



# Bishop Provost offers direction to diocesan phase of Synod

January 21, 2022  
Feast of St. Agnes

My dear People of God,  
Greetings in our Lord!

Recently, in response to a request of the Holy See, the dioceses of the world entered what is called a synodal process. The purpose is to offer input from the faithful for the Synod on Synodality in 2023. Quoting from the webpage of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "The Synod on Synodality is a two-year process of listening and dialogue."

Pope Francis has invited "the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission: 'It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.'" What does "synodality" hope to accomplish? The statement continues, "[T]he Church will be able to learn through Her experience which processes can help Her to live communion, to achieve participation, to open Herself to mission."

To participate in this effort, I appointed Monsignor Daniel Torres to coordinate this "listening and dialogue" for the Diocese of Lake Charles. He provided guidance to the pastors to assist the faithful in this consultation. The feedback from this effort will be compiled and forwarded to the USCCB and subsequently to the Holy See for their purposes.

"Listening and dialogue" have been a part of the life of this diocese from the beginning. Every parish has an active Pastoral Council and separate Finance Council to advise and assist the pastor on the pastoral ministry and administration of temporal goods respectively. The Diocese, as well, has a duly constituted Diocesan Pastoral Council and Finance Council, which meet regularly and are composed mostly of lay men and women, their names listed in the current Diocesan Directory. This is not to mention the Presbyteral Council and College of Consultors, comprised of duly elected and appointed priests, who advise and assist me in the administration of the Diocese, or the lay Advisory Councils of our Catholic schools. Whether Catholic Charities or Family Life, Religious Education or Diocesan Building Commission, Safe Environment or Hispanic Ministry — all these diocesan offices and ministries maintain advisory councils, boards, committees, or consultative groups that offer feedback, advice, direction, and conversation.

I would offer this brief observation. Any "listening and dialogue" benefit from perspective. The true perspective for any Christian is our Lord Jesus Christ. For the Christian, the imitation of Christ is tantamount to being a Christian (cf. Ephesians 5:1-2). This means that the Christian strives to live his or her life in conformity to the teachings of Jesus Christ. "If you love me," our Lord says in the Gospel of St. John, "you will keep my commandments" (John 14: 15). The commandments are not optional. Neither are they recommendations. They are fundamental. Following these commandments in imitation of Christ is not easy. It is, in fact, difficult, but not impossible. With God's Grace and a willingness to cooperate with God's Will, the Christian can witness a transformation in his or her life, one that leads to deeper and greater happiness as the Christian's life is more conformed to the teachings of Christ Himself.

We must ask ourselves the question, "How did Jesus Christ 'listen' and 'dialogue'?" Let us read the Gospels without selectivity. He certainly listens to the appeal of the people, especially the sinners, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the poor. Then, he acts in their favor. There are times also

where those in need say nothing at all, and He acts to heal or assist, as when he forgives the sins of those who have not asked (cf. Mark 2:5) or raises to life the son of the widow of Naim in the funeral procession (cf. Luke 7:11-15). And "dialogue"? From an early age in the Temple, He does this. Later in life He challenges the Pharisees and Sadducees, or they challenge Him, and He dialogues. He also dialogues with Pontius Pilate (cf. John 18:33-38) and with Nicodemus (cf. John 3: 1-15). Sometimes he chooses not to dialogue, as when he expels the money changers from the Temple (cf. John 2: 13ff.; Luke 19: 45ff.) or issues severe condemnations against the religious leaders (cf. Matthew 23: 13ff.). What strikes me in all these instances is His demeanor. He does not approach any of these conversations or actions as would a community organizer, politician, or social worker. Rather He assumes a position that his listeners immediately recognize as authoritative (e.g. Luke 4:22; John 7:46). He is the Redeemer, teaching, admonishing, forgiving, and acting as the arbiter of right and wrong. He is interested in the salvation of those whom He addresses.

Jesus Christ left us His Church to convey this message of salvation. As St. Paul pointed out, the Church is the body of Christ. "[H]e put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way" (Ephesians 1 :22-23; cf. Romans 12: 15; I Corinthians 12:27-28; Ephesians 5:23, 29-30). The Church has always understood herself in this way. Even unto our own age, Lumen Gentium (n. 48, § 2) of the Second Vatican Council spoke of the Church as the "universal sacrament of salvation." The Church is, then, a teacher and a mother precisely because She is to represent and embody Christ in the world. She accompanies the believer, yes, with an accompaniment that identifies the believer's intimate union with Her.

Is the Church filled only with perfect creatures? Of course not, because the Church on earth is both human and Divine. Her Divine Master calls all in the Church to perfection. Some accept; others do not; some reject; still others struggle. For this reason, the Church must always preach the need for repentance. As St. John will state clearly, "If we say, 'We are without sin,' we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing" (I John 1:8-9). There is always hope.

If we are to listen, then we must listen to Christ first. In this way we listen better to others. If we are to dialogue, then we must dialogue with Christ first. Prayer with Jesus Christ is always the fruitful prelude to sharing with others. No meeting or conversation, however well-intended, will accomplish anything of value if it does not begin and end with Jesus Christ, who is our way, truth, and life. All our synods, councils, committees, and commissions are not ends in themselves. They are means to what must be our only end — our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I leave you with these reflections. May our efforts yield some harvest, for by their fruits, we will know them (cf. Matthew 7:16). Extending my blessings to you and your families, I remain

Devotedly yours in our Lord,

✠ Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles

# Cowboy Catholics attend SEEK22

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

Adoration is a huge part of Katie O'Brien's faith journey, and she owes it all to attending her first SEEK conference eight years ago when she was 18.

That is why O'Brien was excited to be a part of SEEK22 in Dallas Feb. 4-6 with more than 50 "Cowboy Catholics" who joined nearly 1,000 college students from 14 campuses across Louisiana and Texas.

SEEK22 is the annual conference hosted by FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), a collegiate apostolate with missionaries who share the Gospel on campuses in the U.S. and around the world. O'Brien is one of those missionaries for students at McNeese State University and SOWELA Technical Community College.

"SEEK changed my life," said O'Brien, now 26 and serving her third year as a FOCUS missionary for Cowboy Catholics.

"It was really Jesus who changed my life, but it was in that moment of adoration. For me to be sitting there eight years later and see college students vulnerable before the Lord, praising Him and opening their hearts to Him was incredibly moving for me," she said.

Maria Fontenot, a McNeese sophomore, was among those students and said it was powerful to see college students standing up for their faith.

"It was a great way to reach out and realize there are other students all around me who are also striving for holiness outside of Lake Charles," Fontenot said, noting that adoration was her favorite time spent at SEEK.

"It was a good reminder that the Lord loves us where we are," she said. "Adoration was a beautiful experience seeing so many college students packed into a room

together all in awe of the Lord present in the Eucharist."

Fontenot credits the Newman Center at Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish for holding her accountable to her faith.

"Having a support system and other people who have the same goal of pursuing sainthood has been a good experience here at McNeese," she said.

Gabe Broussard, a sophomore at SOWELA, said it was his first time attending a SEEK conference.

"I was excited to be with my fellow college students and see other people my age who want to be closer to the Lord and are excited to be Catholic," said Broussard. "I enjoyed a talk on the importance of living in the present moment and not putting off what we can do today, especially when living out our faith."

McNeese senior Melisa Jimenez decided to attend this year since it was her last opportunity to go with her college friends.

"Ever since SEEK, I have been trying to attend daily Mass more often. Whenever it comes to Jesus, it has been easier to say yes to my faith,"

said Jimenez. She is grateful to a FOCUS missionary who started discipling her when she was a sophomore.

"Knowing that she had faith in me, knowing I was capable of evangelizing, going to adoration, and going to Mass on my own ... She helped kick start that conversion in me of wanting more," Jimenez recalled.

Reed Rougeau, a McNeese junior, encourages any college students who get the chance to attend SEEK to do so. "It's a very friendly atmosphere," he said. "It was a good opportunity to make friends with people who are part of Cowboy Catholics that I did not already know."

Confession was also a turning point for Rougeau, noting the priest reminded him that everything we have in this life is a gift. "I feel like I have a lot more capacity to love, a deeper love for everyone around me rather than just the people I know," he said.

Father Paul Jussen, chaplain for Cowboy Catholics at Our Lady of Good Counsel, was among 20 priests hearing confessions for three hours straight.

"God's mercy was flowing. It moves my heart knowing these young people are experiencing God's love in the sacraments," said Father Jussen. "Our young people were positively impacted by SEEK. They learned a lot about their faith and how to live it out in the world."

When the students were not listening to the keynote speakers or attending breakout sessions, they had the opportunity to participate in SEEK22's Mission Way. It is a format for students to learn about service opportunities, religious orders, and Catholic organizations.

"SEEK takes the students out of their everyday lives and brings them into this environment where they are able to take a weekend and grow in good Catholic community," said O'Brien, "a place where they are received, and where seeds are planted. It's a time to show them they are not alone on their journey to grow in their faith."

For more information on Cowboy Catholics, visit [www.cowboycatholics.com](http://www.cowboycatholics.com). For more information on SEEK23, visit <https://seek.focus.org/seek23/>



Deacon Brian Soileau, Director of Saint Charles Center, leads Divine Mercy Adoration in Moss Bluff recently. The devotion is held weekly on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. in the Assumption Chapel at the Center. All are welcome to participate, especially during the season of Lent, as way to rededicate oneself to prayer.

# Saint Charles Center hosts weekly Adoration

MOSS BLUFF — The penitential season of Lent is the perfect opportunity for self-reflection and to allow yourself to experience the mercy of the Lord.

Deacon Brian Soileau, Director of Saint Charles Center, invites you to join him weekly at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays in the Assumption Chapel for Eucharistic Adoration and the Divine Mercy Chapel.

Whether you are struggling in your prayer life or wanting to grow deeper in your relationship with Christ, adoration is the time to bring your heart and sit quietly before God. Listen for His voice. Gaze upon Him as He looks with tender love and mercy upon you.

Place everything before God truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. It is there that you can bring your concerns and worries, hopes and desires, fears and burdens, your sins and sorrows.

Adoration is a sign of devotion to and worship of Jesus Christ, who is believed by Catholics to be present in body, blood, soul, and divinity under the appearance of the consecrated host, that is, sacramental bread.

This Lent, rededicate yourself to prayer. Set aside time every day, even just a few moments, to sit with Jesus.

Dates for Eucharistic Adoration and Divine Mercy during the remainder of Lent are Tuesdays, March 22, 29, and April 5 and 12.

Saint Charles Center is located at 2151 Sam Houston Jones Parkway. For more information, call 337-855-1232.



More than 50 "Cowboy Catholics" from McNeese State University attended the SEEK22 Fellowship of Catholic University Students annual conference in Dallas the weekend of Feb. 4-6. (Photo credit: Matthew Johnson / Cowboy Catholics)



## Oratory reredos made by monks of Clear Creek Abbey

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

SULPHUR — When Benedictine monks are not praying, you can always find them working. It is part of their traditional motto, *Ora et Labora* (Pray and Work).

At least 20 monks at Our Lady of Clear Creek Abbey in the Diocese of Tulsa, Okla., used their time and talents to create the sacred work of art for the sanctuary at St. Francis de Sales Oratory.

Bishop Glen John Provost blessed the reredos — designed by Brother Bernard Marie Dunne — at the conclusion of a Pontifical Low Mass on January 30.

“I rejoice with you in the creation of this reredos. May it be a constant reminder to us of a vital love that finds its source in the Eucharistic mystery celebrated upon this holy altar,” Bishop Provost said.

A reredos (pronounced rear-reh-dahs) is a work of art situated behind an altar. They have been used throughout the history of the Church to reinforce Catholic understanding of the relationship between Christ’s presence in the Word of the Liturgy and the Eucharist that occupies the altar.

“We are very grateful for Divine Providence,” said Rev. Canon Jean-Marie Moreau from the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest. Moreau serves as Rector of the apostolate in Sulphur. “Everything is providential here — from the Institute establishing a church in Louisiana, to commissioning the monks to build the altar, and most recently the reredos.”

The Oratory — the only one in the South for the Institute — is home for the traditional Latin Mass in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

“A reredos is like elevating a throne for the Real Presence,” Canon Moreau said. “It is a type of art that marked the Council of Trent Reformation (between 1545 and 1563). We chose a type of Baroque sculpture to honor the Tridentine Missal of St. Pius V that is placed on the altar and to honor St. Francis de Sales who was born right after the Council,” said Canon Moreau.

“Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest has always had good relationships with Benedictine monasteries in France and in Italy, especially their motherhouse, the Abbey of Our Lady of Fontgombault in France,” Canon noted.

“I knew of the monastery in the Diocese of Tulsa and asked the Abbot, who directed me to Brother Bernard Marie, to oversee the project of building the altar,” Canon explained.

The inspiration behind the Baroque style of the reredos came from Spanish missions that Canon Moreau visited during his three-year assignment to apostolates in California.

“This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity project,” said Brother Bernard, who entered the monastery in 2011 at age 18. “I remember the man who taught me woodworking when I was a teenager. He asked what I planned to do with the skills I had acquired. I told him that someday I was going to carve a church,” he recalled with a boisterous laugh. “After saying it, I thought, sure that would be great, but impossible.”

“It was providential that we were led to Brother Bernard who answered God’s prayer to religious life,” said Canon Moreau. “God in turn answered his prayer to use his woodworking skills to build an altar. God can never be outdone in generosity.”

It is exceptional for Clear Creek Abbey to be involved in a project of this magnitude for something outside the monastery, said Brother Bernard.

“To be able to do this as part of our lives as monks, having that peace of mind that we are trying to be obedient and faithful to our vocation, trying to focus on making something beautiful and focus on the work for God’s glory, adds significance to what we are doing,” Brother Bernard said. “Nothing epitomizes that better than liturgical art.”

The reredos stands 24 feet tall, is 18 feet wide and 4 feet deep. It is made of pine, birch plywood, red maple, and hardwood.

Brother Bernard, along with Jacob Villotti (a volunteer from Kansas City, Missouri), arrived at the Oratory on January 15 with the reredos in 13 pieces. Local volunteers were waiting and ready to unload. A chain hoist was used to lift the heaviest piece weighing as much as 700-800 pounds and other pieces weighing up to 400 pounds.

Over the following two weeks, the volunteers — many of whom attend the Oratory — helped with the installation. This was the first time the pieces had been assembled as one wall. They continued to work on the reredos, sanding, painting, and stenciling designs on the five niches for statues.

“Volunteers are unique in Louisiana compared to oratories in other parts of the country. People here are gifted with their hands,” said Canon Moreau. “This church is a church of the people.”

Steven Coco of Singer and Mike Dismukes of Port Acres, Texas took time off from work to help with the project. They see their contributions as a way of giving back to their Creator.

“This is the House of God,” said Coco. “He made all the raw materials; we are just putting them together and offering them back to Him.”

The trip to Sulphur is an hour one way for Dismukes, but he could not think of a better use of his two weeks’ vacation. “What’s happening here has eternal value,” he said. “Everyone has gifts and talents. It’s much more efficacious for a person to spend time building something that is for God.”

After his recent retirement, Jeff Gruspier of Lake Charles was ready to give more of his time and talent to the Church. “This project comes from the community, from the people who attend the Extraordinary Mass, for the Glory of God and for an increase in faith.”

Other volunteers included Maurice Caraway, Kellen Leger, Vince Salvador, Danny and James Dismukes, Lance Findley, Jason Thomas, Marcus Trahan of Redmarque Construction, and Gigi Gruspier. Sebastian Moreau, a nephew of Canon Moreau, also assisted while visiting from Paris.

Canon described the latest addition to the Oratory as, “Magnificent! The reredos is beyond my expectations,” he said. “Seeing it installed and painted with the stenciling and colors. Wow!”

Before the blessing of the reredos, Canon thanked Bishop Provost for his support, expressing that “we owe the oratory to His Excellency from the bottom of our hearts.”

He also thanked the volunteers for their time and talents in helping assemble the reredos. “This is the work of the community. It has been humbling for me to see so much generosity,” Canon Moreau remarked.

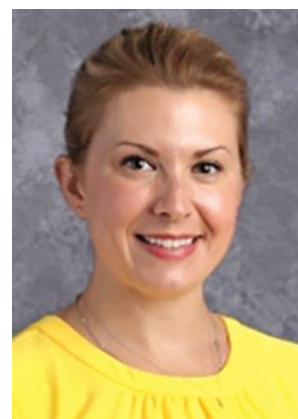
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St. Francis de Sales Oratory is located at 802 South Huntington Street in Sulphur. For a Mass schedule, visit [www.Institute-Christ-King.org/sulphur-home](http://www.Institute-Christ-King.org/sulphur-home)



Bishop Glen John Provost blesses the newly installed reredos above the altar at St. Francis de Sales Oratory in Sulphur. Assisting are Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, Rector of the oratory, right and Father Samuel Bond, Master of Ceremonies, left.

## Tadlock named principal of ICCS



Mrs. Blair Tadlock  
Principal at ICCS

LAKE CHARLES — The Office of Catholic Schools announced on February 23 the selection of Mrs. Blair Tadlock as the Principal of Immaculate Conception Cathedral School. Mrs. Tadlock most recently served as the Interim Principal and will assume her role immediately.

Mrs. Tadlock received a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education/Social Studies from Louisiana State University and continued her graduate studies at LSU, where she obtained a Master of Educational Administration. In addition, Mrs. Tadlock completed Loyola Marymount University’s Catholic School Leadership Academy in 2019.

An alumnus of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School and St. Louis Catholic High School, Mrs. Tadlock has taught in both elementary and secondary Catholic schools.

Since 2005, Mrs. Tadlock has served the ICCS community as teacher, Assistant Principal of Curriculum, and Interim Principal. She also serves as Chair for the Office of Catholic Schools Curriculum Committee.

Upon the announcement, Mrs. Tadlock stated, “It is an honor to be selected to continue serving the ICCS students, parents, faculty, and staff in this new role of principal. I look forward to continuing to work with the exceptional faculty and staff of ICCS and our loyal ICCS families as we all strive to live out our mission of strengthening spirits, minds, and bodies through the teachings of Jesus Christ.”

In his letter to the school community, Father Rommel Tolentino expressed, “In her long tenure at ICCS, Mrs. Tadlock has demonstrated loyalty, dedication, and

commitment to Catholic education, and particularly to our school. Those who have worked with her have seen her ability to lead by example and her willingness to give support wherever it is needed. She is a visionary leader who works hard to achieve what is best for the students and our school community. She has the fortitude and strength of character to help us get through the challenges we face and lead us towards a brighter future.”

The Office of Catholic Schools thanks the search committee and congratulates Mrs. Tadlock on her new role as principal of ICCS.

## Bishop Provost asks prayers for peace

Bishop Provost has issued the following statement on the War in Ukraine:

The news from Ukraine has disturbed us all. We must join our prayers to people of good will throughout the world for peace in that troubled land, torn by aggression and facing destruction. As we have entered the holy Season of Lent, may our forty days of prayer with the Lord in the desert raise up to the mercy of our Heavenly Father the casualties of war, the separation of families, the needless destruction of property, the settlement of refugees, and the suffering of the innocent. Mary, Mother of Peace, pray for us. Lord, grant our world leaders the wisdom and courage necessary to face these challenges. May God preserve us from war and keep us in peace.

## Prayer for the Recovery of the Diocese

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



## Villa Maria Mardi Gras King and Queen

Benny Pierre Granger and Bernice Suire reigned as 2022 King and Queen during the Villa Maria Retirement Center Mardi Gras party on February 18. Al Williams II, community liaison for the city of Lake Charles, had the honor of announcing the Villa Maria royalty to the crowd. Queen Bernice, 98, was born in Gueydan in Vermillion Parish as one of five children to a rice farmer. She married at the age of 19 to Richard Breaux Sr. and raised six children, four boys and two girls. After 43 years of marriage, Mr. Breaux died. Bernice found love again after three years and married a second time to Elton Suire, remaining husband and wife for 19 years until his passing. King Benny, 83, was a Navy veteran having served his country for 20 years on three repair ships, three floating dry docks, one aircraft carrier, and one tanker. He is the father of two sons — one in Lake Charles and one in Seattle, Washington. A good time was had by all in celebrating the Villa Maria Mardi Gras royalty, complete with a DJ, boudin balls and King Cake. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)