



First place in the Diocesan 2023 Quiz Bowl went to a homeschool team that dubbed themselves, “Dumb Ox,” after St. Thomas Aquinas. Accepting their prize of \$400 are team members Stuart Wild, Bryce Fontenot, Isaac Broussard, and Richard Edwards, pictured with Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M., Director for the Office of Religious Education.



Third place went to Immaculate Conception Cathedral School (Green Team). Accepting their prize of \$100 are team members Penny Elliott, Frances Abel, Josie Obluda, and Cora Pelloquin, pictured with Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M.



Second place went to Immaculate Conception Cathedral School (Red Team). Accepting their prize of \$200 are team members Ty Pham, Tate Poncho, Dale Spencer, and Davis Hankins, pictured with Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M.



Fourth place went to Immaculate Conception Cathedral School (Blue Team). Accepting their prize of \$60 are team members Davis Vallette, Andrew Foret, Hudson Abel, and Noelle Robertson, pictured with Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M.

## Bishop Provost's Easter Message 2023

I am struck by the fact, as recorded in the Gospels, that the disciples of Jesus are surprised by the empty tomb (cf. John 20:9; Luke 24:4; Luke 24:21-24; Mark 16:3; Matthew 28:5ff.). The Lord had foretold His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, but as we know from the Gospel accounts, the disciples did not understand or fully appreciate what was said (e.g. Luke 9:45). The tragedy of Calvary remained imprinted in their hearts and minds. Nonetheless, the tomb remains empty.

The world and its many tragedies are forcing us to encounter the cross. We are horrified by wars, violence, disease, and challenges that defy resolution or any remedy. Threats and disasters seem to be only minutes away—both originating from man and from nature. We could, like the disciples, be tempted to discouragement.

The liturgy of the Church strives to convey this sense of loss. On Good Friday in the ritual of the Catholic Church, the tabernacle is empty, no Mass is celebrated, and no decorations embellish our already simplified rituals. The Church's ancient rites summon the Book of Lamentations to reflect Her sentiments: “How lonely she is now, the once crowded city!” (Lamentations 1:1).

How the disciples must have sensed this desolation! Mary of Magdala cries out, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him” (John 20:2). However, soon after this desolation, a realization slowly overtakes that the sun has risen on a new day, seemingly like any other, but gloriously different. There are rumors (cf. Luke 24:22-23). There are apparitions (cf. Luke 24:4). And, as surely as the dissipating twilight at the break of day, a perception dawns that something completely new has happened, something we never thought possible, something to change our lives. The tomb is empty, and He has risen. Happy Easter!



## ‘Dumb Ox’ Triumphs in Quiz Bowl

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — “Dumb Ox,” a team of homeschool students from the East Deanery, answered their way through a series of questions about the Catholic faith to claim the championship title in the 2023 Diocesan Quiz Bowl on Saturday, February 4.

The students chose their team's name in reference to Saint Thomas Aquinas who was dubbed the “Dumb Ox” by his classmates for his shyness. St. Thomas would prove to possess a rare brilliance, sparking a revolution in Christian thought.

All three teams competing from Immaculate Conception Cathedral School swept second place (red team), third place (green team), and fourth place (blue team). Schools or church parishes that entered more than one team were distinguished by colors.

Dumb Ox triumphed by only two points over the ICCS Red Team in the championship round with a final score of 13-11 out of 30 questions.

A total of 56 students, making up 14 teams, competed in the sixth annual event for grades 6-8. The contest — on all things Catholic — was held at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School. Cash prizes for the winning teams included \$400, \$200, \$100, and \$60.

Participants included two teams from St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church; three teams from Immaculate Conception Cathedral School; Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Lake Charles; Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings; four teams from St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School; two teams from St. Joseph Catholic Church in Vinton; and the lone homeschool team, Dumb Ox, from the East Deanery.

The morning began with an opening prayer and welcome by Bishop Glen John Provost, who first initiated the idea of a Quiz Bowl in 2015 to bring students into a deeper knowledge and love of their faith.

Teams answered a series of up to 30 questions in each round

for one point each. Being quick on the buzzer with the most correct answers was key to advancing to the next round.

Dumb Ox team members said their strategy is all about memorization of as many of the 500 questions in the study guide as possible.

“We started about five weeks before the Quiz Bowl and got together for two hours once a week and practiced,” said Bryce Fontenot.

The team's friendship and love of their Catholic faith are big motivators for them wanting to compete.

“It's fun. We are friends so we just do it as a group and hang out while studying,” Fontenot said.

It's a good opportunity to show how much we know about God,” Isaac Broussard chimed in.

Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M., Director of Religious Education for the Diocese, said she is proud of all the contestants for their hard work and for taking the chance to compete.

“We are so glad to have this chance to let young people show how much they know about their faith. It's also great to see all the students from different schools and church parishes coming together,” said Sister Maura Clare.

Building on what they learned for the Quiz Bowl this year, the students can look ahead to preparing for the 2024 event while making the whole process enjoyable.

“I encourage the students to find creative ways to study and to enjoy the learning process — even if you don't go home with the big win, you will have a great time,” added Sister Maura Clare.

Judges for the Quiz Bowl were Father Sam Bond, Father John Payne, Father Andrew DeRouen, Deacon Harold Nixon, Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., Vianney House residents — Logan Guillot and Cameron Fontenot; Justin Sittig, Edward and Bonnie Kron, and Hannah Beard.

Contributing sponsors were Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, Navarra's Jewelry & Gifts, O'Dowd Law Firm, Big Daddy's Sports Grill, Decided Excellence Catholic Media, Lakeside Bank, and “Honor Mary, Pray the Rosary.”

## Providing care to Christians in the Holy Land

Every year on Good Friday, a collection is taken up in Catholic Churches to support the work of the Franciscans working in the Holy Land. Christians there rely heavily on the help that comes to them during this special day in the Church and our life of faith.

The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America is the home of a world-wide Commissariat of Friars Minor and monasteries who function as bridges between the Holy Land and Christians all over the world. The Commissariat

offices here at the Monastery in Washington, D.C. coordinate the vital support for the work of the Franciscans who work in the Holy Land.

The Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land have the unique responsibility of caring for the Holy Places as well as caring for the Christians living in the Holy Land. It is vital that we care for the Christians living in the Holy Land in order to maintain a Christian presence in a land that is filled with a majority Islamic and Jewish population.

## Cowboy Catholics say ‘yes’ to Knights of Columbus

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — A group of mostly college students signed up to be Soldiers of Christ as part of the newly launched Knights of Columbus College Council 18091 at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church.

Rev. Paul Jussen was the celebrant for a special Mass at 5:00 p.m. on the Memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Brother Knights from Our Lady Queen of Heaven Council 4562 and St. Theodore Council 3622 assisted with the exemplification ceremony for the newly installed Third Degree Knights following Mass.

Founded on the principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Knights of Columbus was established in 1882 by Father Michael J. McGivney, assistant pastor of St. Mary Catholic Church in New Haven, Connecticut, and a group of parishioners. Their intent was to bring financial aid and assistance to the sick, disabled, and less fortunate.

“The Knights of Columbus is a wonderful fraternal organization that seeks to defend the Catholic Church in all its glory and all its wonder,” said Father Jussen. “To have the Council being launched here is such a beautiful gift. The Holy Spirit has been moving in the ministry of Cowboy Catholics and Our Lady of Good Counsel.”

Father Jussen said the time seemed right after some interest in young men involved with Cowboy Catholics, a ministry for college students at the McNeese Newman Center.

“As the Cowboy Catholics Chaplain, I

knew that this was the movement of the Holy Spirit,” he said. “I encouraged them, but these young men were the ones who took ownership of making this happen. I did what I could to help facilitate it.”

Father Jussen continued, “We are here to gather to consecrate ourselves to Our Lord, but also to consecrate our lives to the mission of the Church through the Knights of Columbus. As men of God, we need to rise up to defend Holy Mother Church.”

As each college Knight was given a rosary, he was instructed to “carry it always and pray it as often has you can.”

Daniel Reyes of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Council 4562 told the young Knights that the world continues to need saints. He reminded them of the opportunity they have to live a life of heroic virtue through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

“Let the promises you made here today challenge you to live your life from this day forward holding fast to our principles of charity, unity, and fraternity,” said Reyes, “so that on the last day of your souls, filled with happiness, you may enjoy your reward of a life well spent, an eternity in the presence of God himself.”

The newly installed college Knights for Cowboy Catholics are Logan Bertrand, Chad W. Cary, Damien L. Cormier, Sean Fontenot, Kyle Guidry, Kristopher Hill, Matthew Johnson, Andrew Landry, Nicholas Rougeau, Reed Rougeau, Evyn Soileau, Nick Verrett, and Conner Williams.

Father Jussen pointed out that the fraternal organization is open to parishioners at Our Lady of Good Counsel as well.



The Knights of Columbus has launched a Council made up of college students and parishioners at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church. Joining Rev. Paul Jussen, Pastor, and Chaplain for Cowboy Catholics, are front row, from left: Sean Fontenot, Kyle Guidry, Kristopher Hill, Nicholas Rougeau, Nick Verrett, Damien L. Cormier, and Chad W. Cary. Back row, from left: Evyn Soileau, Matthew Johnson, Reed Rougeau, Conner Williams, Logan Bertrand, and Andrew Landry.

“The Knights of Columbus is trying to reach out to young men on college campuses around the country. However, our Council is open to parishioners who would like to help these young men grow as men of God,” he said.

Brother Knights hosted a reception in the Newman Center following the ceremony.

Those assisting from Council 4562 were Daniel Reyes, Jay Madison, Dick Stine, Bob Killingsworth, and Ken Chamberlain; and Brandon Landry from Council 3622.

For more information on joining the Knights of Columbus chapter at Our Lady of Good Counsel, please contact the office at 337-477-1434.



# Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost  
Bishop of Lake Charles

April 7, 2023

## St. Louis Choir invited to perform at national event

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

The St. Louis Catholic High School Concert Choir has been invited to perform in the National Memorial Day Choral Festival in Washington, D.C., May 26-29, 2023.

The musical tribute saluting America's military and fallen heroes is hosted by Music Celebrations International in partnership with the United States Air Force and the American Veterans Center.

Colette Tanner, SLCHS choir director, said choir members are excited about the opportunity, noting that St. Louis is the only high school from Southwest Louisiana chosen to participate. The application process took place in the spring of 2022.

"They were surprised when they learned about it but also excited," said Tanner. "I have never been to the ceremony, so I am just as excited as they are. When you are chosen to perform at festivals, it is always about the experience."

The St. Louis choir will have the distinguished honor of being featured in concert with the U.S. Air Force Symphony on Sunday, May 28, at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts along with choral groups from around the country.

Ahead of the Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 29, the choir will sing in front of the National Archives Building on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Tanner said the invitation to perform comes at a good time for the choral group made up of 24 students.

"I had already told the students that I wanted them to go somewhere. We are in a rebuilding phase for the choir," Tanner noted. "There was a time when the choir had 65-70 voices in it. I am trying to give them as many of the typical experiences that you would get in a choral program as possible."

In addition to state and district competitions, Broadway musicals, and three yearly concerts, the choir sings for three diocesan Masses throughout the year — Clergy and Religious Recognition Mass in September, Catholic Schools Week Diocesan Mass, and the Chrism Mass during Holy Week.

The Memorial Day Choral Festival will be a chance for them to bring their talent to the national level.

Other highlights will include performing at the Festival Wreath Laying Ceremony and Recital at the National World War II Memorial on Saturday, May 27, honoring veterans. The SLCHS singers will lay a custom-made wreath at the Louisiana column of the Memorial on behalf of St. Louis Catholic High School and the people of Louisiana in gratitude for the those who have served our country.

Following the wreath laying ceremony, the students will attend Mass at the Basilica of the

National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception where they have been invited to perform a half-hour concert of sacred music after Mass.

"The students want to sing *A Ukrainian Prayer* by composer John Rutter in response to the global tragedy in Ukraine," said Tanner. "The students love this song and had hoped we could remain in the Basilica after Mass for a few minutes to sing the prayer. Being invited to perform a concert is a gift for all of us."

While there are various patriotic events throughout the year, Tanner said she is especially grateful the St. Louis choir was chosen to sing for the national Memorial Day concert.

"Singing for Memorial Day gives a religious connotation that we can harken to because we are a Catholic school," she said. "We can delve into the fact that it is an act of mercy, burying the dead, honoring the dead. It speaks specifically to veterans who have passed, and we memorialize that. In a way, we are participating in a Corporal Work of Mercy."

Despite the obstacles thrown at them with back-to-back hurricanes in 2020 and other weather-related disasters that followed in 2021, the students have overcome many challenges.

"I think the St. Louis administration and the Diocese of Lake Charles have done a tremendous job with creating as positive an environment as they can with a temporary campus," Tanner said. "The students always rise above and sing so beautifully. I am so blessed to be able to work with them."

Tanner said the chance for the students to be with other high school choral students is priceless.

"I am glad they will have the opportunity to see they are just as good as choir members in areas that have not constantly had to overcome obstacles thrust on them by weather," she said.

Tanner added, "Singing in a choir becomes a humanistic experience in that we all work together to help each other on a communal plane that creates something beautiful beyond what we could do by ourselves."

National events like these are not without costs. Tanner said the trip for each student, including airfare, hotel accommodations, meals, and tickets to all events, will be \$2,000.

Anyone interested in donating or in sponsoring a choir member may contact St. Louis Catholic High School at 337-436-7275 or donate through the following link: [https://stlouiscatholichighschool.factsmgtadmin.com/form/DxfPNFxFE?i=&authToken=\\_\\_token\\_\\_](https://stlouiscatholichighschool.factsmgtadmin.com/form/DxfPNFxFE?i=&authToken=__token__)

Special T-shirts are being made for the students to wear on the trip. To underwrite the expenses for the national choral festival, Tanner said sponsors will be listed on the shirts.

"This is a fantastic group of kids," said Tanner. "Some of them have been in a choral situation since fourth grade. They are immensely talented and so positive."



Members of the St. Louis Catholic High School Concert Choir have been invited to perform in the National Memorial Day Choral Festival in the nation's capital May 26-29. They are seen in this photo following one of several concerts in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

## Bishop Provost to conclude Sacred Triduum in Cathedral

LAKE CHARLES – The Most Reverend Glen John Provost will complete the celebration of the final two services making up the Sacred Triduum - Good Friday and the Easter Vigil - in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street.

Earlier in Holy Week, the Bishop, along with the priests of the diocese, celebrated the Chrism Mass on Wednesday, April 5, where the Holy Oils – Oil of the Sick, Oil of Catechumens, and the Oil of Chrism – used during the year were prepared and blessed.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper, where the commemoration of Institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood is celebrated, was Holy Thursday, April 6. Following the liturgy, Bishop Provost processed with the Blessed Sacrament followed by the congregation to the St. Bernadette Oratory for Eucharistic Adoration until midnight.

The Commemoration of the Lord's Passion will take place at 3p.m. today, April 7 – Good Friday – in the Cathedral. The service begins with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by Veneration of the Cross with the faithful recognizing the "Cross of Christ" as their only hope of salvation. The celebration concludes with Holy Communion.

On Good Friday, the Cathedral Parish will also participate in the Seven Church Walk that will begin at 8:00 a.m. from the Convent of Saint Martin de Porres, 1414 Martha Street. The walk, based on the Seven Last Words of Christ, will conclude at the Cathedral at approximately 1:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross will be prayed in the Cathedral at 2:00 p.m., followed by the Chaplet of Divine Mercy that will begin the Novena of Divine Mercy ending before the Commemoration of the Lord's Passion at 3:00 p.m.

The Novena of Divine Mercy will be prayed at the Cathedral at 3:00 p.m. on Holy Saturday (April 8) followed by offering of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation ending at 4:30 p.m.

The Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 8, will begin at 8:00 p.m., after sunset and the start of the new liturgical day, with what previously was called the "Service of Light" but now is known as The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium." The solemn liturgy begins with the blessing of the fire and the preparation of the Paschal Candle.

Cathedral Mass times for Easter Sunday, April 9, are 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., with Mass in accordance with the Rubrics of 1962 at 12:45 p.m. Bishop Provost is scheduled to celebrate the 9:30 a.m. Solemn Mass on Easter Sunday.

Diocesan offices continue to be closed today and on Easter Monday, April 10, reopening for regular office hours - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. – on Tuesday, April 11, at 8:30 a.m.

## Villa Maria Retirement Center Royalty



King Hector Rafael Ponton and Queen Anna Bernadette Monlezun-Ponton reigned over festivities during the 2023 Villa Maria Retirement Center Mardi Gras party on February 17. Mayor Nic Hunter had the honor of announcing the Villa Maria royalty to the crowd. Colonel Ponton, 86, is a US Army Retired Officer originally from Caguas, Puerto Rico, now residing at Villa Maria Retirement Center after circling the globe during 36 years in uniform. Queen Bernadette, 75, supported her "King" all along the way! The King and Queen have one son, Antoine Adolfo Ponton, who resides in Raleigh, N.C. The Pontons are very grateful and contented at Villa Maria calling it home, and the residents, administration, and staff their "people!" A good time was had by all in celebrating the Villa Maria Mardi Gras royalty, complete with a visit from the Krewe of Noblesse to the residents. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

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APRIL 29, 2023

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## Registration open for *Together in Holiness*

MOSS BLUFF — The third annual *Together in Holiness* in the Diocese of Lake Charles will be held 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, April 29, at Camp Karol, 1087 Bozo Road. The one-day marriage enrichment conference will be presented in partnership with the St. John Paul II Foundation.

"It is with great joy that I invite all married and engaged couples to attend the third annual *Together in Holiness* conference," said The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles. "I am delighted to host this event here in our local Church so that couples throughout the diocese may be strengthened in their understanding of marriage and their call to be a believing and evangelizing community."

*Together in Holiness* inspires spouses to live out their vocation in holiness and joy while empowering parents to form their children in the Catholic faith. It is intended for married couples — from newlyweds to empty nesters — as well as engaged couples.

The St. John Paul II Foundation is a national Catholic apostolate proclaiming the good news about life and family through education and formation. As St. John Paul II famously said, "As goes the family, so goes the nation, so goes the entire world in which we live."

The conference offers presentations from national and local speakers, Mass, Reconciliation, and Eucharistic Adoration.

Bishop Provost will be the celebrant for the Mass and Marriage Blessing at noon. Additional conference topics and speakers include:

- The Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Prophetic Mission of the Family, presented by **Larry G. Freaney**, Director of Education and Assessments at Rejoice Counseling Apostolate

- Enkindling and Fanning the Flame: How to Pass on the Faith to your Children, presented by **Rev. Nathan Long**, Pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles; and **Owen and Erin Clanton**, parishioners at St. Margaret

- Becoming Witnesses to the Joy of Eucharistic Love, presented by national speaker **Dr. Ryan Hanning, PhD**, Fellow at San Juan Diego Institute, discussing the family as a believing and evangelizing community.

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

For those interested in attending *Together in Holiness*, the full schedule and registration is available at [togetherinholiness.org](http://togetherinholiness.org). You can also contact Ellen Clements, conference coordinator, at [ellen@forlifefamily.org](mailto:ellen@forlifefamily.org) or 832-779-1070, for more information.