



Connie Dronette, Second Vice National Regent of the 2022-2024 National Board of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, left, presents Geri Christ Landry with an award and check for \$5,000 on September 19 for being named “Woman of the Year” by the National CDA at their convention earlier this summer in San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Gerri Landry named CDA ‘Woman of the Year’

Gerri Christ Landry was named “Woman of the Year” by the National Catholic Daughters of the Americas at their National Convention held this past July in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Mrs. Landry is a member of the Court Lady of the Lake #695 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles and has served in active ministry as a Catholic Daughter for more than 50 years.

Connie Dronette, Second Vice National Regent for Catholic Daughters of the Americas, presented Mrs. Landry with her award and a check for \$5,000 at the meeting for Court Lady of the Lake on September 19, 2022, in the Cathedral’s Ave Maria Hall. In a spirit of true Christian generosity, Gerri donated the money to the Lester and Geri Christ Landry Scholarship Fund (for special needs students) within the St. Louis High School Foundation.

Contributions she has made to her community are extensive. Gerri Landry has a special love for children and adults on the autism spectrum as well as their families. As a teacher in the public school system, she taught special needs children. After retiring from her first career in education, she became a volunteer advocate for children on the spectrum in the school system, attending numerous IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings with parents. She helped to ensure that these children received education appropriate to their needs.

Mrs. Landry was key to starting the Louisiana and Calcasieu chapters of the Autism Society of America, a national organization founded to increase public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by those with autism and their families. She served on the boards and as the Administrator for the Louisiana Chapter for many years.

In addition to these significant contributions, Mrs. Landry has worked for more than 20 years to build an organization that provides homes and specialized care for adults with autism. She is a founding member of the Board of Directors for Autism Services of Southwest Louisiana.

Autism Services is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to build a culture that embraces adults on the autism spectrum, includes them in every facet of local daily life, and offers them opportunities to make meaningful contributions to our local and regional community. The organization provides housing and support for adults with autism.

Under Mrs. Landry’s leadership, Autism Services has opened five homes since it was founded in 2003. All the homes are 100 percent owned by Autism Services, loan-free. Twenty-four-hour care for the residents is provided by Personal Care Attendants who are specially trained to work with men and women on the autism spectrum. Gerri Landry served as President of the Board from 2003 until 2017. She also served as the organization’s first Executive Director. During her term, the organization raised over one million dollars which was used to build one home and purchase the other three. In addition, her efforts in fundraising have helped the organization to establish a foundation for future maintenance of the homes.

Through the years, Mrs. Landry has served the Catholic Daughters of the Americas in many capacities including Regent four times — twice for Court Our Lady of Fatima #1506, and twice for Court Our Lady of the Lake #695. She organized bake sales and other fundraisers, and she recruited many new members.

While her commitment and contributions are truly inspirational, her devotion to God and family epitomize the standard of a Catholic Daughter. She is a loving wife, mother, sister, and aunt. She has two daughters, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews who hold her as the standard for living out the Catholic faith. At 91 years old, she continues to attend daily Mass, cook for her family on Sundays, and attend all family gatherings as well as serve the Catholic Daughters and the Autism community.

DIOCESAN RECOVERY UPDATE No. 4

Recovery continues across the Diocese of Lake Charles, in multiple stages. Many of the churches and schools are in the design stage of recovery as final damage values are awaited from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Most facilities have had damaged roofs repaired and replaced to protect and preserve the facilities. Several permanent repair projects are under way throughout the diocese.

The Federal assistance claim is laborious, as the Diocese Recovery Team works with FEMA to validate damages and costs for restoration or replacement of all eligible damaged structures.

For answers to **Frequently Asked Questions**, visit <http://www.lcdiocese.org/3-news/3475-faq-disaster-recovery>
Figures below illustrate the current monthly snapshot highlighting the ongoing recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles as of September 30, 2022:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURES	through Aug 2022	September 2022	through Sep 2022
Emergency Work (Category B)	\$8,011,775.88		\$8,011,775.88
Emergency Work (Insurance Contractors)	\$13,829,967.75		\$13,829,967.75
Permanent Work Repairs	\$9,156,715.20	\$726,076.84	\$9,882,792.04
Temporary Facilities (See below)	\$9,062,326.99	\$1,500.00	\$9,063,826.99
Restoration Design (Architects) and PM	\$4,701,681.60	\$137,495.28	\$4,839,176.88
Insurance Consultants	\$440,459.15		\$440,459.15
FEMA Consultants	\$1,318,013.61		\$1,318,013.61
TOTAL Expenditures to date (30 September 2022)	\$46,520,940.18	\$865,072.12	\$47,386,012.30

TEMPORARY SITES (Expenditures to date)	through Aug 2022	September 2022	through Sep 2022
Our Lady’s School Temp Facility	\$2,644,540.05		\$2,644,540.05
St. Louis High School Temp Facility	\$3,571,221.24		\$3,571,221.24
St. Margaret School Temp Facility	\$2,712,584.94		\$2,712,584.94
Christ the King Church	\$95,122.90		\$95,122.90
DOLC Storage	\$38,857.86	\$1,500.00	\$40,357.86
	\$9,062,326.99	\$1,500.00	\$9,063,826.99

PROJECTS COMPLETED / PROJECTS IN DESIGN

A total of 72 DOLC project sites were impacted by Hurricane Laura.
A total of 35 DOLC project sites are under active design or specifications’ development for repairs / restoration.
A total of 22 DOLC project sites have a combination of active work and/or active design for repairs / restoration.
A total of 15 DOLC project sites are completely repaired.

TOTAL INSURANCE PROCEEDS	\$30,000,000.00
FEMA OBLIGATIONS TO DATE	\$20,045,961.94
FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS TO DATE	\$7,372,973.69

Data as of 30 Sep 2022

Religious Sisters of Mercy celebrate Titular Solemnity with open house

“We should be shining lamps, giving light to all around us.”

— *Venerable Mother Catherine McAuley, Foundress of Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan in 1973*

**By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles**

“I had a lot of animosity in my heart, but after I met the Sisters, they helped restore my faith,” Theresa Richard said about her friendship with the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan. “Now, when I walk in the neighborhood, if I see Sister Miriam, she will stop and listen. Everyone in the community loves them.”

Ms. Richard was among the dozens of guests who attended the open house on Saturday, September 24, at the Saint Martin de Porres Convent at 1414 Martha Street where the Religious Sisters of Mercy reside in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The Sisters opened their home between noon and 5:00 p.m. on the Titular Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy. The festive day began with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as the Religious Sisters of Mercy filled the convent chapel with their angelic voices. Guests were invited to spend time in Adoration in half-hour increments, ending the day with a communal Holy Hour at 5:10 p.m.

Mary, Mother of Mercy is the patroness and protectress of the Sisters’ religious order, whose foundress is Venerable Mother Catherine McAuley. Religious Sisters of Mercy serving in the Diocese of Lake Charles are Sister Miriam MacLean, RSM; Sister Mary Benedicta Maier, RSM; Sister Maura Clare Mayock, RSM; and Sister Miriam Ruth Ryan, RSM.

Ms. Richard is a member of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church just a few blocks from the convent. She met the Sisters through her friend Dave Dartez, a member of Greater Saint Mary Baptist Church.

“Being in their presence has changed my whole lifestyle,” said Dartez. He first met the Sisters through Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana where he has been volunteering since Hurricane Laura. “When I gave my life to the Lord, I am so at peace and am happy.”

Earlier in the day, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, celebrated the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass for the Religious Sisters of Mercy at 9:00 a.m. followed by a Blessing of Saint Martin de Porres Convent and Saint Hubert and Our Lady of Ransom Buildings. The convent was the former Saint Hubert Catholic Church (1940-1974).

There was a steady flow of guests — both young and young at heart — throughout the afternoon. While many enjoyed lunch inside, a few of the Religious Sisters cooled off from the summer-like temperatures outside in a friendly battle of water squirt wands with the children.

One of the vows the Sisters profess is poverty, but

something they are never lacking in is joy and are eager to share it with everyone.

“How can we not love them? Look what we see,” said Ms. Richard as she glanced over at Sister Miriam overflowing with cheerfulness while she visited with a guest. “She’s a beautiful person. She’s got God with her; every word she says, you can feel it. She’s truthful. She gives you hope. I didn’t have no more hope.”

The Religious Sisters of Mercy have convents located in the United States, Europe, and Australia. Their Motherhouse is in Alma, Michigan. For more information, visit <https://www.rsmofalma.org>.



Sister Miriam MacLean, RSM, is a joyful target for children with squirt wands during an open house held at the convent where the Religious Sisters of Mercy reside in the Diocese of Lake Charles.



Veritas inspires faithful to increase devotion at Mass

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — For participants at *Veritas 2022*, who can help but experience — with enthusiasm — the Mass in a whole new light moving forward.

The Diocese of Lake Charles' Office of Religious Education hosted its 11th annual Catholic Conference on Saturday, September 17, at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Center for adults seeking to be informed in their faith, enriched, pray, and live better as Catholics. This year's theme was "The Most Holy Eucharist."

Learning about the Catholic faith is part of a lifelong journey, and nearly 250 people from around the diocese took advantage of an opportunity to grow deeper in knowledge and truth during the Eucharistic Revival effort under way on the national level.

Keynote speaker Christopher Carstens took *Veritas* attendees on "A Devotional Journey into The Mass" — the title of his book — teaching cradle Catholics, new Catholics, and even bored Catholics, simple ways to make every Mass a joyful time of piety and intense devotion.

"The Mass should be brilliant, radiant, and an awesome experience every Sunday," said Carstens who serves as Director of the Office of Sacred Worship in the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin. He is also co-host of "The Liturgy Guys" podcast (www.liturgyguys.com) and editor of the *Adoremus Bulletin* (www.adoremus.org).

The conference opened with a welcome and prayer by His Excellency, the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles. He also was the celebrant for Mass ahead of lunch catered by *BeauxDines*.

Carsten's morning session focused on the Liturgy of the Word, followed by his afternoon talk on the Liturgy of the Eucharist. He also served as one of several breakout session presenters with the topic: *The Second Vatican Council: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*.

In his keynote, Carstens explained spiritual meanings behind the signs and symbols, words, and actions of the Mass. He touched on ways to enter the church building, make the Sign of the Cross, listen to the readings, prepare your soul at the Offertory, receive Communion to the fullest, and even respond to the Dismissal.

"Going to Mass should be like being on Mount Tabor. Saints knew how to pray the Mass," Carstens said. "They radiate with Divine glory and beauty."

It was the first time for Germain Washington to attend *Veritas*, (Latin for truth). A parishioner of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, she said that the event exceeded her expectations.

"A big attraction for me was that I had never seen or heard Bishop Provost, so I really wanted to attend," said Washington. "I was also not familiar with the keynote speaker. Listening to him and hearing how he explained the Mass in a different way was a

big takeaway for me. I am always present in Mass but doing as he suggested and having an awareness of the sacramental principle is important."

One of two breakout sessions Washington listened to was *Saint Katharine Drexel and the Blessed Sacrament* presented by Sister Miriam Ruth Ryan, RSM.

"I was not familiar with Saint Katharine Drexel, so I Googled her and decided I wanted to learn more about her. Sister did a beautiful job," said Washington.

Saint Katharine's crowning achievement was the founding of Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic university in the United States for African Americans. She was also instrumental in opening Sacred Heart of Jesus/Saint Katharine Drexel School in Lake Charles in 1908.

Catechists are always looking for ways to pass on the faith to the students they teach, and Vickie Fontenot of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings is no exception.

"All of the talks motivated me. I teach seventh graders, so I was interested in hearing more about Theology of the Body," she said. Fontenot attended the breakout session, *The Devil Ain't Got No Clay*, by Becky Clements who talked about our dignity as human persons. "I also enjoyed the talk, *Who Me ... An Online Saint? Evangelizing with New Media*, by Father Jeffrey Starkovich and learning more about Blessed Carlo Acutis."

Sister Maura Clare Mayock, RSM, Director of Religious Education for the Diocese said it is a joy to have opportunities to make the event a great experience, even in the little touches.

"I was happy to see the response of the people, just in the number pre-registering leading up to the day, yet also in the atmosphere of the event, as participants spent time visiting with one another during breaks and were enthusiastic to get a front row seat in their favorite breakout session," said Sister Maura Clare.

Jeanne Fontenot and Mary Robinson were among those attending *Veritas* for the first time.

"The keynote speaker was very good and inspiring. I took a lot of notes," said Fontenot, who attends Our Lady Queen of Heaven and St. Margaret church parishes.

Robinson, who teaches first-graders at Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in Sulphur, is constantly looking for opportunities to learn. She attended the breakout session, *Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd* presented by the Our Lady of the Lake Parish Team.

"I have been a catechist for eight years, and I think we all have a desire to grow in knowledge. The more we know the more we can grow in our faith," Robinson said. "The breakout session explored encountering Jesus in the Eucharist with children. I also enjoyed the session, *A Eucharistic Marriage*, by Monica and Stephen Broussard. I'll definitely be back next year."

Other breakout session presenters included Colette Bulber Tanner on Catholic Eucharistic Music; Sister Mary Benedicta Maier, RSM, on Viaticum, the Last Sacrament of the Church; and Deacon Harold Nixon, a reflection on a Black Catholic's conversion journey.



Sister Maura Clare Mayock, RSM, Director of Religious Education for the Diocese of Lake Charles, takes a break from *Veritas 2022* to pause for a photo with Christopher Carstens, keynote speaker for the annual Catholic Conference. The event attracted nearly 250 people on September 17 at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Center.

Sister Maura Clare said her hope is that the fruit of *Veritas* will continue to unfold as attendees go home to their church parishes with a renewed life of prayer and relationship with the Lord.

She concluded, "I hope they learned something they can share with another person and that they have renewed energy to share the goodness of the Lord in all they do."



Bishop Glen John Provost recites the Apostles' Creed at the beginning of the fifth annual "Rosary Around the Lake" at the Lake Charles Civic Center on Sunday, October 2.

'Rosary Around the Lake' turns glance toward Blessed Mother

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — St. Maximilian Kolbe once said, "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did."

With rosaries in their hands and special intentions in their hearts, nearly 400 people expressed their love and affection for Mary, Mother of God, during the fifth annual "Rosary Around the Lake" on Sunday, October 2, in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The event, organized by the Ruth Institute as part of the national Rosary Coast to Coast, took place at the Lake Charles Civic Center. The picturesque blue sky, combined with the warm breeze by the lakefront, provided the perfect backdrop to be united in praying for the welfare of the community and country, and the strength of families.

The Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary were recited in three languages — English, French, and Spanish — a new addition to the meditations reflecting on key moments in the life of Christ.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, led the recitation of the Apostles' Creed — in English — to begin the Marian devotion, followed by the children of Our Lady's School in Sulphur leading the first three Hail Mary's.

Members of the Diocese of Lake Charles Youth Core Team led the first Glorious Mystery, The Resurrection.

State Senator Jeremy Stine led — in French — the Second Glorious Mystery, The Ascension. He was assisted by Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, Rector of St. Francis de Sales Oratory in Sulphur, and Bishop Provost.

The Third Glorious Mystery, The Descent of the Holy Spirit, was led by members of the Knights of Columbus, followed by the Hispanic Community of St. Henry Catholic Church leading — in Spanish — the

Fourth Glorious Mystery, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

To conclude the rosary, members of the Men's ACTS Team from Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Lake Charles, led the Fifth Glorious Mystery, The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, PhD, Founder and President of the Ruth Institute, acknowledged several people and groups for the event's success:

- The Catholic Daughters of the Americas at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, and the Lay Carmelites, for decorating the

staging area

- Lucas Orsot, Richard Suarez, and John Pellerin for the sound equipment

- St. Louis Catholic High School students and McNeese State University Students for Life for help with setting up

- Lucas Orsot, Ricardo Ruvalcaba, and Bianca Gonzales for help with the music

- Catholic Scouts for bringing the flags and their willingness to lead the Pledge of Allegiance

- The Knights of Columbus for providing chairs and tables

- Paula Michalko, for arranging for boats to take part from the lake

- All the volunteers who helped, not only on the day of the event but also during the planning stages

The Rosary Around the Lake was also broadcast on FM 107.1 in the immediate area around the Civic Center to allow anyone on boats to participate as well as those wanting to remain in their vehicles in the parking lots.

St. Maximilian Kolbe was correct. One cannot ever love Our Blessed Mother more than Jesus does. But the faithful in the Diocese of Lake Charles came close.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, pray for us!

All Halo's Eve is Oct. 29 at Camp Karol



The second annual "All Halo's Eve" for trick-or-treaters of all ages is planned for Saturday, October 29, from 5-8 p.m. at Camp Karol, 1087 Bozo Road, Moss Bluff. The back-by-popular demand event will shine the spotlight on a variety of saints, so children (and adults, too) can learn more about the stories of these heroic and virtuous role models of the Catholic Church. Come dressed as your favorite saint and join the fun of games, candy, activities, food and more! Featured above from the 2021 event is St. John Paul II portrayed by Coleman Zeringue, a senior at St. Louis Catholic High School. For more information on All Halo's Eve, contact Saint Charles Center at 337-855-1232; or Camp Karol at 337-905-0651 or 337-905-0652.

Special collection for hurricane relief in Florida, Puerto Rico

The weekend of November 12 and 13, the Diocese of Lake Charles will be taking up a special collection, during all Masses, to support dioceses in Florida affected by Hurricane Ian and dioceses in Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Fiona. The funds collected will be sent directly to the dioceses in need for them to use as necessary.

"Although we are grateful to our Lord that hurricane season has been quiet for Southwest Louisiana, we identify with the sufferings of those in the path of recent storms," said Bishop Glen John Provost. "Several Catholic dioceses, parishes, and schools in Florida sent relief to us following Hurricanes Laura and Delta. We now have the opportunity help them in return."

Please give as generously as you are able in your parish the weekend of November 12 and 13, and pray for the victims in this time of need as well as those engaged in disaster relief.