church.

Masses in Spanish are offered at the following parishes:

Sábado/Saturday

Laurel: Immaculate Conception Parish, 8 p.m.

Pascagoula: Sacred Heart Parish, 6 p.m.

Domingo/Sunday

Bay St. Louis: St. Rose de Lima Parish, 12 noon

Biloxi: Blessed Seelos Parish, 11 a.m.

Gulfport: St. John the Evangelist Parish, 2 p.m.

Hattiesburg: Sacred Heart Parish, 1:30 p.m.

Laurel: Immaculate Conception Parish, 4 p.m.

Ocean Springs: St. Alphonsus Parish, 2 p.m.

Picayune: St. Charles Borromeo Parish, 12:30 p.m.

Lunes/Monday

Biloxi: Our Lady of Fatima Parish, 6 p.m.

Jueves/Thursday

Laurel: Immaculate Conception Parish, 7 p.m.



The Relic Project

Archivist: Deacon Karl Koberger

From the Archives



Deacon Karl



Our relic collection is being promoted more this year. We have a wonderful team of volunteers who are helping me with the relics. We have held multiple tours of the Marian Chapel behind Nativity BVM Cathedral where we have close to 500 relics on display to be visited and venerated. All are welcome to visit, but days/hours are very limited right now. We need more volunteers to sit with the relics and answer questions in order to have the chapel open more days/hours each week. We will continue to work on increasing the days/hours that they will be available for the public to visit. Arrangements for tours can be made by contacting Nativity BVM Parish. We are working on cataloguing and taking pictures of the relics to publish on our diocesan website. We might have that completed within the next year.

I am continuing to work with our foreign priests to file proper paperwork with USCIS (Homeland Security) to allow them to remain in the USA as Religious Workers for our Diocese.

When people need information about Sacramental Records (for sacramental reasons), it is my job to help when I can. The first place people should contact is the parish where a person was baptized. That parish should have all sacramental records listed in their Sacramental Register. A few of our parishes have lost their registers in Hurricane Katrina, so I can help with some of them by searching microfilm. (Unfortunately, there is a gap of missing registers between the date they were last filmed before Katrina. In those cases, affidavits of witnesses will have to be obtained.)

NOTE: I do not search records for genealogy or dual citizenship information.

I also work on and file paperwork in order to comply with USCCB regulations for our priests and deacons who celebrate sacraments in other dioceses.

Again I ask all parishes to send me any information from your parish that needs to be archived in your parish historical file for future reference.

Prayer for Vocations

God our Father,

We thank you for calling men and women to serve in Your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons.

Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to Your call.

May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen