



Bishop's Services Appeal begins 2021-2022 campaign

The 41st annual Bishop's Services Appeal, a fundraising campaign to assist in the operation of various ministries and programs of the Diocese of Lake Charles, kicked off the weekend of Sept. 11-12 in church parishes throughout the diocese.

This year's campaign, which continues until the end of the fiscal year — June 30, 2022, with a goal of \$842,000 — has as its theme: "Without a Vision, the People Lose Restraint," a scripture reference from Proverbs 29:18.

Contributions to the BSA aid a variety of ministries of the local church including Catholic Education, Youth Ministry, Vocations/Seminarians, Catholic Charities, Family Life, Annulment and other Tribunal Fees, Seafarers Center, Diocesan Counseling, Evangelization, Communications, and Saint Charles Center.

"In spite of the recent devastating challenges, the ministries offered by the Diocese of Lake Charles never wavered," said Stephanie Rodrigue, who serves as both Director of Temporal Goods and the Office of Development. "Each and every ministry remains a viable option for diocesan parishioners and so many others. In fact, services provided by some ministries, such as Catholic Charities and Communications, expanded to meet needs that have been exacerbated by both COVID-19 and the natural disasters that we experienced. As diocesan parishioners, we have a significant responsibility to share in financially supporting these good works."

In his Bishop's Services Appeal message, Bishop Glen John Provost said, "In light of the events of 2020-2021, we need to renew our vision in the Diocese of Lake Charles. Our Recovery Efforts are making progress with the limited funds that we have available, but without all of us working together, we will forget to maintain a vision. And, my friends, let us not forget that the vision is not ours. Any vision to meet its goal must have Christ at the center."

"The Bishop's Services Appeal is the stewardship by which you the faithful support the mission of the Church. The mission that Christ gave to His apostles and disciples has not changed in the two thousand years since His Life, Death, and Resurrection.

"The Diocese of Lake Charles has struggled because of the disasters of the past year and a half. But our mission continues. The Diocesan Offices and Ministries are meant to serve you as parish support. The efforts we make are to ensure that the vital work of the parishes continue now and for years to come."

Bishop Provost noted in his annual message that he is pleased with the progress the Office of Religious Education has made in its efforts of keeping the vision.

"The Office of Religious Education oversees the Parishes' Religious Education Program and the Catholic Religion Studies at our Catholic Schools," he said. "The goal that has been constant is to ensure a consistent and regular presentation of the Faith for our children and grandchildren."

His Excellency also noted the importance of the education of seminarians so that they may serve as future priests.

"This year, eight men have dedicated themselves to learning and formation. It is a tedious process because of the years of preparation it takes to ordain one man," he said. "But without a vision, we cannot expect to secure the future celebration of the Sacraments."

The service of those in need, especially considering the multitude of disasters, is led by Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

"The vision of Catholic Charities helps to ensure that the poor are given the good news of salvation by assuring them that we, the Catholic Church, care for their bodily and spiritual needs," said Bishop Provost. "The vision helps to



DIocese OF LAKE CHARLES
BISHOP'S SERVICES APPEAL
2021 - 2022

ensure that those trapped or imprisoned by need witness the love of Christ reaching out to them."

The bishop concluded his BSA message reminding people that all of us need a place to go to refocus our vision on Christ and His purpose and mission.

"In the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Saint Charles Center offers the opportunity for priests and lay faithful to go away from the world and be alone with Christ. We go into that holy place preoccupied and worried. Christ speaks to us, and we regain His vision," Bishop Provost said, noting that the generosity of the faithful helps keep the Saint Charles Center open, along with the beautiful new youth facility, Camp Karol.

"Storms have surrounded us, and sickness has tried to

overcome us," Bishop Provost concluded in his message, "but with our eyes on Christ, we can walk confidently through these trials. No One less than Christ, our Lord, is our goal."

Donors can choose from the following options to make their contribution:

- By check or cash in your parish's designated BSA collection envelope.
- By designating a donation at any time in your parish's collection.
- By credit card or electronic check (ACH) through the Diocese of Lake Charles' website at <http://www.lcdioocese.org/resources/support-the-diocese>.

World-famous statue brings Fatima message to Diocese

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

The International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima was welcomed with plenty of praying hands during a tour to eight church parishes in the Diocese of Lake Charles Aug. 13-18. The statue has been traveling the world since 1947 with the purpose of bringing Our Lady's message of hope, peace, and salvation.

Students at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School saw the world-famous statue during their back-to-school Mass on Aug. 18. Larry Maginot, statue custodian with World Apostolate of Fatima, reminded them that even at their young ages, they can help the Blessed Mother save souls and bring peace to the world by praying the Rosary.

It was during the six Fatima apparitions in 1917 when Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children, Lucia dos Santos (age 10), and her cousins, Francisco (age 9) and Jacinta Marto (age 7) in Portugal asking them to pray the Rosary and offer penance daily in preparation for sins.

Church parishes serving as hosts of Fatima Tour for Peace included Our Lady Help of Christians, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and Immaculate Conception, all in Jennings; Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, and St. Margaret of Scotland, all in Lake Charles; St. John Bosco in Westlake; and Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Sulphur.

Our Lady's visit at the Cathedral coincided with the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Aug. 15. Hundreds took to the streets of downtown Lake Charles to share the Fatima message with a Marian procession in the evening.

Martin Torres said he and his wife, Gracie, were excited for the opportunity to view the historic statue. "We celebrated our 29th wedding anniversary on the same day that Our Lady of Fatima statue visited the Cathedral," said Torres. "The Blessed Mother has become an integral part of our faith, our life, and our healings. When our Mother comes to visit us, we come to visit her."

The six-day tour began at all three Marian churches in Jennings. Betty Ann

Caraway, a parishioner at Our Lady Help of Christians, said the statue's visit was like the Blessed Mother telling her, "Come to me, bring all your troubles to me."

"For her to come visit now is such a special gift, especially for my family," Caraway said, "I have a 4-month-old granddaughter going through surgery. For our Blessed Mother to be here today is a great gift. Our Lady does those things for us."

Debbie Timpa, a parishioner of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley, was among those who traveled to St. John Bosco to be a part of the Fatima story. "For people who don't get to travel to where the apparitions occurred, the statue brings the experience to us," said Timpa. "You feel like you are a part of the miracle."

David Hardy said it was the "Miracle of the Sun" that took place on Oct. 13, 1917, and witnessed by 70,000 people that fascinates him. "Considering the fact that atheist journalists were converted on the spot and shaken to tears is a big mover and shaker for me," said Hardy. "When

Our Lady of Fatima has something to say, I listen."

The Pilgrim Virgin Statue was sculpted nearly 75 years ago by José Thedim according to precise instructions of Lucia, who said it was the closest resemblance to the Blessed Mother that she had ever seen.

"When you look into the statue's eyes, it's like they are twinkling as she looks back at you," said Ann Vincent, who participated in the Marian procession. "It's like she is saying, 'I hear you.' I realize as a mother that you can't navigate anything on your own, so I look toward Our Lady to help me as a mother."

Peacefulness and a sense of holiness is how Cynthia Matthews described her experience of seeing the statue at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church.

"It is easy to feel so comfortable after praying and talking one on one with the Blessed Mother, like nothing else in the world matters," Matthews said. "You know she is going to intercede for you to her son Jesus. I saw her when I needed her the most. We have had so much sickness among the elderly in our church. It's been rough."

When the statue arrived

at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church, Linda Portie said she could feel the calmness that accompanied her. "Her visit was timely because this is a difficult time for so many. Some good friends are suffering with COVID, and some others have

cancer, so I brought those special intentions to Our Lady," said Portie. "I know miracles do happen when she visits."

To learn more about helping spread the message of Fatima, visit www.fatimatourforpeace.com.



Bishop Glen John Provost consecrated the Diocese of Lake Charles to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at the conclusion of 9:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Aug. 15, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary coincided with the visit of the International Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima.



Our Lady of LaSalette to celebrate 60 years as parish 175th Anniversary of Apparition part of nine-day celebration

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

SULPHUR — Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church will celebrate a trio of special occasions Sept. 18-26 as it marks the Diamond Jubilee of its parish, the Sacrosanct Diamond Jubilee of Rev. Lawrence Kohler, M.S.; and the 175th anniversary of Our Lady's Apparition at LaSalette in France.

The theme for the nine-day celebration is "Our Lady of LaSalette Church: 60 Years of Grace." Highlights will include a nine-day novena of Masses, guest celebrants and homilists, Eucharistic and Marian processions, and a three-night parish mission preached by The Most Reverend Eduardo Alanis Nevares, Auxiliary Bishop for Diocese of Phoenix. Each day of events will take place at the church, 602 N. Claiborne Street.

Father Andrews Kollanoor, M.S., pastor of Our Lady of LaSalette, said it is important for people to gather as a parish to give thanks to God for 60 years of grace.

"In spite of going through a pandemic and natural calamities, the

Diamond Jubilee is a time to revitalize our faith and community to bring us hope and help us to live a life in charity," he said.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will be the main celebrant at the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Sept. 19, followed by a Marian procession to the Shrine of Our Lady of LaSalette near the church's prayer garden. It was on Sept. 19, 1846, when the apparition of the Blessed Mother to two children originally took place in LaSalette, France.

Because of Father Kollanoor's great love for Our Lady, he directed parishioners to build an exact replica of the LaSalette Shrine. Construction began in 2016 with 250 loads of dirt brought in to replicate the Holy Mountain on which Our Lady of LaSalette appeared. Seven life-size Carrara marble statues, donated by Missionaries of LaSalette, were installed. The solemn blessing and dedication took place on Sept. 22, 2018, with Bishop Provost and Father Rene Butler, M.S., Provincial Superior, Missionaries of LaSalette, Mary, Mother of the Americas Province.

"It is important to remind people of Our Lady's message to come closer to her Son and be converted to His heart of mercy and spread joy and peace to the people around us," said Father Kollanoor.

Our Lady of LaSalette Parish, which today numbers some 600 families, began as a mission of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish in Sulphur. Property on North Claiborne was purchased in 1957 and a church was built and dedicated on Oct. 19, 1958. Within three years, the mission was elevated to an independent parish, and on Sept. 17, 1961, Father Leo J. Martel, M.S., was installed as the first pastor.

The parish would eventually bear fruit of one of its own members when Matthew Cormier was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Provost on June 7, 2014. Father Cormier, the only member of Our Lady of LaSalette Parish to be ordained and who now serves as a Dean in the Diocese, will be the celebrant of the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Sept. 26, to honor the parish's 60th anniversary.



A facsimile of the Our Lady of LaSalette Shrine in France was constructed adjacent to the prayer garden of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in Sulphur. It was dedicated on Sept. 22, 2018, by Bishop Glen John Provost. This year marks the 175th anniversary of the Blessed Mother's apparition to two children giving them a message of reconciliation for all the world.

In 1980, Father Joseph Decoteau, M.S., was installed as pastor and remained the longest standing pastor until his retirement in 2000. He served as a mentor to Cormier. During Father Decoteau's leadership, many improvements were made, including a new front door to the church, library, pavilion, and adoration chapel.

The vibrant spiritual life of the parish has been evident in many ways over the years, but especially with the devotion of perpetual adoration. The conference room by the rectory was remodeled into a chapel and was blessed and opened for adoration on May 31, 1992.

"The parishioners are deeply devoted to the Blessed Sacrament," said Father Kollanoor, "having almost 30 years of uninterrupted perpetual adoration here."

Also in 1992, a generous donation to the parish made it possible to construct a prayer garden to include walking paths, Stations of the Cross for personal meditation, and a gazebo for relaxation and prayer.

In 2008, one of the biggest expansion projects of the parish — at a cost of \$526,000 — occurred by adding 3,200 square feet to the church, including a new high altar. The project was contracted and completed by Ave Maria Construction Company in Sulphur. Bishop Provost rededicated the church and blessed the new altar.

It is not uncommon for

generations of families to share their faith together at Our Lady of LaSalette. Whether it is participating in church bazaars, Live Nativity and illumination at Christmastime, or a re-enactment of the Apparition of Our Lady at LaSalette, there is one thing that remains constant: a true spirit of community.

Never was that unity felt more than on Dec. 15, 2012, after a man with a sledgehammer vandalized the church and adoration chapel destroying the front door and many statues. When news of the destruction spread, an outpouring of parishioners gathered to pick up remnants of the statues and prepare the sacred space for Mass to be celebrated later that day. Over the next several months, the Crucifix and Sacred Heart statue were restored to their former beauty.

The fellowship of the parish is also carried out in many organizations, the Altar Society being the oldest having been formed in 1955 when the area was still a mission of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish. Other ministries include Knights of Columbus Father Shagrigan Council 8978, Legion of Mary, Catholic Youth Organization, Samaritan Ministry, Kaycee Council Auxiliary, LaSalette Laity, A.C.T.S., and the Prayer Blanket and Bereavement ministries. To further the fellowship, a Day of Ministry Appreciation is

celebrated annually.

Our Lady of LaSalette Parish continues to thrive and spread the Blessed Mother's message of reconciliation as it has over the past 60 years. All are welcome to be a part of the Diamond Jubilee celebration.

Father Lawrence Kohler, M.S.

Father Lawrence Kohler, M.S., who served as pastor of Our Lady of LaSalette from 2000 to 2006, will be honored Sept. 23-24 for his 60th ordination to the priesthood of the Missionaries of LaSalette. Father Kohler was ordained on Sept. 24, 1961, in Rome. He taught in the seminary in Jefferson City, Mo., and preached missions and retreats throughout the United States for many years. Father Kohler retired in June 2005 and accepted residence at Our Lady of LaSalette.



Rev. Lawrence Kohler, M.S.



Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church, 602 N. Claiborne Street in Sulphur, was created as a parish on Sept. 17, 1961, by Bishop Maurice Schexnayder. Today, the parish property consists of seven acres on which stand three buildings representing three aspects of ministry: service, preaching, and education.

Father Starkovich named director of Continuing Formation for Priests



Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich

Reverend Jeffrey Starkovich, pastor of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley, was appointed by Bishop Glen John Provost to serve as Director of Continuing Formation for Priests in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The assignment was effective July 1. Father Nathan Long stepped down from the role after 10 years to focus more of his attention on hurricane recovery in his parish at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church.

Most recently serving as Vocation Director for the past five years, Father Starkovich, who was ordained in 2011, recognizes a parallel between the two positions. "Serving as Vocation

Director has been a source of much joy in my priesthood," he said. "In seminary formation, the Church speaks of four different dimensions of priestly life: human, intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral. Transitioning from Vocation Director to Director of Continuing Formation for Priests seems to be a natural progression. I look forward to growing with my brother priests in the diocese in these same four dimensions of our priestly life," Starkovich continued. "I pray that we can be open to the Holy Spirit who continues to form us into priests after the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord."

In appointing Father

Starkovich to the position, Bishop Provost said, "I know that he will bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the directorship."

Bishop Provost expressed his gratitude to Father Long for his dedication to the position over the past decade.

"For ten years, Father Long has served as the Director of Continuing Formation for Priests in the Diocese of Lake Charles. He has done so diligently and conscientiously," Bishop Provost said. "Due to the demands of the recovery in his parish and with his school, he finds it necessary to relinquish this position. The duties of the director are numerous.

Father Long has proven himself to be a faithful steward, and we are most grateful for his services."

Among the responsibilities of the director are to schedule and coordinate the annual retreat in October for priests, along with two other days of recollection; organize and facilitate all preparations associated with the annual convocation in June; serve as resource for priests seeking sabbaticals; chair the Committee for Continuing Formations for Priests; and develop and execute any other continuing education programs for priests such as occasional seminars or conferences.

Father Long said he was excited when given

the opportunity to serve his brother priests in their ongoing formation, even though he himself had only been a priest for a few years.

"The role of director is a behind-the-scenes quiet service," said Long. "You serve them because you care about them, because you want to, and it's good for them. It is very important for us to get together as we do during retreats as we pray together, but also during convocations spending quality time together in conversation and community. It is a joy to have been the director, a simple service that I took delight in."