



Rev. Jaison Mangalath leads a group of Holy Ghost parishioners as they pray the rosary during a back to school prayer service held Wednesday at Opelousas High School.

Church holds prayer rally

Written by

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Next week the halls of Opelousas High School will again be filled the shouting and bustling of its more than 700 students but Wednesday the halls rang with an entirely different sound — the chanting of prayers.

Every inch of school was blessed that evening as the Rev. Jaison Mangalath of Holy Ghost Catholic Church led two dozen people around the school for their annual prayer rally.

"A new school year is

beginning and we wanted to pray for the children and teachers to have a good year," Mangalath said, "and let the school community know that they are in our prayers."

Classes for all St. Landry Parish public school students will begin Monday, so the Blood Covenant Women of God from Holy Ghost Catholic Church of Opelousas asked principal Rodney Johnson for permission to hold a back-to-school prayer rally.

They invited parents, students and teachers, but none were in attendance.

Regardless, the group enthusiastically prayed for Opelousas High students and students who attend surrounding schools.

"We're losing so many of our kids to drugs and alcohol and those video games, and we figured if we start before the beginning of school, we can help them," Blood Covenant Women of God spokeswoman Artherine White said. "Our whole focus is to save our children."

The evening began with Mangalath leading the group through a short liturgy. He told them they were there, "to ask God's blessing on our students and our teachers and also this institution as we begin this academic year."

A series of three school prayers were recited, including, "O Lord God, school is not always easy, and some days it is very difficult, and students struggle to relax and be at peace. Yet, we know that you will give them patience, wisdom and courage to be excellent in every way, and you will help them love others, as you love them. Amen."

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The group recited the Lord's Prayer and were then led by Johnson around the school. Mangalath blessed classrooms, hallways, offices and meeting areas, sprinkling holy water throughout the school as the group followed behind and recited the Hail Mary.

At the end, the prayer was extended to all schools and the group thanked Johnson for allowing them to bless their school.

"His main concern is to educate the mind, the body and the spirit of his students," one woman said.

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