



• 2007 • CATHOLIC CALENDAR COMMEMORATIVE EDITION • 2022 •

15th Anniversary of Bishop Glen John Provost's Consecration to the Episcopacy and Installation as Bishop of Lake Charles

A Letter to Bishop Provost from the Faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles

April 22, 2022

Dear Bishop Provost,

Thank you for your leadership in these past 15 years as the Bishop of Lake Charles. The faithful of the Diocese, both lay and cleric, are grateful to you for the many things that you have done in the Diocese.

This commemorative edition of the *Catholic Calendar* is a small tribute to you of the many accomplishments that we have made since April 23, 2007.

We could have highlighted many other endeavors, but we choose five that were of particular importance to you: Care of the Poor and Needy, the Restoration of the Cathedral, Providing for the Spiritual Needs of Young People, Catholic Schools, and Priestly Vocations are topics that you have spoken about and actively promoted. We could have spoken about your dedication to Married Life and how you enabled the Domestic Church Movement to begin in the Diocese of Lake Charles, your support of the Retired Clergy, or even your efforts in Hurricane Recovery, but these five areas are the ones that illustrate your desire to be a true and good shepherd after the Heart of Christ the Eternal Good Shepherd.

With prayers for you and for the intention of your health, we the Faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles wish you, Your Excellency, *ad multos annos!*

Sincerely yours in Christ,

The Faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles



Most Reverend Glen John Provost, D.D., M.A.



His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, takes his seat for the first time in his new role as the third Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles on April 23, 2007, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.



The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was rededicated by Bishop Provost during a special Mass on August 31, 2019, following extensive restoration.

BISHOP GLEN JOHN PROVOST ✠ FIFTEEN YEARS OUR SHEPHERD

Restoration of the Historic Cathedral

A Reflection by Julie Engert

When Bishop Provost launched the "Return to the Lord" Capital Campaign in 2016, there were six significant goals: Building Our Priest Retirement Fund, Bolstering Our Seminarian Fund, Strengthening Our Parishes, Creating Camp Karol of Saint Charles Center, Expanding Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, and Restoring the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Bishop Provost's vision for the Diocese included the restoration of the 100-year-old Cathedral. It was determined that every element of the Cathedral needed repair or update according to code—an overwhelming task not to be taken lightly nor without funding.

From the cross on the bell tower to the very soil under the building, everything was sorely in need of attention. Two devastating hurricanes (Rita in 2005 and Ike in 2008) had exacerbated the condition of the already-suffering Cathedral. The basement retained water. The space under the building had become the graveyard for cast-off building materials, a few remains from the Great Fire of 1910, and parts of a broken statue of St. Francis de Sales—the namesake of the first church established on the site in 1869. On the interior, asbestos acoustical tiles covering the walls had absorbed damaging water seepage. It was those tiles that covered the greatest surprise of all: the beautiful gold leaf Marian prayer stenciling on the upper walls. All agreed the words of the prayer must be returned to their rightful place, in praise and thanksgiving to Mary, the Immaculate Conception.

To guide the restoration process, Bishop Provost gathered committees of professionals from throughout the Diocese, astute in engineering, restoration of historic church sites, and fundraising. Our Bishop was asking a lot of an area still struggling with storm recovery and economic hardship, but with his guidance and reassurance we soldiered on through much research and consultation, much prayer, much hope, much excitement, much joy, and at times much trepidation.

Bishop Provost kept the parish and the entire Diocese informed throughout the process. After each Mass—celebrated in the Ave Maria Hall for six months while the interior work progressed—parishioners were invited to view the transformation. We were certain that, as the parishioners and the whole Diocese watched the transformation of the Cathedral, the funding goal would be met.

The restoration was completed. The walls were repaired and stenciled with similar symbols of the old church; the pews were repaired and restored; the roof was repaired, retiled and equipped with new lightning rods; the stained glass windows were restored by the original company, Emil Frei and Sons, and covered with clear protective panels; the heating and cooling units were replaced; the Stations of the Cross were restored; the magnificent terracotta bas-reliefs over the entryways were restored and repaired to their former glory; electrical was brought up to code with new lighting; the sacristy received a new casement for vestments, an elevator, and space in the basement; the sanctuary was enlarged, with the old altar rail restored, with a beautiful figure of Mary in the apse, and with new stenciling of Eucharistic symbols.

The devoted people of the Diocese generously supported the "Return to the Lord" Capital Campaign, ensuring the funding for the Cathedral restoration. Bishop Provost was able to realize all six of the campaign's goals.

Our thanks to Bishop Provost and all who worked so hard to meet the challenges of restoring our beautiful Cathedral, rededicated on August 31, 2019. What a joyous celebration to reclaim our church, our Cathedral—now a transformed structure, elegant and glorious, worthy of welcoming all people to give praise and glory and thanksgiving to God.

Julie Engert served on the Restoration Committee for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception as part of the "Return to the Lord" Capital Campaign in 2016.



Thirteen priests now serving in the Diocese were ordained by Bishop Provost: bottom row, from left: Very Rev. Ruben Villarreal, Rev. Michael Beverung, Rev. Joseph Caraway, and Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich; second row, from left: Very Rev. Matthew Cormier, Rev. Michael Caraway, and Rev. Trey Ange; third row, from left: Rev. Samuel Bond, and Rev. Andrew DeRouen; and top row, from left: Very Rev. Ruben Buller, Rev. Levi Thompson, Rev. Jay Alexius, and Rev. Nathan Long.

BISHOP GLEN JOHN PROVOST ✠ FIFTEEN YEARS OUR SHEPHERD

Increasing Vocations to the Priesthood

A Reflection by Reverend Levi Thompson

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

I remember the day in 2009 when Bishop Glen John Provost confirmed me using the Sacred Chrism. I had no idea that eleven years later this same bishop would use Sacred Chrism again to anoint my hands as a priest of Jesus Christ. This was no mere coincidence, but instead, the fruit of years of his faithful prayer for my vocation.

Bishop Provost has been a bishop that *prays for* and *fosters* vocations to the priesthood and religious life. I am just one of the many priests and deacons whom he ordained. I am truly grateful that he has "asked the Master of the harvest for laborers" and encouraged my response to God's call.

In order to "ask the Master," one must set aside time to pray. Bishop Provost has commissioned the Diocese to pray intentionally for vocations. He implemented the 40 Hours Devotion in the Diocese, which consists of every parish offering forty consecutive hours of Adoration for the increase of vocations to the priesthood. During my eight years of seminary formation, I know that these prayers of parishioners truly sustained my discernment during trying times.

Bishop Provost also founded the Vianney House of Discernment, a house set aside for young men to live in community with a priest, while discerning the priesthood and attending college or working. After high school, I entered the Vianney House while I studied at McNeese. During that year, I developed the habit of daily prayer and fostered fraternity. It helped me understand that the priest is a normal person, and it affirmed God's call as I applied to seminary.

As the capstone of my formation, Bishop Provost sent me to study Theology at the North American College in Rome. Words cannot describe the joys of those

four years in the Eternal City. It was an honor to study Theology while living in the heart of the Church. Having Saints Peter and Paul a mere stone's throw away brought new meaning to the Church's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic foundation.

I have always looked to prayerful fidelity of Bishop Provost amid chaos. In no instance is this truer than when he bestowed upon me the gift of priestly ordination during the pandemic. In his homily from the Ordination Mass, Bishop said that the priest is first to be a man of *prayer*. The priest is not to preach his own self but Christ's action Himself. Bishop Provost said, "Approach the altar of God, not as a presider or an actor on a stage, but rather as Christ. Walk as He would walk, turn as He would turn, kneel as He would kneel, lift your prayerful hands as He would lift them ... Be attentive to every word spoken in the sacred liturgy, because through them Christ is speaking to you, in each moment of your life." His words proved prophetic for the four new priests ordained that day who were about to enter a world in dire need of Christ's presence. Prayer and conformity to Christ were necessary remedies as we then entered into a season of natural disasters in the fall of 2020.

St. John Vianney once said, "The priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus. When you see a priest, think of our Lord Jesus Christ." The prayerful example of His Excellency and his support of vocations show what the priestly life ought to look like. Each priest has his own vocation story, but from the Chrism of my Confirmation to the Chrism of my Ordination, I am truly grateful for Bishop Provost's effect on my vocation to the priesthood. May God continue to bless Bishop Provost for all his work and ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Father Levi Thompson was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Glen John Provost on June 27, 2020. He was one of the first young men to live at Vianney House.



Bishop Provost visits with students at Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur.

BISHOP GLEN JOHN PROVOST ✠ FIFTEEN YEARS OUR SHEPHERD

Dedication to Our Catholic Schools

A Reflection by Kimberlee Gazzolo

In the darkest of moments, when the needs of our schools, students and teachers were at their greatest, Bishop Provost was a true leader to our educational community.

Moments after the devastation of Hurricane Laura was seen in the light of day back on August 27, 2020, the Bishop was quick to respond. As the winds calmed and the damage was assessed, Bishop Provost made sure our school communities were never overlooked. At the first Hurricane Recovery meeting I attended, Bishop Provost included schools as one of his top priorities. He made it a goal to get them the funding they needed to have them up and running as soon as possible. I was not surprised that, as a previous school pastor and always an educator, Bishop Provost recognized how important our schools were to our Diocesan community.

Bishop Provost worked tirelessly to secure funding and establish the Bishop's Hurricane Recovery Tuition Fund. He oversaw our office as we distributed more than \$100,000 to directly fund families to continue their children's Catholic education. He was adamant that students return to school as soon as buildings could be secured, and for some sites, temporary buildings could be established. The many difficult decisions he made after Hurricane Laura showed that Bishop Provost is committed to ensuring the longevity of Catholic education in Southwest Louisiana.

Throughout his years at the Diocese, Bishop Provost has made it clear that our schools should remain decidedly Catholic. With a focus on religious education, he ensures that all schools follow clear standards, learn sacred scripture, and incorporate faith traditions into their school days. Our Bishop has high expectations that our students will understand the history of our Church, the tenets of the Catholic faith and what that means for their own personal lives.

Bishop Provost understands that parents sacrifice to send their children to Catholic schools. Each year, he directs funds from the Bishop's Services Appeal to student scholarships. He has also encouraged schools to participate in school choice scholarship programs,

targeting families in need. He is unequivocal in his support for students with special needs and their inclusion in our schools.

As I reflect on the last 13 years that I have been Superintendent, I have had the honor and privilege of watching Bishop Provost as he cares for our schools. Each year, he spends a morning at each school, visiting classrooms, praying with students and answering questions. The most cherished moments are when he laughs at a second-grader's silly question, handles with grace the same question for the tenth time and interacts with student lessons. I have seen him speak French with a high school student, join in on a literature discussion and patiently explain "how he became a Bishop." He is passionate about the arts, and attends school plays, concerts, and arts presentations.

One of my fondest memories, is when I accompanied him to Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings. He joined the fourth- and fifth-graders at recess, and he gave them each a saint card. It was easy to see how he enjoyed their enthusiasm and they his. On a wall in my office is a picture of Bishop Provost, walking between desks in an elementary classroom, talking with students. Always a teacher, comfortable in a Catholic school.

For him the school visits seem special, a time he can spend with the future of the Catholic Church. It was in those moments that we see his caring isn't just in the big picture, but on a very personal level. His caring extends to all of us within the Diocese. As he has for many of us, Bishop Provost has confirmed my daughter, attended a family member's burial, and taught me to be a better leader. Not a meeting goes by when he does not ask about my family with a pastoral concern.

This is the shepherd we've been blessed to have for the past 15 years—a leader with a compassionate heart. His pastoral concern will continue to lead us in our faith with a resounding hope in our Lord. It is the leadership of Bishop Provost that will help ensure the future of Catholic education in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Happy 15th Anniversary!
Kimberlee Gazzolo has served as Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles since 2009.



"Big Joe," a 26-foot refrigerated truck, helps Catholic Charities distribute food monthly at nine sites throughout the Diocese.

BISHOP GLEN JOHN PROVOST ✠ FIFTEEN YEARS OUR SHEPHERD

Expanding the Work of Catholic Charities in the Diocese

A Reflection by Sister Miriam MacLean, RSM

"The Bishop should set a fine example of fraternal charity and of a truly collegial spirit, offering loving care and support, both spiritual and material... to the diocesan presbyterate, the deacons and the faithful, and particularly to the poor and the needy" (*Apostolorum Successores*, No. 38).

Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana can give a particular witness to the care that Bishop Provost has given to the poor since his ordination as Bishop. When Bishop Provost arrived in the Diocese of Lake Charles, one of his goals was to ensure that Catholic Charities served the entirety of the Diocese of Lake Charles, encompassing five civil parishes. Bishop Provost guided us toward this goal with great patience, laying, as he has told me before, one brick at a time.

I have been aware of the Bishop's loving concern for Catholic Charities since 2014, when I was assigned to the Diocese. I watched his direction of Sister Mary Vianney Walsh, RSM, the first Religious Sister of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, to serve as Director of Catholic Charities. He told Sister Mary Vianney of his desire to ensure that the whole Diocese was better reached. Catholic Charities met regularly with members of each of the parishes who desired to be of service to the poor, seeking ways to collaborate more effectively. Sister Mary Vianney ensured that all of the parishes knew that they could call her directly with requests for help. She also expanded the food distribution to outside of Calcasieu Parish, beginning two distributions in Cameron Parish (in Creole and Big Lake).

When I became Director of Catholic Charities in late 2018, the Bishop gave me the same marching orders that he had given to Sister Mary Vianney almost five years earlier. Catholic Charities continued the good works that Sister Mary Vianney had begun while strengthening them and exploring new ways to ensure more widespread service.

Before Hurricane Laura made landfall on August 27, 2020, Bishop Provost made known to me a desire to have a strong Catholic response to the devastation that was coming to the entirety of the Diocese. He wanted to ensure that the people of God knew that Christ's Church was here with them, responding to their needs. It was these words which echoed in my mind and heart in the days, weeks and months to come! I knew that the Bishop's heart desired to serve the people of Southwest Louisiana who were so devastated.

Bishop Provost remained in close communication with Catholic Charities during the following days and weeks, desiring to know the services that could be provided to alleviate some of the needs of the people, and also desiring to use his own resources and connections to add to the efforts. It was Bishop Provost's vision that propelled us forth to bring supplies throughout the entire Diocese with our Saint Joseph the Worker Truck, which the Bishop had blessed several months before the storm.

As the immediate aftermath of the storm ended and we transitioned into what we know all too well as long-term recovery, the Bishop's desire to ensure that Catholic Charities serves the whole Diocese remained very much in the forefront at Catholic Charities. Knowing that people remained in very difficult situations, Catholic Charities kept distribution sites in all five parishes. Beginning in January 2021, we started scheduled distributions in Vinton, Kinder, DeRidder, Ragley, Elton and Jennings, in addition to our already-established sites in Creole, Big Lake and Lake Charles.

The year 2022 is bringing with it a greater emphasis on ensuring that the financial assistance given for rent, utilities and home repairs is more evenly distributed throughout the Diocese, seeking to further realize the Bishop's goal. No doubt the coming years will bring about additional ways that Catholic Charities can continue to serve as the Bishop's arm in service of those who are vulnerable in our society.

Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana remains grateful for the loving care—both spiritual and material—of our shepherd, Bishop Glen John Provost! We know that his support is a sign of Christ's tender love for His poor and we strive to be effective signs of the Lord's love in union with our Bishop!

Sister Miriam MacLean, RSM, serves as Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. She is also the Secretary for the Ministry of Pastoral Services for the Diocese.



Bishop Provost blesses Camp Karol, a Catholic youth camp situated on more than 100 acres along the Calcasieu River in Moss Bluff.

BISHOP GLEN JOHN PROVOST ✠ FIFTEEN YEARS OUR SHEPHERD

Creating Camp Karol: A Place for Youth To Grow in Faith

A Reflection by Reverend Whitney Miller

Many are familiar with the 1986 movie "Stand By Me." It is the story of four 12-year-old boys—Gordie, Chris, Teddy and Vern—set in Castlerock, Oregon, in the summer of 1959. Along the course of the movie, they learn about themselves, the meaning of friendship, and the need to stand up for what is right.

Sixteen years ago on March 31, 2006, a similar group of lay men—David, Michael, Jared, Bruce, Ric, and others—set out with a vision for a place, a supportive holy ground for youth, where girls and boys of all ages, shapes, sizes and backgrounds could come to find family, friendship and faith. It is, after all, something we Catholics do at our best: we stand by one another—as we recite the Creed at Sunday Mass, as we rally for the rights of the unborn, as we link arms around a camp fire and recite the "Our Father"—we stand united by each other.

After nearly 10 years of independent effort from 2006 to 2015, 89 acres of property known as "Bear Island" was donated to the Diocese of Lake Charles. At the time, I served as Director of the Saint Charles Center, and Bishop Provost, who had been one of the primary supporters of the Bear Island project, assigned me to coordinate this effort toward a Catholic youth camp which would allow for a broadening of programs with the young people of the Diocese in mind.

Bishop Provost's vision was inspired by that of Saint John Paul II, whose birth name was Karol Wojtyła. In Polish, the native language of the pope, Karol means Charles. And so, the name Camp Karol was selected to

underscore this historic link. Camp Karol has to our Saint Charles Center. Not long after, an additional 12 acres was purchased by the Diocese with an eye on future expansion and room for eventual growth.

The project of Camp Karol became one of the goals of the Return to the Lord Capital Campaign conducted by the Diocese in 2016. Throughout the course of these efforts, it was important to Bishop Provost that the youth of our local church have a place to call home so that the values and beliefs essential to their moral and spiritual well-being would be handed on to the next generation and beyond.

Deacon Harold Nixon and his wife, Sheryl, served on this campaign committee and once noted, "Having the proper facilities will attract our young people to spend more time with one another in a fun, Catholic environment. Someday folks will share that they met lifelong friends, their spouse or answered God's call to the celibate life at this camp."

And so, we stand with a rich lineage of Catholic connection, beginning with a saintly pope who loved the gift which young people bring to our church, continuing with the support and encouragement of our own diocesan shepherd and leader, along with countless hands and hearts joined together when folks of faith stand united with one another and our God!

Father Whitney Miller served as Director of the Saint Charles Center from 2010 to 2020, and assisted with much of the design of Camp Karol. Bishop Provost dedicated and blessed the Catholic youth camp on Oct. 23, 2021.