



The Diocese of Lake Charles
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Catholic

Catholic Charities source of hope during COVID-19 pandemic

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

LAKE CHARLES — The mission of Catholic Charities to provide service to people in need and to call other people of good will to do the same is playing out more than ever right now as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold daily.

Through their work at Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana in the Diocese of Lake Charles, volunteers and staff are in frequent contact with people whose survival is already a struggle. With the economic fallout from the pandemic, society's vulnerable are now faced with how they will pay their rent, utilities or buy enough food for their family, just to name a few.

Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., Ph.D., Director of Catholic Charities of SWLA, has been coordinating relief efforts locally. What follows is a diary of sorts through March 31 on ways the diocesan outreach ministry continues to make God's presence known amid this global crisis.

• **March 18:** Since it became clear there would be restrictions once the coronavirus made itself known in Southwest Louisiana, the staff and volunteers have worked hard to ensure continuity of daily operations. The office has been able to remain open to help people with rent, utilities, medication, funerals, etc. It was decided early on, if the office was forced to close, calls would be forwarded and assistance would continue to be offered.

Today, we distributed food to about 75 households in Grand Lake. People expressed gratitude, saying they have very little in their bank account right now. People were cheerful and calm and happy. No matter what, we at Catholic Charities will not become weary in doing good, with our Beloved Lord's help and creativity.

• **March 19:** Blessed Feast of St. Joseph! We are all experiencing poverty in one way or another, materially, spiritually, psychologically. Today, the truck from Second Harvest came to deliver more food. We distributed food to about 50 people at Golden Arms Apartments, and we are continuing to make slow and steady preparations to be able to assist people with food.

• **March 20:** We distributed food to more than 250 people. New people came looking for assistance and reported increased difficulties in these trying times. We are blessed to be able to continue our services to the poor and look forward to another week of service next week.

• **March 23:** Catholic Charities is set up outside 9 a.m. to noon Monday – Thursday for drive up food registration at its Lake Charles food bank site, 1225 Second St., for those families who are eligible. Please bring a valid ID, a Social Security card and proof of income for each person in the household as well as a utility bill. All persons who ask for food assistance will be given food.

Catholic Charities has modified its hours of operation during the "stay-at-home" order issued on March 23 by Gov. John Bel Edwards. They are open to receive calls Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Catholic Charities is taking added safety precautions in order to help contain the spread of COVID-19 while insuring they continue to provide for the community.

• **March 24:** Catholic Charities USA has made it possible for Catholic Charities of SWLA to provide \$200 Wal-Mart gift cards to people recently laid off from their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. There is a limit of one gift card per household. Those eligible may email name, phone number, number of people in household, address, date of birth, proof of being laid off, a utility bill and ID to catholic.charities@lcdioocese.org. Applications must be sent by email. Please do not call. Funds are limited.

• **March 25:** Catholic Charities is need of canned goods to help with their food distribution efforts as many new people



Sister Miriam MacLean, RSM, PhD, left, Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, met with Jim Strohman, Senior Vice President and Project Director for Venture Global LNG's Calcasieu Pass Project, center, and Joe Miller, right, Kiewit Project Director and received monetary donations along with offers for on-hands assistance from their respective companies. Shown here, Sister Miriam also provided the representatives a tour of the Catholic Charities facilities.

are registering for their services. Church parishes usually host food drives during Lent, but because there are no public Masses, Catholic Charities is very short on donated items while the demand is high. They continue to be set up outside 9 a.m. to noon Monday – Thursday for drive up food registration at their Lake Charles site.

• **March 26:** Catholic Charities continues its food registration with new families still arriving. We are finding that about half of the people are impacted by COVID-19. We are very grateful for donations that are coming in. Because of a large donation from Enterprise, food in bulk was able to be ordered. The people of Lake Charles are very generous! We are also looking into some funding opportunities to help with rent and utilities for affected citizens. We are grateful to be able to continue to be of service to so many in need.

• **March 27:** Catholic Charities wrapped up another week of paperwork as it continued to register people in the community for assistance. Marlisa Harding from the American Press visited with Sister Miriam via phone to discuss how Catholic Charities has been reaching out to people affected by COVID-19.

• **March 30:** Catholic Charities handled more than 50 calls for rent and utility assistance as well as helping people register and receive food. Sister Miriam and the staff are grateful for the donations coming in and for the young people volunteering to re-stock shelves. To increase awareness of the 6 feet social distancing rule, a "corona-stick" is being used. To lighten the mood, a competition to see who can decorate the best corona-stick is in the works. May the best corona-stick win!

• **March 31:** Catholic Charities continued food registration with almost 30 new people registering. The staff also responded to nearly 60 phone calls received the day before, plus a few more today from people seeking rent and utility assistance. Mayor Nic Hunter stopped by for a visit to offer words of encouragement and to see Catholic Charities in action. We are grateful for all he is doing to keep our city safe in these days.

There is much to be grateful for, most of all our ability to keep our eyes on the Lord in all circumstances.

If you would like to donate food for the pantry, please consider ordering from their Amazon Wishlist: at <https://amzn.to/391Omah> to access the list; or drop off cans directly to Catholic Charities, 1225 Second Street between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Through buying on Amazon, the canned goods can be shipped directly to Catholic Charities at their food bank site, 1225 Second St., Lake Charles, LA 70601. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please go to www.catholiccharitiesswla.com and click on the Donate Now button. You may also mail donations to Catholic Charities, 1225 Second Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601.

BISHOP PROVOST'S Easter Message

I am struck by the fact, as recorded in the Gospels, that the disciples of Jesus are surprised by the empty tomb (cf. John 20:9; Luke 24:4; Luke 24:21-24; Mark 16:3; Matthew 28:5ff.). The Lord had foretold His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, but as we know from the Gospel accounts, the disciples did not understand or fully appreciate what was said (e.g. Luke 9:45). Nonetheless, the tomb remains empty.

This pandemic is forcing on us to encounter the unexpected. Many have become ill. Many others have been quarantined. Still others have succumbed. May they rest in peace. This Holy Week has been the strangest of my life—starkly quiet with no congregation, no sacred music, no visitors, no family, empty churches, confined to home. I am sure it is the same for you. On Good Friday in the ritual of the Catholic Church, the tabernacle is empty, no Mass is celebrated, and no decorations embellish our already simplified rituals. The Church's ancient rites summon the Book of Lamentations to reflect Her sentiments: "How lonely she is now, the once crowded city!" (Lamentations 1:1).

How the disciples must have sensed this desolation! Mary of Magdala cries out, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him" (John 20:2). However, soon after this sense of loss, a realization slowly overtakes that the sun has risen on a new day, seemingly like any other, but gloriously different. There are rumors (Luke 24:22-23). There are apparitions (e.g. Luke 24:4). And, as surely as the dissipating twilight at the break of day, a perception dawns that something completely new has happened, something we never thought possible, something to change our lives. The tomb is empty, and He has risen.

Easter liturgies streamed

LAKE CHARLES — Bishop Glen John Provost's Easter Sunday Mass will be televised on KPLC at 9:30 a.m. April 12 from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Mass recorded for television is restricted to 30 minutes, and for this reason, the rites have been shortened and abbreviated to the extent allowed by liturgical law. The Mass will also be streamed online at www.lcdioocese.org; www.facebook.com/lcdioocese; and www.youtube.com/lcdioocese.

The 3 p.m. Good Friday and 8 p.m. Easter Vigil liturgies officiated by Bishop Provost will be streamed on www.facebook.com/olqhchurch and www.facebook.com/lcdioocese.

Masses throughout the Diocese are being streamed on various church parish websites and/or Facebook pages. Below is a list with the links.

• Father Rommel Tolentino or Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, **Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception:** all Masses in the Extraordinary Form — Good Friday, the Passion of the Lord, 3 p.m.; April 10; Easter Vigil, 8 p.m.; April 11; and Easter Sunday, 5 p.m.; April 12. Tenebrae will be at 6 a.m. on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. All services will be streamed on Extraordinary Form Society of Lake Charles on Facebook and www.facebook.com/cathedraloftheimmaculateconception.

• Father Aubrey Guilbeau or Father Albert Borel, 10:30 a.m. Sundays, **St. Theodore Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/mossbluffcatholic/ or <https://mossbluffcatholic.org>. Drive-through confessions: 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturdays; and 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. Sundays.

• Father Luke Krzanowski, M.S., 8 a.m., Mass; 1 p.m., Rosary; **St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/lukaszwest

• Father Dismas Mauk, S.V.D., **St. Raphael Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/groups/219247525315000/ Mass times are: Monday, 5:30 p.m.; Tuesday – Friday, 8:30 a.m.; Saturday, 4 p.m. vigil; and Sunday, 10:15 a.m.

• Father Sam Orsot, **St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/stmscatholic

• Father Keith Pellerin, **St. Philip Neri Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/stphilipnericatholic and www.spnericatholic.com. Mass times are: 8:30 a.m. weekdays; 10:30 a.m. weekends.

• Father Jeffrey Starkovich, **St. Pius X Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/spx.church

• Monsignor Daniel Torres, **Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/olqhchurch

• Monsignor Jace Eskin, **St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/smmpcatholic

• Monsignor James Gaddy, 4 p.m. Saturdays, **St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/stmaryofthelakechurch and www.stmaryofthelakeparish.org

• Father Timothy Goody, **Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Sulphur:** www.facebook.com/ICSULPHUR; and www.icsulphur.org

• Father Matthew Cormier, **St. Henry Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/sthenrycc. Mass times are: 5:30 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday; 11:30 a.m., Sunday (English/Spanish); Holy Hour Thursdays after Mass; and Stations of the Cross Fridays after Mass

• Father Anthony Fontenot, **Christ the King Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/ctklakecharles

• Father Edward Richard, M.S. **Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church:** www.facebook.com/promptsuccorsulphur

The next Catholic Calendar will be published on Friday, April 24

The Offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles are closed today, Good Friday, April 10, and Easter Monday, April 13. Modified office hours will be observed Tuesday, April 14, onward to allow the continuance of necessary services during this difficult time of the COVID-19 outbreak. Hours have been modified during the "stay-at-home" order issued by Gov. John Bel Edwards on March 23.

The Chancery administration building, 414 Iris St.; the Bishop Harold Perry ministries building, 411 Iris St.; as well as the offices of Catholic Charities, 1225 Second Street, are open Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and closed on Friday. Meetings are by appointment only for the safety and well-being of those employed by the Diocese.

To contact the Diocese, please call 337-439-7400; or Catholic Charities at 337-439-7436.

Bishop Provost presents Catholic Scouting awards

Read more at lcdioocese.org

LAKE CHARLES — The Bishop's Brunch for Religious Emblems Recognition was held Saturday, March 7, at the Knights of Columbus Hall of Council 4562 of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. The awards presentation, hosted by the Catholic Committee on Scouting in the Diocese of Lake Charles, recognizes worthy scouts who completed the National Catholic Committee

on Scouting requirements to earn a religious emblem.

Bishop Glen John Provost, assisted by Reverend Trey Ange, Chaplain for Catholic Committee on Scouting, presented the awards. Kristina Lounsberry, committee chair, welcomed the scouts, their parents and guests, and Scott Lounsberry served as master of ceremonies. Father Ange prayed the Invocation and Blessing before the meal.

Youth awards included

God is Love, Light of Christ, Parvuli Dei, and Pope Pius XII, while adult recognition featured the Bronze Pelican and St. George medals, with special recognition for the Scout Chaplain. In addition to these honors, the inaugural Richard Roy Tireless Servant Award was instituted in memory of Mr. Roy, who had a "servant's heart" throughout his life with more than 40 years as a leader of Boy Scouts of America Troop 107.



Bishop Glen John Provost and Reverend Trey Ange, Chaplain for Catholic Committee on Scouting, are joined by recipients of various religious emblems and awards at the Bishop's Brunch on Saturday, March 7.



Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

April 10, 2020

Journey to priesthood takes historic turn for seminarians

LAKE CHARLES — The largest class of transitional deacons in the history of the Diocese of Lake Charles was ordained last summer in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Their journey to the priesthood took another historic turn this year as the COVID-19 pandemic gripping the world forced the four seminarians to abruptly end their final semester several months early.

Deacons Andrew DeRouen, Joseph Caraway, and Levi Thompson — all students at the Pontifical North American College in Rome; and Deacon Samuel Bond, a student at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, returned to the Diocese in mid-March.

They are continuing their studies online ahead of their priestly ordinations scheduled for Saturday, June 27, in the Cathedral. Until then, the deacons are assisting in the church parishes where they completed their Summer 2019 internships: Deacon DeRouen at St. Pius X; Deacon Caraway at St. Henry; Deacon Thompson at Our Lady Queen of Heaven; and Deacon Bond at the Cathedral.

Other seminarians are also back in the Diocese assisting in various ways as a number of priests live-stream their private Masses online while public Masses are suspended. The eight young men are continuing their formation at Saint Charles Center which has been temporarily repurposed as a seminary. They remain under the guidance of Father Jeffrey Starkovich, Director of Vocations.

Following is a reflection from each transitional deacon in his own words about the effect the pandemic has had on them as they draw closer to their ordination to the priesthood:



Deacon Andrew DeRouen

Like most transitional deacons studying in Rome, I was looking forward to finishing up my time in Rome this June and returning home in time for our ordinations to the priesthood. A sudden call to return home early out of an abundance of caution has changed that

plan, but there's been no shortage of grace to continue persevering. I find it quite special that my last Lent before ordination has demanded discomfort and detachment in nearly every aspect of life.

At a moment's notice, I had to part ways with things that didn't fit in a suitcase. After living with friends for four years, I had to say goodbye in a matter of hours, knowing I wouldn't see many of them ever again. But entering the world outside the seminary, I began to witness fear overwhelming many people. Even in our own country and diocese, where the faithful have limited access to the Sacraments, despair has crepted into our hearts.

What a time to strive for holiness, and what a time to become a priest! If anything, early entry into a pastoral assignment has affirmed this dire need for fearless and holy priests, and I pray that I can become one among them.



Deacon Joseph Caraway

For nearly the last four years, I have lived and studied Theology in Rome for my formation to the priesthood. The recent COVID-19 circumstances have brought that time to an unexpected end.

I received a phone call at 3:00 p.m. one afternoon to notify me that I would need to depart my home of the last four years by 5:00 a.m. the next morning — and I would not be returning. While my departure from the Eternal City was earlier and more abrupt than expected, I had a two-week quarantine awaiting me when I returned home. This was a blessing to reflect on my time in Rome. Different than most people who think back on their vacation and remember the architecture and art found in the basilicas and museums, I thought of my memories and friendships made during my stay.

I have become friends with many people in Italy, including some in the most affected areas in the north, and it is sad to hear about their struggles. However, amid the circumstances they are going through, I am inspired by their steadfast faith through this crisis. As one Italian said, "All of Italy is on its knees."

I have frequently found myself joining them in prayer for all of us going through this time of carrying the cross. I recognize that I have been blessed with many gifts, and when they are taken away, it is easy to see the negatives and the unfortunate circumstances. However, I challenge myself each day to see the positives and how much the Lord is still giving me.

We must trust and have faith in Christ. This pandemic is offering us the chance to turn to Him and stand at the cross like His Mother and the disciple whom Jesus loved.

cent developments of the Coronavirus, these connections are seemingly put on hold. Now, my last semester before ordination to the priesthood, there seems to be a dark cloud that hangs over this time.

This time that would typically be marked with joy and anticipation for the culmination of my six years of hard work, fraternity, and dedication, feels lonely and thrown off. The friends I have spent this time with, the Chapel I have spent hours in prayer in, and the professors I studied under, I was unable to give a proper goodbye as I returned to Lake Charles.

What is it that God is trying to say to me at this moment? Despite all this apparent chaos, God is still enough. God can still the roaring seas and cast out the demons of the heart. Even during the times when I (and the rest of the country) feel lonely and detached from those we feel closest to, nothing can come between us and our relationship with Him. Not sickness, not death, and especially not the coronavirus.



Deacon Levi Thompson

I have been in seminary for nearly eight years in preparation for the Holy Priesthood. But these years of formation were cut short overnight. I was in Rome, Italy at the Pontifical North American College studying Theology. The coronavirus had continued to spread extensively, resulting in a complete lockdown of Italy, and forcing us to evacuate the country.

The drastic change happened in a week and was one of the most traumatic events of my life. In the seminary, the primary focus is the spiritual, intellectual, and human formation to the priesthood. In the seminary in Rome, I appreciated the faith of the universal church and the lives of the saints in the Eternal City.

But we were asked to come home as soon as possible, and not to expect a future return to Rome. We would find a solution to finish seminary formation from the Diocese. My entire life and formation in Rome came crashing down. I packed up my entire room and life and caught a flight to the States 14 hours later in order to continue formation from the Diocese.

Due to the coronavirus, my entire seminary formation in Rome ended in a day. I had to let go of the past in the seminary, in order to look forward to future ministry. All I could do in the moments of transition was trust in God's will. I had my own will and desire for how things should have been, but I learned to let go and trust God. Even in the crazy moments, I can now see God's presence with me in the journey. He can mysteriously take the difficulties caused by the virus and bear fruit in forming me into a holy priest.

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Please keep our seminarians and all those affected by COVID-19 in your prayers.

COVID-19 Notebook: Faithful respond

Thousands of Facebook followers have been responding positively to the COVID-19 pandemic response from the Diocese of Lake Charles. Since the March 16 announcement about the suspension of public Masses, many priests have turned to online Masses to minister to the faithful.

Bishop Glen John Provost began televising his private 9:30 a.m. Mass from the Cathedral on Sunday, March 22, the Fourth Sunday of Lent, and continues to do so while the "stay-at-home" order and social distancing is in place. The Mass is also streamed on the diocesan website at www.lcdiococese.org; on Facebook: www.facebook.com/lcdiococese/; and on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/lcdioce>.

Bishop Provost is providing daily meditations called "A Thought from the Bishop's Chapel" that can be viewed on the website and Facebook.

Here are some responses from Facebook:

Bishop's private Mass from Cathedral:

- I felt the spiritual union with the many others all over our diocese who were celebrating Mass in their hearts through Bishop Provost's televised version. — Debbie Timpa

- Thank you for letting us be a part of Holy Mass and receiving communion by desire. — Vicki Cooper Wolf

- Thank you so much! Got weepy when I heard your voice. The video was clear and continuity excellent! What a blessing to celebrate together in solidarity! — Selene Landry

- The Mass our dear Bishop televised today was absolutely perfect. It moved me to tears. I felt a profound peace come over my soul. Thank you, Bishop, and thanks to Father Buller. Extremely grateful! — Mary Frances McCloy Bordlee

- Thanks for doing this. I contacted four families that do not have Facebook and told them about it on TV, and they watched also. Thank you for doing this. — Vickie Melanson

- My family and I watched it on TV. I found hope in the homily that Bishop Provost shared with us. — Crystal G. Broussard

- Thank y'all so much for your hard work and dedication to the diocese. — Kendall Fontenot

- The Bruno crew watched it streaming from YouTube. It was such a great feeling knowing we could still attend Mass during these times. — Jared Bruno

- Much thanks for helping with our spiritual needs in this difficult time — Vicki Crawford

- It was wonderful. I hope it will be done every Sunday. — Dee Dee Savoy

- I watched. Please continue. Very comforting broadcast. — Evelyn Kimball



March 25, 2020
The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

My dear people of God,

As we continue to heed medical and government advice to help keep our parishioners safe from COVID-19, so many have expressed their sincere gratitude for our televised Mass on Sunday and the many parishes that are offering Masses, Way of the Cross, Adoration, prayers and guidance and other spiritual opportunities through the use of technology. This allows parishioners to be reminded that this medical emergency is occurring during the Season of Lent when we are called to devote ourselves to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In prayer we seek the Lord, by fasting we practice moderation, and through almsgiving we serve the poor and marginalized and address the many needs of our parishioners.

This is a time for us to take seriously the Gospel call to bring the message of Christ to the world. The Church's mission is essential. I am pleased to report that Catholic Charities and other services of our Diocese will continue to help those in need and that our parishes and our Diocese will continue to address spiritual and material needs, especially in this time of uncertainty.

To address material needs, we must remember that the call to almsgiving continues even in times of emergency, just as the business and expenses of our church parishes continue. This truth is most apparent now when we find so many of our brothers and sisters in great need. I understand that many of our parishes have online giving already in place, and I urge you to take advantage of that opportunity to give or to mail in your offertory envelopes and donations, if you prefer. To assist those who do not have online giving already established, we have made that option available for all parishioners on the Diocese of Lake Charles website at <http://www.lcdiococese.org/resources/support-the-diocese>. If you access "Support My Parish," you will have the option to select your parish and properly direct your donation. To assist our parishes, I am dispensing all parishes from the Parochial Assessment (Tithe); these funds will remain in the parishes to help them to meet pressing needs during these troubling and uncertain times.

Please be assured that during this time you and your families have been constantly present to me in my thoughts and prayers and remember the assurance our Lord has given to us: "I will never forsake you or abandon you" (Heb. 15:5; Deut. 31:6).

Asking the intercession of Our Lady Star of the Sea, I remain,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,



• Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles