



Papal honors given to faithful servants of Diocese of LC

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Honors conferred by the Holy Father, Pope Francis, were publicly received by 17 laity of the Diocese of Lake Charles in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Sunday, February 13.

His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A., officiated the Solemn Vespers for the Conferral of Papal Honors at 6:00 p.m. He was assisted by the Very Reverend Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General; Reverend Samuel Bond, Master of Ceremonies; Deacon George Stearns, Chancellor; and Deacon Brian Soileau, Secretary for the Ministry of Christian Formation.

Six were named Knight in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great; two received the Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* (Cross for the Church and Pontiff); and nine received the Papal Medal *Benemerenti* (Well-Deserving).

Pope Francis conferred the honors at the request of Bishop Provost.

“We are gathered in our Cathedral today to confer Papal honors upon distinguished men and women of our diocese,” Bishop Provost said. “We could have honored others as well, but to paraphrase the words of St. Paul, when one is honored, all share in the joy (cf. I Corinthians 12:26). This is how the Church rejoices.”

“Our celebration springs not from their desire but from ours, for we, like St. Paul, must thank God for the Christian service and example made visible in the lives of these faithful Catholic Christians,” the bishop continued.

Those named Knight in the Order of Saint Gregory the Great are:

- Derek Conner – St. John Vianney Parish in Bell City
- David DesOrmeaux – Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
- Kevin Leonard – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish in Sulphur
- Robert “Bob” McCall – St. Margaret of Scotland Parish
- Neill Rowland – St. Margaret of Scotland Parish
- Jared Watson – Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

The honor of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great is one of five pontifical orders of knighthood bestowed on Catholic men and women in recognition of their personal service to the Church and their good example in the community. Bishop Provost conferred the insignia of the Order of Knighthood with an embrace.

Recipients of the Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* are:

- Connie Dronette – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
 - Mitch Martin – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
- The Papal Cross was established by Pope Leo XIII in 1888 for distinguished service to the Church by members of the laity or clergy. It is the highest honor which can be bestowed upon lay men and women.

Those honored with the Papal Medal *Benemerenti* are:

- Arnold Bellow – St. Margaret of Scotland Parish
 - Suzanne Hebert – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
 - Sharon Jones – Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish
 - Lea Poncho – St. Martin de Porres Parish
 - Deborah Richard – St. Henry Parish
 - Michael Richard – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
 - Martha Simmons – St. Margaret of Scotland Parish
 - Blaine Wyninger – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
 - Denise Wyninger – Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish
- Pope Gregory XVI instituted the *Benemerenti* Medal in 1832 for great service to the Church by members of the laity or clergy.

Bishop Provost reminded the honorees to never take for granted any act of goodness on their part.

“We indeed learn from the wise, and when that teacher’s wisdom comes from a humble heart and mind, the lesson is even more valuable,” he said.

“It is this dedication to the message of Christ and His Church that we celebrate today. Our thanksgiving is for the goodness that has shown forth in the lives of these humble men and women. They have given of themselves to the vulnerable, the helpless, and the young.

“They have built up the Body of Christ by promoting family values and solid Christian teachings. They have not compromised with the world but rather strived to convert the world, slowly and surely, one humble act at a time. They are the ‘firstfruits,’ sanctified by the Spirit and truth.”

When the Papal honors were first announced in December of 2021, Bishop Provost congratulated the recipients for being recognized in this way.

“In the Diocese of Lake Charles, there are so many good men and women who labor in their Church parishes and at the diocesan level, assisting the needy, teaching the Gospel message, and fostering the Christian life in their families, schools, and communities,” he said. “God bless them all!”

Following the joyful ceremony of honors, a reception for family and friends was held in the Ave Maria Hall.



Knights of Saint Gregory the Great: The Knighthood of Saint Gregory the Great was conferred on six individuals for their distinguished service to the Church. This honor was requested from Pope Francis by Bishop Glen John Provost. The knights pictured with Bishop Provost are, from left, Kevin Leonard, Jared Watson, and Robert “Bob” McCall; and from right, Derek Conner, Neill Rowland, and David DesOrmeaux. Joining Bishop Provost and the honorees are Deacon George Stearns, Chancellor, left, and Deacon Brian Soileau, Secretary for Ministry of Christian Formation. (Photo credit: Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)



Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*: Recipients of the Papal Cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* pictured with Bishop Glen John Provost are Mitch Martin and Connie Dronette. The honor is the highest recognition the laity can receive from the Pope. Joining Bishop Provost and the honorees are Deacon George Stearns, Chancellor, left, and Deacon Brian Soileau, Secretary for Ministry of Christian Formation. (Photo credit: Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)



Papal Medal *Benemerenti*: Nine individuals received the Papal Medal *Benemerenti* during the Conferral of Papal Honors on February 13. Pictured with Bishop Glen John Provost, front row from left are, Lea Poncho, Martha Simmons, Arnold Bellow, Sharon Jones, and Deborah Richard; and middle row, from left, Blaine Wyninger, Denise Wyninger, Suzanne Hebert, and Michael Richard. This medal acknowledges the steadfast and faithful service rendered to the Church by the recipient. Joining Bishop Provost and the honorees are Deacon George Stearns, Chancellor, left, and Deacon Brian Soileau, Secretary for Ministry of Christian Formation. (Photo credit: Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Diocese in compliance with Charter

LAKE CHARLES – Based on results of the 2021 on-site audit of the Diocese of Lake Charles, the Diocese has been found compliant with all audited Articles within the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People for the audit period of July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2021.

Bishop Glen John Provost was informed of the finding in a letter, dated January 5, 2022, 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 during the process.

According to the correspondence, “the conclusions reached as to the compliance of the diocese are based upon inquiry, observation and the review of specifically requested documentation furnished to StoneBridge Business Partners during the course of the audit.”

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.

Stone Bridge thanked the Diocese for its efforts to protect the children and young people in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The next onsite audit is scheduled in 2024.

Diocese seeks input for upcoming Synod

The Office of the Vicar General for Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Lake Charles is seeking assistance from the faithful to prepare a document regarding the upcoming Synod on Synodality.

The document will be sent to the Vatican for review in August of this year.

Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on the theme: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission.”

Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, V.G., was appointed by Bishop Glen John Provost to chair the work in the Diocese regarding the Synod. The Holy Father has called for each diocese to participate.

In this regard, Monsignor Torres has requested that each organization, ministry, and entity of the parish/religious order/school have discussions of the history, present realities, and future dreams of the Catholic Church that people may share.

A gathering of no more than 10 representatives from each parish will be held on Saturday, March 26, at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Mass, followed by a diocesan-wide discussion from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center gym. The representatives can hear, vision, and offer the hopes and dreams for the diocese.

Learn more about the synodal process by visiting the Vatican Synod website at <https://www.synod.va/en.html>

For more information on the process of drafting the document, visit <http://www.lodiocese.org/3-news/3323-diocese-seeks-input-for-upcoming-synod>. Questions should be directed to Monsignor Torres at [daniel.torres@lodiocese.org](mailto:torres@lodiocese.org).

Please note that Bishop Provost has issued a Pastoral Letter on the subject of the Synod and offering his direction on the Diocesan phase. The letter currently appears on the diocesan website at <http://www.lodiocese.org/3-news/3339-bishop-provost-offers-direction-to-diocesan-phase-of-synod> and will be printed in the March 18 Catholic Calendar.

Quiz Bowl 2022 planned March 19

Has God always existed? What does “all perfect” mean? Who is the patron Saint of the Diocese of Lake Charles? Who is the secondary patron Saint of the Province of New Orleans? Under what title do we refer to ourselves in the Hail Mary prayer?

These questions are just a sampling of what students can expect to be asked during “Quiz Bowl 2022” on Saturday, March 19.

The annual competition hosted by the Office of Religious Education in the Diocese of Lake Charles is for middle school students in grades 6-8 through church parishes, schools, or homeschool groups.

The top four teams will earn cash prizes and certificates signed by Bishop Glen John Provost.

“We celebrate academic and sports achievements, but we also want to celebrate achievement in the study of our Catholic faith,” said Sister Maura Clare Mayock, Director of Religious Education for the Diocese. “The Quiz Bowl is a way to offer recognition of excellence in that area.”

How it works: Two teams will go head-to-head in each round. As the round proceeds,

one player at a time will be responsible for buzzing in to answer a question on behalf of their team. After each question, the players will rotate so all team members participate. The winning team will advance to the next round. The losing team will have another chance to advance before elimination.

Sister Maura Clare said all the students have an advantage since a quizlet will be made available to all registrants to help students prepare ahead of the big day.

“While the content will remain the same, the questions will be slightly reworded on the

day of the competition,” she said.

The reigning Quiz Bowl champions from 2019, the last year the event was held, are from Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings.

Registration is \$20 per team of four students that can be a combination of grades 6-8. Parish or school groups may submit registration to Sister Maura Clare via email to mauraclare.mayock@lodiocese.org or mail to 411 Iris Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601.

Donors are needed to support the annual event for

middle school youth. Sponsors who contribute \$200 or more will have their names printed on the event T-shirts, which every student and adult will wear. Checks can be sent to the Office of Religious Education, Diocese of Lake Charles, 411 Iris Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601.

For more information on registration or being a sponsor, contact Sister Maura Clare at 337-439-7400, Ext. 305. Students may also contact their Parish Catechetical Leader or school Director of Religious Education coordinator.



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK MASS

Students reminded of humility, saying 'yes' to God's will

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Seniors at St. Louis Catholic High School were reminded of the importance of humility and always being open to God's will for each of them as they gathered for the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass on Feb. 2. In celebration of National Catholic Schools Week — held Jan. 30-Feb. 5 — the Very Reverend Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General, officiated the special Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, followed by a talk by Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Father Buller was also assisted by Rev. Nathan Long, pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church and rector of St. Louis High; and Rev. Levi Thompson, parochial vicar of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church.

The Mass coincided with the Feast Day of the Presentation of the Lord, "a remarkable feast when we recall the story of when the Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple to present him to the Lord out of obedience and humility," said Father Buller.

"It is this humility," he said, "that allows us to say what it is that we have, but more importantly to say what we don't have."

"Humility is one of the greatest virtues that we can strive for. This is crucial for you, as students, to admit that you don't know something. It is also crucial for each one of us in the Christian life to admit that we don't have everything, and we must rely on God," Father Buller continued.

"We don't come into the world knowing everything. It takes humility on our part to say I do not have all the answers, Lord. I need you to teach me through my teachers, through the school that I attend, through my prayers and my understanding how I need God's grace."

"It is only through humility, this striving always to say what we do not have, realizing that our Lord will fulfill what we need," Buller emphasized.

Following the Mass, Father Caraway talked to the students about the importance of discerning their vocation in life, whether that be a calling to the priesthood, religious life, marriage, or single life. He explained that a vocation is a calling.

"Our hearts were made for a particular way of loving, and that is our vocational calling, the way in which our Lord is calling us to love like Christ in the world," said Father Caraway.

"There is nothing greater than saying 'yes' to God's will in your life. There is nothing more awesome than living your vocation well," he stressed.

Father Caraway, who was ordained a priest in 1919, shared his conversion story with the students. It was not that many years ago when he was a quarterback on his high school football team and dating.

"During my own vocation journey, I came to the humbling realization that I had never asked God what He wanted me to do with my life," he recalled. "I began asking God, 'Your will be done, not mine,' as I was on the path to becoming a dentist."

Father Caraway explained that when people do what the Lord has made them for, that will bring the greatest fulfillment within their hearts.

"It is our duty to ask our Lord what it is He wants for us. That is when we will find the greatest fulfillment in our own life," he said, "when we are doing what our Lord made us for."

In addition to St. Louis, Catholic schools in the Diocese are Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur; and Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings.



Genesis Bass
St. Louis senior



Matthew Landry
SMCS, Eighth Grade



Abram Powell
OLI, Fifth Grade

Three from Diocese schools named District Students of Year

Three students from the Diocese of Lake Charles were awarded 2021-2022 "Student of the Year" honors on the district level from non-public schools in Southwest Louisiana. They will advance to the regional competition in Baton Rouge.

Winners are **Genesis Bass**, Grade 12, St. Louis Catholic High School, Lake Charles; **Matthew Landry**, Grade 8, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, Lake Charles; and **Abram Powell**, Grade 5, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School, Jennings.

Genesis is the daughter of Gregory and Loretta Bass of Lake Charles. Matthew is the son of Albert and LaTecha Landry of Iowa. Abram is the son of Casey and Erin Powell of Welsh.

Other winners at the school level were:

- Immaculate Conception Cathedral School:** Grade 8 — Caroline Hankins, daughter of Michael and Kari Hankins; Grade 5 — Matthew Devall, son of

Matthew and Katie Devall. All are of Lake Charles.

- Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School:** Grade 8 — Kenzie Marshall, daughter of Chad and Dana Marshall of Jennings.

- St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School:** Grade 5 — Cullen Clanton, son of Owen and Erin Clanton of Lake Charles.

- Our Lady's Catholic School:** Grade 8 — Isabella Richard, daughter of Tim and Tracy Richard; Grade 5 — Landry Taylor, son of Daniel and Jana Taylor. All are of Sulphur.

Students from First Baptist Christian Academy in Moss Bluff also competed at the district level.

The students were selected for the honor based on grade point average, school organization participation, community service, an essay writing assignment, and an interview with a panel of judges.



In celebration of National Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 30-Feb. 5, the Very Reverend Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General, officiated a special Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Feb. 2 for seniors of St. Louis Catholic High School. Following the Mass, Reverend Michael Caraway, Vocation Director, pictured here, talked to the students about the importance of discerning their vocation in life, whether that be a calling to the priesthood, religious life, married or single life. Other Catholic schools in the Diocese are Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, and St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur; and Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

2022 Lenten Regulations

Every Catholic, to enter more deeply into the life of Christ, is to participate in some way in the spiritual and penitential disciplines of Lent. The regulations for the Catholic Church in the United States are as follows: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence. The other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

The obligation to abstain from meat binds Catholics 14 years of age and older. The obligation to fast, limiting oneself to one full meal and two lighter meals during the day, binds Catholics from the age of 18 to 59. Those younger or older are encouraged to voluntarily embrace these disciplines in so far as they are able.

Divine and Natural Law holds that all the faithful are morally bound to do penance.

The Fourth Precept of the Church obliges Catholics to observe the penance of fasting and abstinence for Lent.

Fridays outside of Lent are also days of penance and spiritual discipline. Abstaining from meat is the traditional way of observing these days of penance. The Bishops of the United States have granted permission for abstinence from meat on Fridays outside of Lent to be replaced with some other self-denial or personal penance. However, Friday remains a day of some penitential practice. As Bishop Provost has stated in pastoral letters: "The idea of sacrificing something is countercultural to the 'throwaway' mentality that plagues us today and of which Pope Francis has time and again warned us" (September 3, 2015).

Fasting should never endanger one's health. Avoiding some form of permissible entertainment or performing sacrificial acts of charity, for example, could replace the fasting when health is a consideration.

Finally, with any penitential discipline, both the letter and the spirit are to be maintained. For example, replacing meat with a gourmet seafood meal is not in keeping with penitential practice. Also, the increasingly popular practice of hosting "crawfish boils" and entertainments on Good Friday is highly inappropriate. Good Friday remains an extraordinary and solemn day on which we recall the suffering and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Good Friday should remain a day of fasting, abstinence, prayer, penance, and interior and exterior quiet.

Upcoming events in the Diocese

Mardi Gras Office hours

The Offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed on Monday, Feb. 28, and Tuesday, March 1, for Mardi Gras, reopening on Wednesday, March 2 — Ash Wednesday — the beginning of Lent. Offices will be open for regular business hours — 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily.

Bishop Glen John Provost will be the celebrant of the 12:05 p.m. Ash Wednesday Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and will distribute ashes to the faithful.

The Catholic Calendar will be next published on Friday, March 18.

Marriage enrichment conference planned March 5

MOSS BLUFF — Registration is open for Together in Holiness, a one-day marriage enrichment conference presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation and the Diocese of Lake Charles. The one-day conference scheduled 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, March 5, at Camp Karol, 1087 Bozo Road, is a series for dioceses inspiring spouses to grow together in holiness and empowering parents to form their children in the Catholic faith.

The Most Rev. Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A., Bishop of Lake Charles, will be the celebrant for the Mass and Marriage Blessing at noon. The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will be offered during the day.

A registration fee of \$64 per couple and \$40 per individual includes a box lunch and light afternoon snack for each registrant. On-site childcare is available for \$5 per child. Partial or full scholarships are available for families in need of financial assistance with the cost of registration.

For more information and to register, visit togetherinholiness.org. You can also contact Mylinh Vo, conference coordinator, at mylinh@forlifeandfamily.org or 832-779-1070.

Casting call for 'Live Stations of the Cross'

LAKE CHARLES — A casting call for the Palm Sunday

production of the "Live Stations of the Cross" at Consolata Cemetery is under way. Roles available include disciples, wailing women, townsfolk, women, children, and Roman soldiers. The Live Stations begin with the Condemnation of Jesus by Pilate and end with the Burial of Jesus, depicting the 14 Stations of the Cross.

Anyone interested in auditioning for the roles may contact Dewey Duhon at 337-477-5372 or email dewey.duhon@lcdiocese.org. Production will be Sunday, April 10, at Consolata Cemetery, 2300 Country Club Road.

Bishop's Bible study series continues in March

The Bible Study series on Genesis, presented by Bishop Glen John Provost, continues in March with the First Friday Men's Prayer Breakfast on March 4, and the Women's Prayer Luncheon on Wednesday, March 9.

The gathering for men is held in Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception following the Bishop's 6:30 a.m. celebration of Mass in the Cathedral. The luncheons begin at 11:30 a.m. in the Ave Maria Hall with the Bishop's teachings starting around 12:15 p.m.

The men's prayer gathering will continue March 4, April 1, and May 6 for the remainder of the series on Genesis. Men may register by calling the Diocese of Lake Charles at 337-439-7400, Ext. 305.

Dates for the Women's Prayer Luncheons, catered by Treasures of Marilyn's, are March 9, April 6, and May 4. Reservations should be made prior to each luncheon by sending a check in the amount of \$12.50, payable to the Diocese of Lake Charles, to Sister Maura Clare Mayock, 411 Iris Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601. A stamped self-addressed envelope should be included with payment. For more information, call 337-439-7400, Ext. 305.

Lenten Mission at OLQH will feature Father Kirby

LAKE CHARLES — Reverend Jeffrey F. Kirby, STD, who backpacked through Europe while in graduate school and ran two marathons while in seminary, will present a Lenten Mission at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church Monday — Wednesday, March 14-16, at 6:30 p.m. nightly. The

theme of the mission is "Redemptive Suffering and Christian Discipleship."

Father Kirby grew up in West Germany, served in the Army National Guard, attended seminary in Rome, has crossed the Atlantic Ocean by ship, eaten breakfast in the White House, and served as a Guest Chaplain to the US House of Representatives. He is a Papal Missionary of Mercy, the Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Indian Land, South Carolina, and a Senior Contributor to the Crux news site.

Father Kirby holds a doctorate in moral theology from the Holy Cross University in Rome and a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He also serves as an Adjunct Professor of Theology at Belmont Abbey College. The presentation each night during the mission will be 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the main church located at 3939 Lake Street.

Religious Sisters of Mercy to lead "Cor ad Cor" on March 8

LAKE CHARLES — The Religious Sisters of Mercy will host "Cor ad Cor," a ministry for unmarried women ages 18-39, from 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at their convent, 1414 Martha Street. The monthly gathering is for women who want to deepen their capacity to hear and respond to God's voice as He leads them on their daily pilgrimage of faith, hope and charity.

The evening begins at 5:10 p.m. with a Holy Hour, followed by dinner and discussion at 6:15 p.m., then Scripture reading and discussion, and ending at 7:45 p.m. with night prayer. It is not necessary to be discerning religious life to attend.

The gathering is held on the first Tuesday of each month. For more information or to RSVP, call 337-564-0030 or email saintmartindeporresconvent@gmail.com.

Adoration/Divine Mercy at Saint Charles Center

MOSS BLUFF — Deacon Brian Soileau, director of Saint Charles Center, presides over Eucharistic Adoration and Divine Mercy for Adults at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in the Assumption Chapel. Saint Charles Center is located at 2151 Sam Houston Jones Parkway. For more information, call 337-855-1232.