



PASTORAL LETTER: LENT 2023

“The Eucharist: Yearning for the Lord”

February 26, 2023

First Sunday of Lent

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.” I Corinthians 11:26

About 35 years ago, when I was a pastor of a parish, the Bishop asked me to welcome as a guest the first Archbishop of the Military Services of the United States, Archbishop Joseph Ryan. He directed all our Catholic military chaplains throughout the world. One evening, he recounted one of his experiences as a young Marine chaplain in the Pacific during the Second World War.

The Marines were storming the beaches of islands in the Pacific held by the Japanese. Their names are legendary: Tarawa, Saipan, Okinawa, Iwo Jima. These were bloody conflicts, and the death toll was considerable. I found it fascinating to hear someone who had been present speak of them.

Father Ryan would celebrate Mass on the beaches and then take the Blessed Sacrament to young Marines, some not much older than 20, manning howitzer installations. One occurrence was burned into his memory.

There were two young soldiers to whom Father Ryan gave Holy Communion in a remote area of the beach. Having completed his task, the priest turned to walk away. Several yards distance, a terrific explosion threw him to the ground. He looked behind, and in the spot where he had stood, an enemy shell had fallen and exploded. He returned to the demolished installation. One Marine was already dead. The other was severely wounded and near death. He took the dying Marine in his arms and heard him ask, “Father, am I going to die?” “Yes, I am afraid so,” Father Ryan gently replied. “And is my Buddy dead?” the Marine asked. Father Ryan answered affirmatively. “Good,” the Marine responded, gasping for breath, “That’s good. We both have Jesus in us.”

Now, I repeat this story for a reason. It is not only deeply touching. But even more, this account of young Marines dying on a beach in the Pacific and what the Eucharist meant to them speak more eloquently than ten thousand theology books.

We know that we live under less threatening circumstances, but sadly many take the Eucharist for granted. Is not Mass attendance down? Do not the surveys show that a large segment of Catholics do not believe what the Church teaches about the Eucharist? How different it was for the two young Marines. They knew exactly what they believed. They knew what the Church taught. They also knew that our Lord had given this gift of Himself so that the Church could share that gift with them.

The Second Vatican Council taught nothing new about the Eucharist but repeated that ancient faith in these words: “At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us’” (*Sacrosanctum concilium*, 47). Whether in the eloquent words of an Ecumenical Council or from the mouth of a dying Marine, the faith is the same.

Jesus Christ gave us the Eucharist “in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages.” This is the action of Jesus recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. No one “perpetuates” anything because he wants to forget. Our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to be remembered. There is a reason for this. When we eat His Body and drink His Blood, we share in Christ’s death and Resurrection. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood,” Jesus Christ said in the Gospel of St. John, “remains in me and I in him” (John 6:56).

I think of the dying Marines on the beach, or the terminally ill in our hospitals, or the persecuted Christians hiding in a remote location—countless thousands of threatened, suffering, and deprived—they know that the Lord is present to them. This presence, however, is more to them than merely a consoling visit. The Lord comes to abide with them, to offer them a share in His life-giving passion, death, and Resurrection.

What the persecuted, suffering, and dying know, and what we need to realize, is that humans yearn for the Lord. This yearning is not some empty wish with no foundation in fact. This desire was instilled in our hearts at Baptism when God shared with us His life for the first time. He satisfied this thirst and hunger. And He does so through His Son, Jesus Christ, who gives us His own Body and Blood, a flesh that He offered up on the Cross of Calvary.

This mystery is not confined by time. God is not restricted by a clock. Instead, God reaches out to us in the most intimate way possible, through a food that nourishes us for eternal life. Through the Eucharist God answers our most basic need, to experience Him in the here and now, as He is in eternity. In words attributed to St. Augustine, “Eternity is the now that does not pass away” (*cf. The Confessions*, Book 11).

We yearn for this eternal now, in which God is present. I think this is what the young Marine expressed as he lay dying on a Pacific beach. I know that is what innocent second graders desire when I ask them what sacrament they are to receive this year and they shout enthusiastically, “Holy Communion.” What the cynical, callous, and corrupt of this world cannot ever admit is the innocence of children! Unfortunately, these men and women of the world yearn for nothing, except their gratification and satisfaction. But the innocent, the little children, the dying, and the poor, left empty by this world—they know their yearning and that only God can satisfy their desire.

Catholics are a sacramental people. The Sacrament is not found in a synod, or programs, or re-structuring, or anything else devised by humans. The Eucharist is the Sacrament *par excellence* which nourishes the Body of Believers. Just as we cannot live bodily without food, neither can we live spiritually without the Eucharist. For the Catholic, the Eucharist is a powerful teacher and sign of contradiction to the empty promises and worthless values of the world. This truth the young dying Marine knows, as well as a child of 7 preparing for Holy Communion. They both yearn for the Bread of Heaven, Christ the Lord.

The three-year Eucharistic Revival in which Catholics of the nation are involved is a moment to rediscover our yearning. Through this moment with our Lord in His Eucharistic Presence, it is my prayer that we will rediscover our innermost hunger and thirst for Him. May the Eucharist continue to satisfy our deepest desire for God. May we yearn for Him and the “banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.”

Extending to you and your families my blessings, I remain joyfully your bishop and

Devotedly yours in our Lord,

✠ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

An Afternoon with Christ

2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 19, 2023

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street, Lake Charles



Rev. Joseph Caraway
Parochial Vicar of St. Henry Catholic Church



PRAISE · ADORE · REFLECT

Rev. Joseph Caraway, Parochial Vicar of St. Henry Catholic Church in Lake Charles, will lead the third session of “An Afternoon with Christ,” 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 19, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The afternoon will begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Caraway, and conclude with Benediction. The monthly series is part of the National Eucharistic Revival to help people foster a habit of spending time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. For more information, call the Cathedral office at 337-436-7251.

2023 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.

DIOCESAN RECOVERY UPDATE No. 8

Nearly two and a half years have passed since Hurricane Laura made landfall on August 27, 2020, as a Category 4 hurricane in Southwest Louisiana with 150 mph winds and over nine feet of storm surge. The January 24, 2023, wind, rain and tornadoes served to exacerbate both repaired and compromised structures.

Recovery continues across the Diocese of Lake Charles in multiple stages. Many of the churches and schools are in the design stage of recovery and waiting for federal assistance from FEMA to be approved. Roof replacement was a priority, and many permanent repair projects are underway.

While the federal assistance claim remains laborious, the Diocesan Recovery Team continues to work with FEMA to validate damages and costs for restoration or replacement of damaged structures. Some FEMA Project Worksheets are currently at the FEMA Consolidated Resources Center (CRC) in Denton, Texas, a significant step forward toward funding obligation.

Figures below illustrate the current monthly snapshot highlighting the ongoing recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles as of February 8, 2023:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURES	through Dec 2022	January 2023	through Jan 2023
Emergency Work (Category B)	\$8,011,775.88	\$2,339,503.13	\$10,351,279.01
Emergency Work (Insurance Contractors)	\$13,829,967.75		\$13,829,967.75
Permanent Work Repairs	\$11,848,390.12		\$11,848,390.12
Temporary Facilities (See below)	\$9,302,696.01	\$114,618.26	\$9,417,314.27
Restoration Design (Architects) and PM	\$5,524,955.46	\$568,482.46	\$6,093,437.92
Insurance Consultants	\$440,459.15		\$440,459.15
FEMA Consultants	\$2,342,335.30		\$2,342,335.30
TOTAL Expenditures to date:	\$51,300,579.67	\$3,022,603.85	\$54,323,183.52

TEMPORARY SITES (Expenditures to date)

Our Lady’s School Temp Facility	\$2,694,249.03	\$24,854.49	\$2,719,103.52
St. Louis High School Temp Facility	\$3,635,522.94	\$32,150.85	\$3,667,673.79
St. Margaret School Temp Facility	\$2,816,145.78	\$51,780.42	\$2,867,926.20
Christ the King Church	\$98,722.90	\$1,200.00	\$99,922.90
DOLC Storage	\$58,055.36	\$4,632.50	\$62,687.86
	\$9,302,696.01	\$114,618.26	\$9,417,314.27

PROJECTS COMPLETED / PROJECTS IN DESIGN

A total of 72 DOLC project sites impacted by Hurricane Laura.
A total of 34 DOLC project sites are under active design or specifications development for repairs / restoration.
A total of 23 DOLC project sites have a combination of active work and/or active design for repairs / restoration.
A total of 15 DOLC project sites, restoration is complete.

TOTAL INSURANCE PROCEEDS	\$30,000,000.00
FEMA OBLIGATIONS TO DATE	\$20,011,227.21
FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS TO DATE	\$8,318,898.96

Data as of 8 Feb 2023

Jacob Troutman New Chief of Recovery

Effective February 22, 2023, Ash Wednesday, Bishop Provost has appointed Jacob Troutman the new Chief of Recovery for the Diocese of Lake Charles. Until now Father Ruben Buller has served in that capacity. The Bishop stated: “Father Buller has rendered excellent and indispensable service to the Diocese over the last two and a half years as Chief of Recovery. During the initial stages of recovery, he offered expert guidance and oversight. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. With his new pastoral responsibilities, he wishes to dedicate more of his time and energies to the Cathedral Parish, while remaining, at my request, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia. In addition to this, the Diocese of Lake Charles will soon complete three years of recovery and is moving into a new stage of development to reach its goals.” Mr. Troutman will retain his position as Fiscal Director.

Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

February 24, 2023



The Society of the Roman Catholic Church of the Diocese of Lake Charles

Statements of Financial Position

June 30, 2021 and 2020

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 25,521,013	\$ 14,436,654
Investments	3,252,697	975,313
Accounts receivable, net	1,572,265	953,527
Pledges receivable, net	-	450,573
Loan receivable	112,690	125,459
Cash value of life insurance policies	684,188	683,945
Prepaid insurance and other expenses	265,708	400,154
Prepaid hurricane expenses, net	7,031,674	-
Property, equipment, and improvements, net	11,757,133	11,625,594
Investments pledged as collateral	100,000	100,000
Deposit in self-insurance pool	285,116	285,116
Beneficial interests in securities held in trust	2,234,393	1,883,260
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 52,816,877	\$ 31,919,595
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable	\$ 15,912,460	\$ 574,590
National collections and other payables	356,199	197,951
Accrued insurance claims payable	459,490	374,067
Contributions and benefit payables	89,781	74,995
Due to parishes	836,569	942,053
Deferred revenue	6,253	-
Other post employment benefits payable	5,993,717	5,960,768
Paycheck protection program loan payable	-	750,800
Contingent liability	-	-
Total Liabilities	23,654,469	8,875,224
Net assets - without donor restrictions	17,407,255	13,304,999
Net assets - with donor restrictions	11,755,153	9,739,372
Total Net Assets	29,162,408	23,044,371
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 52,816,877	\$ 31,919,595

January 31, 2023
Memorial of Saint John Bosco

My Dear People of God,

Greetings to you from our Lord Jesus Christ and God His Father!

I am pleased to publish the Financial Statement from our Annual Audit for the Diocese of Lake Charles. The Audit is conducted by an independent auditor. It includes the position of the Diocese of Lake Charles and does not include the financials of the parishes which the pastors of the parishes are asked to publish individually each year for their parishioners.

Despite the hardships that the Faithful have faced in this past year, the Diocese is able to rely on the generosity of many that support the multitude of services for the most needy, spiritually and physically. I would like to point out in particular the excellent work that is being accomplished by the Diocese of Lake Charles in the area of charity to the most needy through Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. For this and for so much more, I remain grateful to you.

Should you wish to see the full audit, it is published on our diocesan website (lcdiocese.org). Any questions may be addressed to the Diocese of Lake Charles by calling 337-439-7400.

In gratitude to our Heavenly Father, the giver of every good gift, I remain, Sincerely in our Lord,

✠ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Statements of Activities

Year ended June 30, 2021

	Without Donor Restriction	With Donor Restriction	2021 Totals
Support and Revenue:			
Parochial tithes	\$ 2,535,296	\$ -	\$ 2,535,296
Diocesan assessments	6,800,959	299,444	7,100,403
Diocesan appeals	-	102,086	102,086
Contributions and bequests	239,655	932,595	1,172,250
Grants and subsidies	-	7,597,098	7,597,098
Investment income	603,919	415,941	1,019,860
Gain from disposal of property	500	-	500
Specials program and other revenues	2,286,501	10,744	2,297,245
Paycheck protection program loan forgiveness	750,800	-	750,800
Net assets released from restrictions	7,342,127	(7,342,127)	-
TOTAL REVENUE	20,559,757	2,015,781	22,575,538
Expenses:			
Program expenses			
Clergy life	957,234	-	957,234
Christian formation	1,650,249	-	1,650,249
Pastoral services	1,522,749	-	1,522,749
Health care and casualty insurance	6,128,051	-	6,128,051
Supporting services			
General administration	6,174,321	-	6,174,321
Fund raising	24,897	-	24,897
TOTAL EXPENSES	16,457,501	-	16,457,501
Increase in net assets	4,102,256	2,015,781	6,118,037
Net assets, beginning of year	13,304,999	9,739,372	23,044,371
Net assets, end of year	\$ 17,407,255	\$ 11,755,153	\$ 29,162,408

Diocese announces 2023 Students of Year

The Office of Catholic Schools announces the Diocese of Lake Charles 2023 Student of the Year winners for elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Winners are **Coleman Zeringue**, Grade 12, St. Louis Catholic High School in Lake Charles; **Presley Manceaux**, Grade 8, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School in Lake Charles; and **Camille Brandon**, Grade 5, Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur.

Coleman is the son of Jason and Erin Zeringue, and Presley is the daughter of Travis and Lacy Manceaux, all of Lake Charles. Camille is the daughter of Jonathan and Kemoshia Brandon of DeQuincy.

The winners were chosen from the school level Students of the Year on Friday, January 27, in the Ave Maria Hall of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. They advance to the state competition in Lafayette on March 2 to compete in the inaugural Louisiana Catholic Student of the Year Program.

The competition is open to Catholic schools in the state's seven dioceses — Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Houma-Thibodaux, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Shreveport, and the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

The program is designed to recognize outstanding students in grades 5, 8, and 12 who have demonstrated excellence in discipleship, leadership, service, citizenship, and academic achievement.

Other winners at the school level were:

- **Immaculate Conception Cathedral School** (Lake Charles): Grade 8 — Addison Rasberry, daughter of Melissa Rasberry; Grade 5 — Emma Harrell, daughter of Dr. Brian and Lauren Harrell. All are of Lake Charles.

- **St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School** (Lake Charles): Grade 5 — Shelby Chapman, daughter of Michael and Whitney Chapman, under the guardianship of Seth and Stacey Chapman David of Lake Charles.



COLEMAN ZERINGUE
Grade 12
St. Louis



PRESLEY MANCEAUX
Grade 8
SMCS



CAMILLE BRANDON
Grade 5
OLS

- **Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School** (Jennings): Grade 8 — Molly Person, daughter of Jeff and Carly Person of Jennings; Grade 5 — Charli Guillory, daughter of Chase and Shelly Guillory of Roanoke.
- **Our Lady's Catholic School** (Sulphur): Grade 8 — Kyle Patin, son of Kevin and Vicky Patin of Vinton.

Winners were selected for the Diocesan Student of the Year honor based on academic achievement, school organization participation, community service, leadership activities, an essay writing assignment, and an interview with a panel of five judges.