



St. Louis High holds ribbon cutting for temporary campus

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — St. Louis Catholic High School celebrated the completion of its temporary modular campus with a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 26, with Bishop Glen John Provost in attendance for a special blessing.

Extending his thanks to Principal Mia Touchet for her leadership, the bishop praised the staff, teachers, and advisory board who played an essential role in making it possible for students to return to classes so quickly after back-to-back hurricanes. The first day of in-person classes was October 21 after COVID-19 and hurricane-related closures.

"I am very impressed with the provisional accommodations here at the school," said Bishop Provost. "It only took a matter of 18 days, which is really very good, considering the size of the facility and the number of people to accommodate."

The temporary campus, under the direction of general contractor Russell J. Stutes Construction, includes 23 new portable buildings interconnected with concrete and over 16,000 square feet of decking, allowing for nearly 35 classrooms and 10 offices. Touchet praised the

SLCHS advisory board along with Matt Fontenet, Director of Advancement, who was on a plane the weekend after Hurricane Laura in search of the temporary buildings.

"I can't tell you the excitement and relief it is to have students back in class," said Touchet. "The collaboration of effort from the City, the Diocese, the Chamber, from our insurance, to construction, to Energy ... It has truly been a team effort."

Even though the buildings are temporary while the main campus is undergoing extensive repairs from the devastation of Hurricanes Laura and Delta, Fontenet said the traffic flow of students functions great while still adhering to COVID-19 guidelines.

"What happened in 18 days is pretty remarkable from a timeline standpoint," said Fontenet, "and, we are thrilled with the facility. Teachers have what they need; some have even more because the temporary classrooms are bigger than some of the rooms on the main campus."

St. Louis is the first in the Diocese to be set up with a temporary learning facility following the storms and is one of four schools that sustained major damage. Kimberlee Gazzolo, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, is pleased with the results.



Bishop Glen John Provost, second from right, gets ready to cut the ribbon at St. Louis Catholic High School on October 26 for the recently completed temporary modular campus on the school's property. Joining him on the first row are, from left: Paula Ramsey, Chamber of Southwest Louisiana Vice President; Mia Touchet, St. Louis Principal; Matt Fontenet, Director of Advancement at St. Louis; second row, from left: Blaine Wyninger, St. Louis Vice Principal; Dinah Bradford, St. Louis Advisory Board President; Father Nathan Long, Rector of St. Louis; and third row, from left: Stephanie Rodrigue, Director of Temporal Goods; Father Ruben Buller, Vicar General and Chief of Recovery; and Kimberlee Gazzolo, Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

to have the students and teachers back on campus."

In his closing comments, Bishop Provost said, "The Diocese sustained a lot of damage and there are other schools that require our attention, and church properties, too. We are anxious to see things continue in a positive direction here at

St. Louis."

Also in attendance for the ribbon cutting were the Rev. Nathan Long, Rector of St. Louis; the Very Rev. Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General and Chief of Recovery; Blaine Wyninger, Assistant Principal; Dinah Bradford, Advisory Board President; Stephanie Rodrigue, Direc-

tor of Temporal Goods for the Diocese; John Ieyoub, Lake Charles City Council;

SLCHS Advisory Council and Finance Council members, Visit Lake Charles, the Chamber of Commerce, and many more distinguished friends and guests.

Lafayette diocese donates to hurricane relief efforts

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — The Diocese of Lafayette responded to Hurricane Laura recovery efforts in the Diocese of Lake Charles with a donation of \$155,000. The presentation was made by the Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, on October 5 at St. Henry Catholic Church Community Center.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop, accepted the check on behalf of the Diocese of Lake Charles. The funds were generated during a special collection taken throughout the Lafayette diocese the weekend of September 12-13, as well as through online giving through the Diocesan website. Bishop Deshotel said more funds are on the way.

Joining Bishop Deshotel

were Kim Boudreaux, CEO of Catholic Charities of Acadiana; and Margaret H. Trahan, Director of the Office of Stewardship and Development for the Diocese of Lafayette.

In his remarks ahead of the check presentation, Bishop Deshotel said he was happy to be in Lake Charles to share the support and concern of the Diocese of Lafayette for all those who have suffered so much devastation.

"I want you to know your neighbors to the East have been keeping you in their hearts and in their prayers, and have also expressed to me their concern asking in what ways they can help," he said.

"We see in certain circumstances that God allows what seems to us terrible tragedies, to bring about virtue and goodness and charity among others

to help those who are so afflicted," Bishop Deshotel continued. "The good is always greater than the suffering that has been endured. This is certainly the case in our desire to help all of you in the Diocese of Lake Charles."

In accepting the generous donation, Bishop Provost expressed his appreciation to Bishop Deshotel and all the good people of Lafayette.

"The outpouring of concern has been extraordinary," said Bishop Provost. "We have had people from all over the country helping volunteer, but it is especially heartwarming to see the response of those who are our neighbors to us. I know there have been many people from diocesan organizations and parishes in the Diocese of Lafayette who have come to assist, in particular, Catholic Charities of Acadiana."

The donation will benefit Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana as well as aid in rebuilding efforts for Catholic churches,

schools, community centers, and food pantries throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Before concluding with the "Prayer for Recovery of the Diocese of Lake Charles" and praying a "Hail Mary" for the Diocese of Lafayette, Bishop Provost recognized several of those present who are leading recovery efforts: Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana; the Very Rev. Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General and Chief of Recovery; the Rev. Monsignor Daniel Torres, Vicar General and Chair of the Deans Council set up to monitor the spiritual needs of the diocese; the Very Rev. Matthew Cormier, V.F., Dean of the Central Deanery and pastor of St. Henry Catholic Church; and the Rev. Joseph Caraway, parochial vicar of St. Henry.

St. Henry Community Center was one of several distribution sites for Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana to drop off supplies six days a week since



Bishop Glen John Provost, left, accepts a donation for \$155,000 from Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel of the Diocese of Lafayette for Hurricane Laura Relief efforts. The funds were collected during a special collection in the Lafayette diocese to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura. (Photography by Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Hurricane Laura made landfall on August 27. Father Cormier estimated that close to 2,000 people were served through these efforts at the St. Henry site alone. Catholic Charities of Acadiana has also been coordinating relief efforts

with Sister Miriam to assist with disaster response.

Following the check presentation, Bishop Provost joined Sister Miriam who led a tour at Catholic Charities for Bishop Deshotel, Trahan and Boudreaux.

Prayer for Safety in Hurricane Season

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, has asked that during the hurricane season of 2020 the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles pray the following prayer, composed in 1957 by the Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder, Second Bishop of Lafayette, following Hurricane Audrey:

O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children.

The Sea of Galilee obeyed your order and returned to its former quietude.

You are still the Master of the land and sea. We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control: the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, and overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land and spread chaos and disaster.

During this hurricane season we turn to You, O loving Father. Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with the passing of time. O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our Beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son on our behalf, so that spared from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem where a stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.

The Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder
Second Bishop of Lafayette

"True Presence: The Eucharist in Art" — Grades 3-5



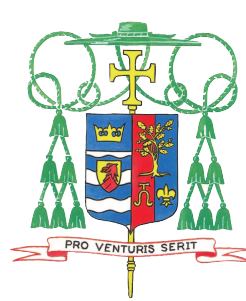
"The Living Bread" by Bella Findley, first place

The winning artwork for grades 3-5 in the "True Presence: The Eucharist in Art" contest was submitted by Bella Findley of Vinton. Her artwork is titled "The Living Bread." Ty Pham of Lake Charles placed second with his artwork titled "Eucharist Is Present Everywhere." The contest was presented

by the Diocese of Lake Charles as a way for students in grades K-12 as well as adults to creatively portray their Catholic belief in the Eucharist. More winning entries from other age groups will be published in future issues of the Catholic Calendar.



"Eucharist Is Present Everywhere" by Ty Pham, second place



Diocese in recovery mode after two back-to-back hurricanes

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

Two major hurricanes in 6 weeks. More than 50 priests in active ministry throughout 39 church parishes and 7 missions, spread across 5 civil parishes. Add to the mix an on-going pandemic for most of 2020.

No matter how the numbers are calculated, the result is the same: one diocese in full recovery mode.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A., Bishop of Lake Charles, said that everything now should be seen through the “prism of recovery for the good of the Church and for the good of the people.”

“There is a lot of re-prioritizing that must take place and calibrating what can wait and what cannot wait,” Bishop Provost said about the Diocese being hit by two back-to-back hurricanes. “Recovery should be front and center in our minds as we meet the needs of the people and the Church.”

While priests, religious, administrators, parish staffs, and school faculty were in the middle of picking up pieces from Hurricane Laura, along came Hurricane Delta dealing another blow to the already crippled diocese.

Delta made landfall late on October 9 as a Category 2 hurricane near the coastal town of Creole less than 15 miles east of where Laura roared ashore on August 27 as a Category 4 storm. Laura was a wind event. Delta was a rain event. Neither make for a good combination.

If there is a silver lining to be found from being in the direct path of two hurricanes in a matter of weeks, the Very Rev. Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General, said the recovery process for the Diocese was already in motion when Delta hit.

“We are in the midst of recovering from two storms,” said Father Buller, who also serves as Chief of Recovery to rebuild the Diocese. “We have a process in place, and things are following that process. That’s the good news.”

The Hurricane Recovery Team was formed by Bishop Provost in the days after Hurricane Laura. It is made up of a Council of Deans chaired by the Rev. Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, V.G., He meets regularly with the Deans who are assisting pastors and parochial vicars in their efforts to provide for the pastoral needs of the faithful.

“The pastors have done a phenomenal job as far as getting back to their full Mass schedules after both storms,” said Buller. Many churches operated off gen-

erators after both storms until power could be restored.

Director of Temporal Goods is Ms. Stephanie Rodrigue, whose duties include meeting with the Diocesan Building Commission to review recovery efforts, report on progress, and seek advice and input of the professionals on the Commission. Recovery Secretary is Ms. Brittany Beale who has been tasked with documenting all activities involving temporal matters for the recovery efforts.

Echoing the sentiments of Bishop Provost regarding what is a priority, Father Buller acknowledged that daily operations in the Diocese as they were before Hurricane Laura will not continue as they once did.

“One of the blessings that we can see with the hurricanes is that it gives us an opportunity to see where we need to make improvements and where we need to tighten our belts,” said Buller. “Will things be the same as before the hurricane? Probably not. Our goal in the end would be that our Diocese would be better than it was.”

Of utmost importance to Bishop Provost is for the Diocese to be of service to the church parishes to help make the recovery as easy as possible.

“If our churches and their facilities in the parishes are unusable, then we are handicapped and cannot minister the people of God,” said the Bishop.

The Rev. John Payne, JCL, said he is ready to cancel his subscription to the “Hurricane of the Month” Club, although he is grateful for miraculously being spared the worst of the two storms.

Pastor of St. John Vianney Catholic Church in Bell City and a judge on the Diocesan Tribunal, Father Payne was quick to commend the Hurricane Recovery Team in its response after Delta.

“The mitigation team was already on site with industrial generators before I could even return from evacuating the day after Delta passed,” said Father Payne. “I told Father Buller the fact that the Diocese had our back and whipped into action so quickly, I was really impressed.”

The Rev. Vijaya Prakash Peddoju, H.G.N., pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Oakdale and its mission church, St. Francis of Rome in Elizabeth, said downed trees and missing roof shingles were the main problem with Hurricane Laura. He wasn’t so lucky with Hurricane Delta.

“We had flooding in

the church and the office, around six inches of water,” said Father Peddoju. “The Diocese responded quickly to our needs, as did some of our parishioners to assist with pumping the water out and removing the carpet. I’m from India and am not used to dealing with mold, wet sheetrock and insulation.”

All that is left of Christ the King Catholic Church in Lake Charles is a shell of the building. Hurricane Laura destroyed the church, the office, and the church hall. The Rev. Rojo Koonathan, H.G.N., V.F., pastor and Dean of the South Deanery, had hoped he could at least save the pews, but then Delta finished off those, too.

“All of the ceilings were demolished with Laura. After Delta, we will have to give up all the pews because of more roof leakage and flooding,” Father Koonathan said. “The only thing that survived is a storage building which we are using for the church office. My office is now in the rectory three miles away from the church.”

Father Koonathan is pleased with how recovery is progressing. Having recently been assigned pastor at Christ the King in July and appointed a Dean at the same time, he is gaining lots of experience dealing with hurricanes, something that isn’t taught in the seminary.

“It’s a challenge to help people keep their faith, especially since so many of my parishioners are scattered,” said Koonathan, but reminds people that how we overcome challenges that the Lord puts in front of us is important.

“God is giving us many lessons. Every struggle that we go through in our life is a way that the Lord gives us to grow stronger in our faith,” he said.

Another important piece to the process is DCMC Partners and The Lemoine Company, LLC, to assist with recovery efforts. The firms are providing project management support and are responsible for overseeing and executing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funded projects resulting from the hurricanes.

“The breadth and depths of losses within the Diocese are astounding,” said Rodrigue. “We think the Diocese experienced at least \$60-\$100 million in losses, possibly more. This situation created an unprecedented challenge and was a driver for the Diocese’s decision to seek outside expert assistance.”

“It is critical that our many parishes, schools and service entities get



Seated with His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, is Andrew Sachs, Chief Strategy & Implementation Officer with DCMC Partners. Standing with Very Reverend Ruben Buller, Vicar General & Moderator of the Curia, is Will Rachal, Vice President, Lemoine Disaster Company.

the help they need so that we can continue to provide needed services and spiritual support in our communities,” said Bishop Provost. “Our decision to hire DCMC Partners and The Lemoine Company has helped us begin our recovery process to fully restore our Diocese for today, as well as tomorrow.”

Bishop Provost acknowledged that rebuilding is part of the recovery and that will take a very long time. “We need perseverance and fortitude to be able to face the recovery that is going to take years to accomplish,” he said.

Insurance coverage is shared between the churches, rectories, schools and administrative offices throughout the Diocese. Father Buller said the Hurricane Recovery Team has learned a lot in the short time since the two storms.

“We have learned about central billing and payments to track spending whenever we go for reimbursement to insurance or FEMA,” Buller said. “This is why DCMC and the Lemoine Company is so important. We are hoping to be able to utilize public funds to help in rebuilding our parishes and schools.”

Father Buller, whose of-

fice was on the first floor of the Chancery, now carries out his duties from a mobile office, better known as his car. His office was on the first floor of the Chancery, but the roof collapsed leaving the building unusable for the unforeseen future.

Understanding this will be the case for quite some time, Buller said, “Between a phone and my car, I can do most everything that needs to be done.”

This isn’t the first major hurricane to disrupt the Lake Charles diocese. In 2005, Hurricane Rita damaged the Chancery as well as some churches, but the focus of the rebuilding was on the coastal churches in Cameron Parish.

“For Laura, we have damage at every parish in the Diocese,” said Father Buller, “some more significant than others, but there isn’t a parish that hasn’t been totally spared. When we look at the scope of the damage across the board, three to five years, possibly longer, would be a reasonable timetable to get the Diocese stable again.”

Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, under the leadership of Sister Miriam MacLean, Religious Sister of Mercy, has

been a lifeline for those in need of food and supplies. The day same day as Hurricane Laura, and the day after Delta, the non-profit agency was on the ground running to assess the situation and provide assistance.

Father Buller emphasized the dedicated efforts of Catholic Charities noting that the most important thing is that the Catholic Church is present and the Church is there to help everyone. He also acknowledged the generosity of the dioceses in Louisiana and the countless number of bishops and dioceses throughout the United States as well.

To contact the Diocese of Lake Charles, call 337-888-6026 during regular office hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To contact the Office of Catholic Schools, call 337-400-5237, Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., or email dana.wimberly@lcediocese.org

To contact Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, call 337-439-7436 during regular business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Prayer for Recovery of the Diocese

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, composed a prayer for the recovery of the Diocese of Lake Charles in the wake of Hurricane Laura that made landfall in Southwest Louisiana on August 27, 2020. Six weeks later, Hurricane Delta also impacted the crippled region on October 9.

Heavenly Father, Who willed that the fallen hut of David be rebuilt; that Your people return from exile to repopulate their lands, rebuild Jerusalem and restore the Temple; that Your Son, Jesus Christ, would be the new temple and that He would build a new Jerusalem, firmly set on the twelve apostles of the Lamb; look, Gracious Creator, upon our devastation now in the Diocese of Lake Charles and along the coast; rouse up in the hearts of many good and faithful workers the courage, perseverance, and fortitude to bring Your task to a successful completion, where what is recovered will give Your name glory and be protected from the onslaught of the Devil; put to flight lethargy of spirit and fortify our wills so that the good works of Your faithful people will be seen as fulfilling Your work; grant us understanding, God of all light and reason, so that we will comprehend Your ways and see in every suffering and tribulation an occasion to embrace Your will and grow in love for You. Grant, loving Father, through that same Jesus Christ, our Lord, all these prayers by the intercession of Our Lady Star of the Sea, You, who live and reign in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

+The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

On the occasion of Hurricane Laura

August 27, 2020



Centennial Anniversary of the Apostleship of the Sea

The Diocese of Lake Charles celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) on Saturday, October 3. The day began with the Holy Mass in honor of Our Lady in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated by His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A., Bishop of Lake

Charles. Deacon Patrick LaPoint, Director of Stella Maris Seafarers Center; and Father Rommel Tolentino, Port Chaplain for the Diocese of Lake Charles, assisted at the Mass, along with Father D.B. Thompson, Father Joseph McGrath, Father Ruben J. Buller, V.G.; Father Uche Adiukwu, Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, Deacon Brian

Kirk, and Deacon Dale Deshotel. The Mass was followed by a Marian and Eucharistic Procession to the Lake Charles Civic Center Seawall, where Adoration and Benediction took place. It was a beautiful tribute to the Patroness of the Apostleship of the Sea, and Our Lady Star of the Sea (Stella Maris).



The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 26 and 27, reopening on Monday, Nov. 30, for regular business hours – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.. The next Catholic Calendar will be published on Friday, Dec. 11.