



One Diocese, One Church: Hurricane recovery showing signs of progress

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

A lot has happened in the Diocese of Lake Charles since Hurricane Laura made landfall just over six months ago.

Displaced priests have settled in more permanent housing. Temporary campuses have been set up at two of the three heavily damaged schools. Christ the King Parish is "home" after sharing worship space at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. Saint Charles Center is back in the retreat business after serving as a short-term residence for clergy and seminarians.

These are just a few examples of progress since Laura spread her catastrophic destruction from the coastal churches in Cameron Parish to as far north as churches in Allen and Beauregard parishes on August 27, 2020.

Father Ruben J. Buller said the Hurricane Recovery Team has made great strides since then.

"We have been able to assess all of our damages across the diocese at 65 sites. That includes 39 church parishes and all six schools," said Buller, who serves as Chief of Recovery while also continuing in his role as Vicar General. "We estimate the damages at \$110 million."

Buller said there are a total of 508 projects that the recovery team is working on that will fall into categories of repair, restore, or rebuild.

"The things that are repairs are beginning slowly, but they are beginning," he said. "It is still too early to say what structures will be rebuilt at this point. Those decisions are still in the early phases of the process."

The recovery effort has taken on a central theme: "One Diocese, One Church." For that purpose, Father Buller said the

recovery is thought of in terms as one building project rather than multiple projects everywhere.

"We are all in this together," he said. "The ability of a particular church to be able to address its own needs is different from one location to the other. Thinking of this project as 'One Diocese, One Church,' which is what we are in a sense, we will be able to ensure that there is a wholeness in each of the locations."

"Some of the parishes that are more well off will be bearing a little more of the brunt of their own costs," continued Buller, "so that smaller parishes, or parishes that are not as wealthy will be able to have more support."

Meeting with all the pastors and all the principals of the schools is something that Father Buller considers one of the biggest areas of progress in these past several months.

"They are the ones who are boots on the ground, so we proposed the question: What is that you see that will be best for your location? Some of them are in the midst of looking at proposals they will be making," Buller said.

A mammoth task such as rebuilding an entire diocese spanning five civil parishes does not come without challenges. Being hit by Hurricane Delta six weeks after Laura was not what the crippled diocese needed.

"To be hit by a second hurricane so quickly put us back at square one," Buller said. "The biggest thing that Delta did was exacerbate the situation. The recent ice storm also brought its own level of difficulties piled on to hurricane damages."

Another obstacle was setting up temporary campuses at three school sites.

Buller said the recovery team was fortu-

Catholic



The Very Rev. Rojo Koonathan, H.G.N., V.F., pastor of Christ the King Catholic Church, celebrates Mass in a double-wide trailer being used as worship space for the south Lake Charles church. Christ the King was one of dozens of churches in the diocese that took a beating from Hurricane Laura in late August. Bishop Glen John Provost blessed the building and consecrated the new altar on Dec. 19. The altar was handmade by longtime parishioner Harold Dyke. On loan are the president's chair from Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Creole, and the tabernacle from St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Lacassine. Many other items were donated by parishioners, such as the sound system, chairs, the chalice and ciborium.

(Photo by Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

open to get St. Louis Catholic High School open quickly in the fall, and most recently, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School. Students in grades 5-8 had been sharing space at Immaculate Conception Cathedral School through mid-February.

"The challenges at Our Lady's School in Sulphur have been a bigger hurdle to cross," said Buller. "It's not anyone's fault. The type of dirt the campus sits on does not support temporary buildings, so that has to be addressed first before we can put the campus in place."

With the beginning of the 2021 hurricane season less than three months away on June 1, one of the things the recovery team is working on is making sure the diocese's insurance policy will be reflective of what is needed to rebuild for a named storm should a catastrophic storm strike

the area again.

Until the policy renews on July 1, added coverage of \$30 million for a named storm was purchased to protect the diocese through June 30. It had already met the current policy's limit of liability.

"Working with the insurance company as well as our own people is a big process. It will take from now until our policy is renewed to get all that situated," Buller said. "If we up the coverage, we have to up the premiums. It's a balance that we have to look at."

Father Buller said the repairs, restoration, and rebuilding could realistically take up to five years.

"We just want to start checking off those 508 projects one at a time," he said. "Our goal is to bring health to our diocese again."

Deacon Chris Gregory interred at Consolata

SULPHUR - A devoted son to God, husband, father, grandfather, godfather and friend to all who had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, Deacon James "Chris" Gregory, 66, who died Saturday, Feb. 6, was interred at Consolata Cemetery on Wednesday, Feb. 10.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. Fr. Timothy Goodly and Fr. Aubrey Guilbeau were concelebrants with Bishop Glen John Provost officiating.

Deacon Gregory's love for Christ was seen in all of his actions. He knew no stranger and loved to share God's love every chance he was allowed. He had the brightest smile, most welcoming spirit and robust voice.

As a certified optician, he owned and operated the Sulphur Optical Shoppe for over 30 years, serving his community in their eye wear needs. He was an Emergency Medical Technician and an active member of the Sunrise Rotary Club of Sulphur. In

2005-2006 he received the Rotarian of the Year award for 11 years of perfect attendance. He lived by the Rotarian 4-way Test. When not serving his community, he could be found at his children's various sporting events, especially their swim meets where he held an active part as a certified swim referee/stroke official.

He was ordained a Permanent Deacon for the Diocese of Lake Charles in August 2014. Since his ordination he served his Faith Family of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, where he was raised. Chris was in his final year of serving the school children of the Westlake area schools as the CPSB Bus Driver of Bus 231.

He was preceded in death by his father, Chesley Gregory and his mother, Norma Planchard Gregory.

He leaves his best friend and beloved wife of 42 years, Mary Lynn (Hayes) Gregory; four children, Sarah Bannan (Christopher) of Mandeville, La, Rebekah Bernard (Andrew) of Lumberton, Texas, Dr. Nicholas Gregory (Sarah)



Deacon Chris Gregory

of Monroe, La., and Hannah Rogers (Paul) of Lake Charles; 15 grandchildren; Kaeleb Rogers, Evan Bernard, Noah Bannan, Logan Bannan, Emmelia Bernard, Hailey Bannan, Ethan Bernard, Chesley Bannan, E.J. Bernard, Elizabeth Bannan, Earon Bernard, Lillian Gregory, Joseph Rogers, Stephen Bannan, and Eliza Gregory. Sister, Candace "Candy" Buser, brothers; Dr. Chesley "Pip" Gregory (Trudy), and Dr. Joseph "Joey" Gregory (Debra); sister-in-law Nell Richard and brother-in-law Tony Hayes (Ann); along with many nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

In lieu of flowers please donate to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital "In memory" of Deacon Chris Gregory.

Bishop Provost to preside at Sacred Triduum in Cathedral

LAKE CHARLES - The Most Reverend Glen John Provost will celebrate the Sacred Triduum - Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil - in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

On Palm Sunday, March 28, Bishop Provost will bless the palms before the 9:30 a.m. Mass in the Cathedral. Palms will also be blessed at the 5 p.m. Extraordinary Form Mass that day.

The Bishop will also be the celebrant of the Chrism Mass in the Cathedral at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 31, with the priests of the Diocese as concelebrants. At this Mass, the Holy Oils - Oil of the Sick, Oil of the Catechumens, and the Oil of Chrism - used during the year are prepared and blessed.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated on Holy Thursday, April 1, at 7 p.m. It is at this Mass where the commemoration of Christ's washing the feet of His Apostles is re-enacted. Following the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament will be available for Eucharistic Adoration until midnight. Earlier in the day, at 8 a.m., there will be morning prayer in the Cathedral.

The Commemoration of the Lord's Passion will take place on Good Friday,

April 2, at 3 p.m. The service begins with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by Veneration of the Cross with the faithful recognizing the "Cross of Christ" as their only hope of salvation. The celebration concludes with Holy Communion.

On Good Friday there will be morning prayer at 8 a.m. followed by a Walk with Christ from the Cathedral to the Old Catholic Cemetery and back, praying the Stations of the Cross, the Holy Rosary, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

The Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 3, will begin at 8 p.m. in the Cathedral with the Service of Light outside the church.

Cathedral Mass times for Easter Sunday, April 4, are 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., with Mass in the Extraordinary Form at 5:00 p.m.

Diocesan office hours for Holy Week are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, March 29-31. Offices will be closed on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, April 1 and 2, as well as Easter Monday, April 5. They reopen on Tuesday, April 6 at 8:30 a.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

Penance Nights slated in four diocesan deaneries

Penance Nights have been scheduled throughout each of the four deaneries Tuesday-Thursday, March 23-25, in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The following church parishes will be open from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on each designated day:

Tuesday, March 23

• **West Deanery** — Immaculate Conception, Maplewood; Our Lady of LaSalette, DeQuincy; Our Lady of LaSalette and Our Lady of Prompt Succor, both in Sulphur; St. Joseph, DeRidder; St. Joseph, Vinton; St. Peter the Apostle, Hackberry; St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss; and St. Pius X, Ragley.

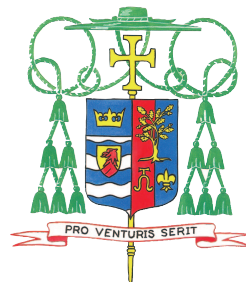
Wednesday, March 24

• **North Central Deanery** — Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sacred Heart of Jesus, St. Henry, St. Margaret of Scotland, all in Lake Charles; St. Raphael, Iowa; and St. Theodore, Moss Bluff.

Thursday, March 25

• **South Central Deanery** — Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, St. Martin de Porres, and Christ the King, all of Lake Charles; St. Mary of the Lake, Big Lake; and St. John Vianney, Bell City.

• **East Deanery** — Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Immaculate Conception, all in Jennings; Our Lady of Seven Dolours, Welsh; Our Lady of the Lake, Lake Arthur; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Oakdale; St. Charles Borromeo, Fenton; St. Joan of Arc, Oberlin; St. Joseph and St. Paul, both in Elton; St. Joseph, Welsh; St. Lawrence Raymond; and St. Philip Neri, Kinder.



Nearly 400 scholarships available in Diocese of Lake Charles Schools

Deadline to apply is April 15

Lake Charles – Up to nearly 400 students will have an opportunity to earn scholarships to attend Catholic schools this Fall within the Diocese of Lake Charles, thanks to the generosity of a patron giving a \$1.8 million donation. The family, who wishes to remain anonymous, made the generous gift through ACE Scholarships, which provides children of low-income families access to quality education through its scholarship program.

“This incredible gift to our community comes at a time when Southwest Louisiana families are most profoundly in need, and this patron’s investment in their future is evidence of deep faith in the educational excellence of our diocesan schools,” said Bishop Glen John Provost. “Because of this generosity, families unable to afford Catholic school will find the assistance they need to make the best choice for their children. We urge families considering our Catholic schools to seek us out and seize this blessed opportunity.”

Students in grades K-8 receive up to \$4,200 and students entering grades 9-12 receive up to \$4,500 toward tuition. Families interested in applying for tuition assistance through ACE Scholarships must apply for enrollment at their school of choice and apply separately for a scholarship through ACE at <https://www.acescholarships.org/become-a-scholar/louisiana/>.

The deadline to apply for a scholarship for the 2021-22 academic school year is April 15, 2021.

“The gift of a quality education is a precious thing,” said ACE Scholarships President Arthur Dupré, “and this private donor’s desire to help Lake Charles’ recovery by investing in

educational opportunity – particularly via the Diocese – will directly transform so many children’s lives. This donation is a testament to Bishop Provost’s leadership in ensuring academic excellence, and we at ACE Scholarships are proud to partner with the Diocese to open new doors for these families and these children. We look forward to helping enrich these young minds through a solid education and empowering them with access to the schools of their dreams.”

To qualify for an ACE Scholarship, the following criteria must be met:

1. Your child must be a resident of Louisiana.
2. Your family income is less than the amount listed in the chart (See link above).
3. One of the following statements must be true:
 - a. Your child attended a Louisiana public school during the 2020-2021 school year.
 - b. Your child participated in the Louisiana Scholarship Program/Tuition Donation Credit Program during the 2020-21 school year.
 - c. Your child will be attending kindergarten for the first time during the 2021-22 school year.

For more information, please contact the Office of Catholic Schools (337-400-5237).

Insurance and Hurricanes

Every year, the Diocese of Lake Charles reviews and analyzes the property liability insurance for every school, parish, building and department within its five-parish territory. All structures and entities are combined for insurance coverage for economies of scale, bigger discounts and spreading of risk.

The Diocese currently partners with the Catholic Mutual Group (CMG) to obtain this coverage. CMG is an organization that is a part of the Catholic Church that focuses on providing more affordable insurance than can be found in the commercial insurance markets. It was founded by a group of Bishops in 1889 and provides insurance coverage for over 125 dioceses and archdioceses in North America and 200 Catholic Religious Orders and Institutions in the U.S. and

Canada.

As part of the annual review, CMG engages an independent third party who conducts a named storm analysis. This is taken into consideration every year as the Diocese of Lake Charles collaborates with its insurance partner to assess costs and benefits of coverage levels and premiums.

The “named storm limit” of coverage for the Diocese is \$30 million. In the most recent named storm analysis that was received and reviewed in the Spring of 2020, the report details every named storm and its corresponding damage experience in the Diocese of Lake Charles over the past 100 years. The total damages from all of the top 20 storms combined, before Laura and Delta, are only \$42 million.

In 2005, when Hurricane

Rita made landfall as a Category 3 storm in Cameron Parish, the Diocese was covered with a “named storm limit” of \$20 million. According to GC Analytics, the ground-up loss was over \$4 million, well below the \$20 million coverage limit in place at that time. Rita was the strongest storm in 48 years on record to hit Southwest Louisiana. Hurricane Audrey was the all-time highest damage storm to hit our area in 1957 with losses totaling a little more than \$8 million.

Taking a prudent approach moving forward, the Diocese increased its “named storm limit” to \$30 million and continued doing so for the next 15 years. The annual premium in 2020 was over \$1 million for this coverage.

The analysis, conducted by GC Analytics, estimated a hurricane loss of approxi-

mately \$15 million every 1 in 100 years (or 1% chance in 2020), and further showed only a 1% probability that another loss of Category 3 strength would exceed \$29 million.

Hurricanes Laura and Delta caused \$110 million in damages to the properties of the Diocese of Lake Charles. This is off the charts and defies any historical trends and future modeling of any insurance “experts.” The chances of the Diocese suffering two back-to-back storms was considered “inconceivable” by the experts. Their projections and recommendations were literally blown away.

Rest assured, the Diocese will be taking all of this into consideration as it works towards the renewals for property insurance this spring.

Diocese in compliance with Charter

LAKE CHARLES — Based on the analysis of data collection results of the 2019/2020 Charter audit period of the Diocese of Lake Charles, the diocese has been found to be in compliance with the requirements for the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, approved by the U.S.

bishops in 2002.

Bishop Glen John Provost was informed of the finding in a letter, dated January 18, 2021, from Stonebridge Business Partners which is the company that conducts independent audits of dioceses across the country. The letter thanked the diocese for its cooperation and for partici-

pating in the data collection process. An onsite audit is scheduled for the Diocese of Lake Charles in 2021.

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People is a comprehensive set of procedures originally established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June 2002 for

addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse. It was revised in 2005, 2011, and 2018.

Catholic Charities partners with city

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana is partnering with the City of Lake Charles to help residents pay overdue water bills.

The idea originated from the city’s concern over the high volume of water bill accounts becoming extremely past due in light of economic struggles.

Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., director of Catholic Charities, said the nonprofit agency has always been committed to helping people through difficult times and get them back on their feet.

“It is such a gift that we are able to have another resource through the city to help people be able to keep their water on,” said Sister Miriam. “Dealing with two hurricanes, we know what it’s like to not have water here in Lake Charles.”

The water/sewer utility service bill payment assistance program is funded by the city and managed by Catholic Charities for the benefit of customers in Lake Charles who have been adversely affected by COVID-19. The temporary hold on water disconnections is coming to an end.

Catholic Charities will assist with \$200 per household or three months of delinquent water bills between March and November of 2020, whichever is greater. Assistance will only be granted once per household.

Even though so many people are suffering and tired, especially after the hurricanes, Sister Miriam said the water assistance program offers a little sign of hope and some normalcy, which is not a lot these days.

“From a faith perspective, we might ask what is the normalcy we are looking for? It is these ways of helping one another,” Sister Miriam said. “We are ultimately growing in faith and growing in our love for the Lord and allowing this to be an opportunity to grow in virtue.”

Catholic Charities is expecting to be able to help between 400-500 citizens with past due water bills.

The following information is required to process each request:

- Proof of income (copies or scans of paystubs, SSI, child support, etc.) Please include all forms of income.
- A copy of the water bill of which you are requesting assistance.
- A copy of the ID of the

person on the bill.

- Release of information form for Catholic Charities to get your information on water bill from the city.

- Release of Information form for Catholic Charities to put your information into Charity Tracker.

- An application form.

All forms may be accessed online at www.catholiccharitiesswla.com or picked up at the office of Catholic Charities, 1225 Second St.

Sister Miriam said qualifying for the water assistance program through the partnership does not disqualify someone from other types of assistance offered by Catholic Charities. However, a household won’t be able to apply for additional assistance at the same time.

“Because we expect a high volume from this partnership, people will need to apply at a later time to be assessed for other needs,” said Sister Miriam.

Catholic Charities helps with rental and mortgage assistance, food and utilities, funeral expenses, prescription medication and TWIC assistance. Clients are seen by appointment only.

For questions about the application process for the water assistance program,

call Catholic Charities at 337-439-7436 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. To apply for any other type of assistance, calls are taken only on Monday.

“True Presence: The Eucharist in Art” — Grades K-2, Writing Category

The winning entry for grades K-2 in the writing category of the “True Presence: The Eucharist in Art” contest was submitted by Visa Newman of Lake Charles with a short story titled “The Eucharist at Work.” She wrote her story with anticipation of receiving the Sacrament of Eucharist for the first time on June 14, 2020. The contest, presented by the Diocese of Lake Charles, was as a way for students in grades K-12 as well as adults to creatively portray their Catholic belief in the Eucharist either by artwork or writing.

The Eucharist at Work

By Visa Newman, first place

Once, there lived a poor little girl whose age was around 8. She lived in a small village.

One day her mother said it’s time for your test for the Eucharist.

Oh, mother, I’ve been waiting so long for this day, the girl said from her room.

When Mary Sugarplum, the poor little girl, got to the temple, she took the test. She did great, but not enough.

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

The winning entry for grades 6-8 in the writing category of the “True Presence: The Eucharist in Art” contest was submitted by Jacob Ardoin of Lake Charles with a poem titled “You Are Here.” The second-place entry by Connor Lyons of Jennings, and third-place entry by Ethan Nguyen of Lake Charles were also poems. 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 either by artwork or writing.

You Are Here

By Jacob Ardoin, first place

With closed eyes and an open heart,
I feel you within my soul and my spirit soars
Your divine power and endless love surround me
You are here

Many times I witness the transformation
Still I watch in adoration and reverence
Still again I cry out silently “Abba”
You are here

Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Present here, before me, a sinner
Everlasting life, offered, surrendered
You are here

Precious Body and Precious Blood
My soul awaits your sanctifying grace
By your holy self you call out, come
You are here

In the hearing of your holy Word
In the transformation of you
Peace, calm, anticipation of receiving
You are here

Unable to ever I define and describe
Amazing Grace here for me and with me
You the glorified Jesus present
You are here

By your Father’s power, by this miracle
I receive, a part of the resurrected Christ
Oh the splendor and surrender of me
You are here

At your Father’s right hand
Under the guise of bread and wine
Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity
You are here

Adoration Holy Eucharist
Whole Christ, Truly present
In this sacrament
You are here

The True Presence of Christ

By Connor Lyons, second place

Jesus is present,
Under bread and wine.
Not absent,
But truly divine.
Some do not believe,
While others do.
When you receive him,
He will find you.

The True Presence of Christ

By Ethan Nguyen, third place

The True Presence is one of heart and mind
It’s the conscience of the individual Christians to find

True knowledge causes all of us to share
As a congregation, we gather with no time to spare

With Jesus gathered in our midst
We all sit and ponder his wonderful gifts

Even with the church emptied
The faithful will continue on unwearied

Even with the place to practice our faith gone
Sin will not have won

As we remember how Christ’s body was broken
We continue to speak the truth of God as it must be spoken

Because True Presence is feeling God’s essence
While we have been shut in from this horrid virus

Christians soldier on as Paul did writing to Titus
Even in the dark, there would be a spark of God’s holy light to forever shine bright

Sorry, kiddo, Father said. You didn’t pass. Oh, but Father, you don’t understand! I have to be closer to Jesus! she said. Now, out! said Father. Yes, Father. I understand. And out the door she went.

Later, when Mary Sugarplum was cleaning the temple, she heard a bell ring. She dropped her stick in surprise. Nobody was there but her and Jesus.

Just then, a luminous white light that could blind you appeared. It was all from the Eucharist.

Come to me, Jesus said. Mary Sugarplum got down on her knees and started to gaze and adore the Eucharist. That’s when the nuns came in and saw her. They ran straight to Father and told him.

Father was about to stop her but realized that this was God’s work. He then said, let God’s work be done.

A week later, Mary received communion. And it was all thanks to God. The End.