



Bishop Provost's Christmas Message 2020

This year has been unprecedented. We are suffering through a pandemic that has stricken hundreds of thousands in this country alone. In our region of Southwest Louisiana two hurricanes, with a separation of five weeks and making landfall just a few miles of each other, have devastated our homes, businesses, and churches. All of this has brought uncertainty and disrupted our lives. While these upsetting circumstances have challenged us, we are making heroic efforts to rise to the occasion with God's Grace. Now, at the end of this horrific year, we have arrived at the messianic feast. What does this feast have to tell us?

The message of Christmas is the message of the Prince of Peace. The prophet Isaiah tells us that the child born to us will be called "Wonderful Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:5). This is no ordinary child. He is born of a virgin, and his birth is the fulfillment of a dream and a plan foretold by prophets and wise men and women for centuries and nestled in the Will of a loving God. And when that child finally appears, the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace" (Luke 2:14).

Peace! We want peace, but the peace we want is not the peace that this world can give. We pray for a peace that begins and ends with God's Will for us. In His Will is our peace. We should not want to return to the way things were before the contagion and the storms. God is trying to teach us something. What He wants is better, and we should want that better life as well.

Come let us worship! Let us approach the manger of Bethlehem, absorb its message of peace, and depart from it with hearts and minds changed and renewed. It is my prayer that this Christmas will be like no other we have ever experienced before. To you all I extend my blessings for a peace that only God can give.

Displaced priests are fed by flock that they shepherd

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Priests are known for feeding their flock spiritually, but over the past several months, their flock have had the opportunity to feed them.

The immense destruction from Hurricane Laura in late August found numerous priests in the Diocese of Lake Charles homeless after the Category 4 storm left many rectories uninhabitable. While some priests relocated to other rectories, several found refuge at Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff and have been there since early September.

"At first we didn't have electricity; there was no way to cook as the kitchen is damaged, and we were operating off a generator," said Deacon Brian Soileau, who serves as director of the diocesan retreat facility.

With limited resources and everyone left to fend for themselves, Soileau wanted to do whatever he could to help provide food for the clergy.

"I started out by asking people through Facebook to donate canned goods and pots and pans so that even with limited use of generator power, the priests could at least heat up something in the microwave," Soileau said.

From all the donations that poured in, Soileau recognized the generosity in a way that could benefit the clergy even more.

"If people are going to be so generous this way, maybe they would cook meals for the priests on a daily basis," he thought. "After seeing them come back in the evening exhausted from dealing with damage at their church parishes, I wanted to provide the priests with more nourishment."

Once again, Deacon Soileau turned to social media seeking volunteers. The re-

sponse was enormous ranging from church groups to individual families who expressed a desire to help. It is even more amazing, he said, that some of the people providing the meals are dealing with their own storm damage yet are still willing to provide for the faithful shepherds.

Two priests on the receiving end of the meals are Father Aubrey Guilbeau, pastor, and Father Andrew DeRouen, parochial vicar, both assigned to St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff. They see the meals as more than just satisfying a physical hunger.

"I am very humbled to know that people place such an importance on taking care of us in this way," said Guilbeau, who also serves as Vicar for Clergy for the Diocese. "Having them use their time, effort and resources to provide meals for us despite their own struggles is very touching."

"For me, the meals are tangible evidence that people love their priests," said DeRouen, who was ordained in late June. "It is humbling to know as a new priest that I am cared for by others. People are being generous out of pure love and gratitude for us."

During his 38 years of priesthood, Guilbeau has enjoyed many meals from homes across Southwest Louisiana but is still surprised at variations for the same recipe.

"The exciting thing for me is seeing how cooks have different combinations of ingredients for a similar type of recipe," he said. "We have had jambalaya a few times, but each meal had its own taste, so it was like trying something new." Guilbeau was quick to add that all the meals have been delicious.

On top of enjoying local cuisine, an added benefit for Father DeRouen has been spending time with his brother priests.



Volunteers have been providing home-cooked meals for several priests residing at Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff since shortly after Hurricane Laura. A few of the priests, from left, are Father Andrew DeRouen, Father Aubrey Guilbeau, and Father Jenesh Joseph, a priest of the Heralds of Good News.

"The evening meals have offered an unforeseen blessing," he said. "Having lived in a rectory with only one other priest, and now, all of a sudden living with four other priests and a deacon, has provided a variety of conversation that is an unexpected richness added to each day."

Father Guilbeau agrees that their fraternity together has been strengthened through the sharing of meals.

"It is a time for us to share blessings and struggles of the day, and networking information of the day," said Guilbeau. "We also use the time to remember all those in our

community who are going through the same thing we are in similar ways."

In addition to delicious home-cooked meals being delivered, monetary donations as well as gift cards have also been a big help to the hurricane relief effort.

"The people of this diocese are phenomenal," said Deacon Soileau. "If you say, 'Our priests need something, people are beating down the doors to come and give them whatever it is they need.' The response has really shown me just how much the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles love their priests."

ICBS Master of Theology offered at Xavier University

NEW ORLEANS – The Master of Theology (Th.M.) of the Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana is the only graduate theology program in the United States taught from a Black Catholic perspective, scheduled this next summer from June 25 to July 16, 2021.

Its curriculum is interdisciplinary; courses focus on Black approaches, critiques, and contributions to systematic and pastoral theologies, youth and pastoral ministry, aesthetics, philosophy, and education. Established in 1980, the ICBS is dedicated to academic learning, prayer, worship and community-building.

The graduate program forms students for theologically and culturally competent service as ordained, religious or lay ecclesial ministers in the church. The ICBS welcomes graduates seeking on-going study, graduate students of other programs and ministers who desire to expand, enhance and enrich their general theological studies by exploring the Catholic theological tradition

and its particular meaning for the social and spiritual experiences of Black people in the U.S. and beyond. In 2020, the ICBS transitioned to an online learning platform in response to the current pandemic. The teaching format for ICBS Summer 2021 has not yet been determined.

2021 Degree Course Offerings include;

- IBTH 5010 Black Approaches to Theology. Stresses the nature, methods and sources of Black Theology; the reasons justifying its existence and its relationship to other theologies within the Roman Catholic Tradition. Requirement for all new students (1:30-4:45pm/3 units). Craig A. Ford, Jr., Ph.D.

- IBTH 5020 History of Black Catholicism. Explores the role played by Blacks in Catholicism from the beginning of the Church, with special emphasis on the presence and contributions of Blacks to Roman Catholicism in the United States. Core Course (8:30-11:45am/3 units). Cecilia A. Moore, Ph.D.

- IBTH 5060 Black Psy-

chology. Constructs effective pastoral communication with Black congregations by review of major interpersonal, social, and systematic issues from a perspective based upon sound analysis stemming from recognition of cultural differences. Core Course (1:30-4:45pm/3 units). Brian Turner, Ph.D.

- IBTH 5081 Christology. Studies the Kingdom of God as announced in the teaching, healing ministry, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, particularly as these are understood from the perspective of liberation and black theologies. Area Requirement (8:30-11:45am/3 units). Modeste Malu Nyimi, Ph.D.

- IBTH 5440 The Spirituals. Studies a broad range of the black sacred songs known as the "Spirituals." Focus is placed upon a study of their origins, meanings, and purposes. Emphasis is also given to understanding their importance in the foundation of African American culture and Christianity; and their possible uses in pastoral worship, and pastoral ministry. Area Requirement (1:30-4:45pm/3 units). Dwight Webster, Ph.D.

- IBTH 5670 Spiritual Direction and Formation in the Black Community. Explores the unique characters of Christian spiritual and faith formation specifically addressing issues of culture, family, personal and communal history, social loca-

tion and discipleship in the context of the Black community. Elective (8:30-11:45am/3 units) Valerie Lewis-Mosley, D.Min.

- IBTH 5999 Qualifying Examination.

- IBTH 6000 Practicum (Major Research Paper and

Project).

- IBTH 7000 Comprehensive.

To access the 2021 ICBS Degree application, go to <https://gradapply.xula.edu/> apply/ and complete the Application for Graduate Program, selecting ICBS Masters

of Theology as the Field of Study (Major) on the Academic and Intended Major Page.

For more information: (504) 520-7691, ibcs@xula.edu, www.xula.edu/ibcs.

Dana Lockett, Program Specialist or Kathleen Dorsley Bellow, D.Min., Director

Diocesan holiday closure

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles are closed for the Christmas holiday through Friday, January 1. All offices reopen on Monday, Jan. 4, for regular office hours – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

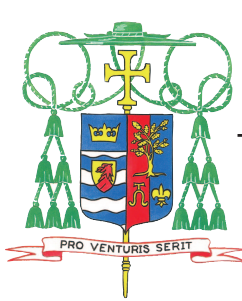
Prayer for Recovery of the Diocese

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



Dedication of priests strong enough to withstand hurricanes

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Two hurricanes and four months later, there are still visible reminders of destruction caused by Hurricanes Laura and Delta in the Diocese of Lake Charles. For many Catholics, those reminders are especially evident in their churches.

From roofs being ripped off to windows being blown in, the catastrophic storms were not strong enough, however, to destroy the dedication of priests across the five-parish region.

Within days after both hurricanes made landfall — Laura, a Category 4 hurricane on August 27, and Delta, a Category 2 on October 9 — many priests began celebrating Masses. Among those was His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, who remained in the Diocese for both storms.

“The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will continue to be offered by priests wherever possible, even if there is only one person in attendance,” Bishop Provost said. He was able to celebrate Mass at his usual Sunday time in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on August 30.

Early on, pastors relied on generators to provide lights and limited air-conditioning in the sweltering temperatures of the summer heat.

“We were able to have Mass the Sunday after Laura in the day chapel,” said Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, Vicar General and pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. “A lot of people still had not come back since the city was like a war zone. There was a total of around

26 people that first weekend. We are on a full schedule now, including weekdays, in the main church.”

Torres praised the leadership of Mayor Nic Hunter, the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury, Lake Charles City Council, Entergy and the work crews who came from all over to restore power.

“We were on a generator after Laura for only two and half weeks, and that was a miracle,” he said. “To have the power restored in under three weeks was amazing since they were saying it could be as long as four weeks.”

Parishioners at St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff had to wait two weeks before they were able to gather for the Sunday liturgy.

Upon assessing the damages and finding broken windows, water-soaked carpet, and pews covered with debris, the first thought that crossed the pastor’s mind was how soon he would be able to celebrate Mass.

“In times such as these, people need to have their faith supported so they do not despair,” said the Very Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, who also serves as Vicar for Clergy. “As a pastor, I am concerned with the physical well-being of parishioners, but most of all I am called to be their spiritual shepherd.”

Father Guilbeau celebrated Mass by candlelight initially. Later, he relied on use of a large generator, and in time, power was restored.

“People were grateful for the utilities that eventually offered comfort to our Masses, but most of all they were thankful to be able to gather



Monsignor Daniel Torres

in their church to give praise and thanks to God,” Guilbeau said. “Our church building is a humble structure now, but the real beauty comes from the people who are the Church.”

The coastal parishes of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Creole, Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron, St. Eugene in Grand Chenier, St. Mary of the Lake in Big Lake, St. Peter the Apostle in Hackberry, and Our Lady of the Assumption Mission in Johnson Bayou were among the most heavily impacted churches.

“I have never seen so much damage in all my life,” said Monsignor James Gaddy, pastor of St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church about the devastation of Hurricane Laura. “As bad as it was in Lake Charles, it was twice as bad in Grand Lake.”

With one side of its roof

completely ripped off by 150-mph winds from Laura, St. Mary of the Lake is unusable for the unforeseeable future. But, Monsignor Gaddy hasn’t let that keep him from celebrating Mass for anyone back in the area trying to pick up the pieces of their lives. He and Father D.B. Thompson, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea and Sacred Heart of Jesus, share the same location to offer Masses for their parishioners.

“While the church and hall for St. Mary of the Lake were undergoing mitigation, we used the community center next to the fire station in Grand Lake for a few weeks after Laura,” said Gaddy. “I would celebrate Mass there on Saturday afternoon, and Father Thompson would say Mass at 8 a.m. on Sunday. Now, the St. Mary of the Lake church hall is used for



Monsignor James Gaddy

Masses. I have since added a 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday in addition to the 4 p.m. Saturday Mass. We are going to be using the hall for at least a couple of years.”

Other churches in the diocese have also supported one another until each can stand on its own again.

“Immaculate Conception in Sulphur helped St. John Bosco Catholic Church with Masses for several weeks,” said Monsignor Torres, “and the parishioners of Christ the King celebrate Mass at 2 p.m. on Sundays at Our Lady Queen of Heaven since their church was destroyed.”

Even in the midst of their own struggles, priests are going the extra mile for the faithful because they know the importance of God’s love and mercy through the sacraments.

“The sacraments grace us

with the ability to see that God is with us, there is nothing or no one that can destroy us,” Torres said. “Not even a pandemic, not hurricanes, not politics or economic struggles.”

Experiencing firsthand how faith helps people face challenges brought about by the storms, Father Guilbeau is one of many priests who has been displaced from his rectory because of extensive damage.

“I have learned to live with less. I have learned to be more patient. I have learned you can joyfully praise the Lord even in simple surroundings,” Guilbeau said. “People have returned to Mass as they are able, and our faith is expressed in our trust in God, even in these difficult times.”

“True Presence: The Eucharist in Art” — Grades 6-8

The winning artwork for grades 6-8 in the “True Presence: The Eucharist in Art” contest was submitted by Michaela LaFleur of Lake Charles. Her artwork is titled “Passion of the Eucharist.” Scarlet Reeves of Lake Charles placed second with her artwork titled “True Presence.” The third-place entry by Jacob Istre of Lake Charles is titled “The Body and Blood of Jesus.” 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.



“True Presence”
by Scarlet Reeves, second place



“The Body and Blood of Jesus”
by Jacob Istre, third place



“Passion of the Eucharist”
by Michaela LaFleur, first place

Fountains add beauty to Consolata Cemetery

LAKE CHARLES — For decades, the fountains at Consolata Cemetery have added a touch of beauty to the landscape of burial spaces. But, as long as Deway Duhon has been director of the cemetery, he has never seen the fountains operational.

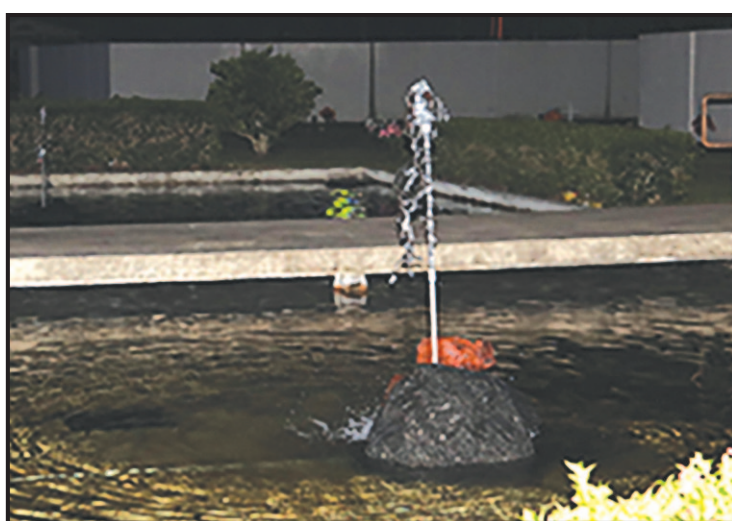
“When I started working here a couple of years ago, the four fountains surrounding the chapel, and the fountains in the big pond were not working,” said Duhon. “Monsignor (Irving) DeBlanc put those fountains in for a reason. They are a beautiful feature, and we needed to get them working.”

Duhon said the problem was a combination of things, but the solution mainly involved re-plumbing.

Day Remembrance Mass held at the cemetery on November 2, the fountains once again served as reminder of Christ as “living water” for all the faithfully departed souls.

The late Monsignor DeBlanc, a longtime pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, started the cemetery under OLQH in 1962 along Country Club Road when it was just a dirt road.

“Monsignor DeBlanc was a true visionary,” said Duhon. “There is nothing else around here like Consolata. I felt we needed to get those fountains back up and running since a lot of people bought spaces around the pond because of the beautiful feature they provide to the cemetery.”



An active pond near the main entrance of Consolata Cemetery is a unique feature to the landscape of burial spaces. The pond was designed and added to the cemetery in the 1970s. Consolata is often referred to as a haven of hope and love.

Bishop’s Bible Study to resume

The Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception Office Complex will be the site for the remainder of Bishop Glen John Provost’s Bible Study classes, this cycle dealing with Genesis and using the Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, available from Crossroads.

Dates in 2021 for the Men’s Bible Study will be February 5, March 5, April 9, and May 7, following 6:30 a.m. Mass

in the Cathedral, 935 Bilbo Street.

Women’s Bible Study dates are February 3, March 3, April 7, and May 5 beginning at noon.

No meals will be served. State protocols for the safety of participants will be followed — temperatures will be taken, face masks must be worn, and social distancing will be used for seating.