



Deacon Page will be ordained to Priesthood May 27

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Bishop Glen John Provost will ordain Rev. Mr. Stephen Joshua Page to the Sacred Order of Holy Priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, May 27, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Deacon Page said he is looking forward to celebrating Mass as a priest.

“The Eucharist has been a powerful reminder to me of the love of God. Celebrating the Eucharist will be a concrete example of giving back to my Diocese who has given me so much,” he remarked.

A parishioner of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church, Joshua is the 27-year-old son of Stephen and Jennifer Page of Sulphur and the brother to his two older sisters, Britni Tommasi and Mikaela Blanchard.

For Deacon Page, God’s calling began stirring in his heart when he was a junior at St. Louis Catholic High School.

“I attended a vocation retreat at Saint Charles Center at the recommendation of one of my teachers,” said Page, admitting that he would have never gone otherwise. That retreat, along with a deeper conversion after receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, led him to pray more about his vocation.

“After high school, I stayed a year at the Vianney House. I had a great year working, attending McNeese State University, and getting to know the Diocese better,” Deacon Page recalled. “By the spring semester (in 2015), it was

a no-brainer that I should apply to the seminary to further my discernment.”

It might sound obvious, but the best advice Page can offer a young man considering the priesthood is to pray, go on vocation retreats, and talk to priests.

“God calls us, so we must listen to him in prayer. Daily Mass, praying the Rosary, spending time in Adoration are all essential,” Page emphasized, while viewing discernment as a two-way street. “Both the individual and the seminary say, ‘yes’ to the vocation.”

Deacon Page is grateful for the formation he received at both St. Joseph Seminary College and Notre Dame Seminary, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree. In addition to St. Louis Catholic High School, his early education also included Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School.

“Seminary makes better Catholic men. It really is a well-rounded education,” said Page. “It is not only rooted in the intellectual classes of Theology, Scripture, History, and Tradition, but also the human, spiritual, and pastoral dimensions as well.”

Page is a strong believer in making time for recreation, too. He played football in high school and shared some of his athletic abilities in the role of sports chaplain at a Catholic high school in New Orleans last year.

“I believe sports can help young men and women to become more disciplined on and off the field,” he said. “Just as in seminary, formation includes classes and recreation, so extra-curricular activities can help educate and form the minds of students.”

A couple of books that proved helpful during Page’s discernment process include *The Lives of the Saints* and the *Cure d’Ars – Life of St. John Vianney*. He said they are inspiring examples of courageous individuals who can help encourage one to be brave in discernment and prayer with God.

While summer parish assignments for seminarians offer opportunities to learn more about the diocese and the people in it, Page said his diaconate internship at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church in 2022 helped him get his feet wet in parish ministry without being overwhelmed with responsibilities.



Deacon Joshua Page participates in the Good Friday Liturgy on April 7, 2023, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He will be ordained tomorrow, May 27, by Bishop Glen John Provost. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

“I was part of a team at Our Lady Queen of Heaven that worked together to build up the community,” said Page. “Whether I was at Christus OCHSNER St. Patrick Hospital, Villa Maria Retirement Center, OLQH School, Consolata Cemetery, Crossroads Catholic Books & Gifts, or doing work in the parish, there was always someone whom I could learn from who has been devoting their service to helping people at these various places.”

Deacon Page recognizes that the Diocesan Priesthood is rooted in the community and said he is looking forward to soon being able to serve.

“I am excited to come back to the Diocese full time and be a part of the lives of family and friends after being away at seminary for eight years,” he remarked. “Many of my friends have grown up and started families. Priesthood means being with people during the most important moments of their lives.”

When asked how he can be a vessel to keep the Light of Christ shining for younger Catholics in the Diocese of Lake Charles, Page has observed that many of the younger generation want to know more about their faith in a much deeper way.

“The youth today want to know *why* we do what we do and how to defend their faith,” noted Page. “This encourages me to continue learning so that I can more effectively minister and catechize in the future.”

He will have plenty of opportunities to teach through his homilies, something he said has already been a grace-filled experience.

“Someone told me that I come alive most when I am giving a homily,” Deacon Page said, noting that his preparation includes prayer, reading theology, commentary, and corresponding catechism texts. “I hope to offer some concrete spiritual nugget that people can remember and carry with them.”

Before the conclusion of the Liturgy of Holy Orders, the first priestly assignment for Page will be announced.

The ordination will be live streamed on the Lake Charles Vocations Facebook page for those unable to attend. A reception will follow in the Ave Maria Hall. The Cathedral is located at 935 Bilbo Street.



Deacon Joshua Page

FREQUENTLY

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The new building – the former site of the Safety Council of Southwest Louisiana – is in good shape. Our negotiated purchase price and the cost of minor work to adapt the space to our needs will cost about \$3.3 million. This is a savings of at least 75 percent versus replacing those existing buildings! This new chancery also provides benefits like three times the square footage of our other buildings combined, centralized office efficiencies, and new meeting spaces available to our diocesan organizations.

In addition to the aforementioned benefits, this new chancery opens up opportunities for new future revenue streams. We look forward to this project contributing to the long-term financial stability of our diocese.

4. Where is the new chancery building?

The Diocese of Lake Charles’ new chancery building will be located at 1201 Ryan Street in Downtown Lake Charles. This site formerly housed the Safety Council of Southwest Louisiana.

5. When will you move?

We officially closed on the building May 5, 2023. After minor renovations to adapt the space to our needs, we will move on July 1, 2023.

6. What will change after the move?

The most immediate change is our new address. Our new contact information is:

1201 Ryan St., Lake Charles, LA 70601

The PO Box and telephone number will remain the same:

PO Box 3223, Lake Charles, LA 70602-3223

(337) 439-7400

We hope to deliver additional positive changes as a result of this move. These include greater efficiency in our operations, shorter response times from departments housed in the new chancery, new physical spaces for use by our diocesan faithful, and the ability to better serve you through new endeavors at the former administrative buildings, among others.

7. What administrative functions will operate from the new building? Which functions will remain elsewhere?

Most diocesan administrative functions will be housed at the new chancery building. This includes:

- Office of Diocesan Administration • Office of Catholic Schools • Tribunal
- Marriage, Family and Pro-Life • Communications • Religious Education and Evangelization
- Fiscal Services • Vocations • Archives • Child and Youth Protection and Safe Environment
- Human Resources • Clergy Immigration • Recovery • Development

Because of the nature of its ministry, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, 1225 Second Street, will continue to operate out of its own facility. Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol retreat facilities in Moss Bluff and the Stella Maris Seafarers Center at the Port of Lake Charles will also maintain their current locations.

8. How will you pay for this new building?

The Diocese has mortgaged a large portion of the total cost of the new space with finance payments covered by general operations. The remaining cost comes from funds set aside by the bishop for purposes such as this.

- No hurricane recovery funds that are allocated to rebuilding parishes or schools will be diverted to purchasing the chancery building.
- Some existing costs, such as monthly rent for the space currently occupied by the Office of Catholic Schools, will no longer exist for us. That office, in particular, will move into the new chancery. Money set aside for its lease can then be redirected toward this mortgage.
- The plans for funding this purchase are the result of the valuable support of our diocesan finance council, a volunteer group made up of nine lay professionals, two priests, and one deacon from across Southwest Louisiana. This council includes CPAs, certified financial planners and others who review and evaluate major financial and investment decisions by the Diocese of Lake Charles. The council reviewed this purchase, and they agreed that it is prudent.

9. What will happen to the existing administrative buildings?

The prospects are promising for the Diocese of Lake Charles. Some of these buildings are in high-demand locations, and we have already fielded some interest in potentially leasing or selling the spaces.

This would create new revenue for the Diocese that could be directed to any number of valuable projects to benefit you, the faithful.

The historic nature of the buildings and their importance in the community will be considered when looking at potential future plans. We look forward to memorializing the legacy of Bishop Harold Perry in the new location.

10. My organization would like to use some of the meeting spaces available at the new chancery building. How can I do that?

We hope to provide available chancery building collaborative spaces on a first-come, first-served basis to diocesan organizations, including Catholic schools, affiliated non-profit groups and parish organizations.

For more information, please call 337-439-7400 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

11. How will this expense and the move impact ongoing concerns like hurricane repairs throughout the diocese?

A consolidated, centralized office will streamline processes related to rebuilding and recovery – thus speeding up things like hurricane repairs for our churches and other diocesan organizations. Hurricane repairs throughout the diocese will be handled more efficiently. In fact, no hurricane recovery money that is allocated for parish or school rebuilding will be used in purchasing this building.

12. What will occur with the Masses currently being offered at the Deaf Center?

Masses will continue to be said at the Deaf Center. We do not see at present any need to relocate the community. Any plans for the relocation of Masses at the Deaf Center will be made in consultation with the community and their chaplain, Fr. Aubrey Guilbeau.

13. I have an idea for repurposing the former administrative buildings. Where can I share my input?

We welcome input from the diocesan faithful regarding the future of these buildings! Please direct your suggestions to Fr. Joseph Caraway, Vice-Chancellor at 337-439-7400 or fill out the form located at <http://lcdioocese.org/new-chancery-2023>

14. Will there be an open house for the public?

An open house for the public is scheduled for Saturday, September 16, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. We look forward to welcoming you for a visit to our new location.

Annual Mass to Avert Storms and Pilgrimage to Historic Shrine

Thursday, June 1, 2023



4:00 p.m.: Mass at Christ the King Catholic Church, 7680 Gulf Highway

6:00 p.m.: Visit to Our Lady Star of the Sea Historic Shrine in Cameron



Diocese consolidates chancery offices

LAKE CHARLES — In a move that fulfills a long-term goal to create a centralized administrative office, the Diocese of Lake Charles has purchased the building located at 1201 Ryan Street, the former site of the Safety Council of Southwest Louisiana, in which to consolidate its chancery offices.

“Since the diocese’s inception in 1980, every bishop has tried to consolidate our ministries to improve our ability to serve the faithful in Southwest Louisiana,” said the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles. “This new chancery allows us to bring together 35 employees currently working from five different locations across the diocese, while also providing significant cost savings and new benefits to our churches and affiliated organizations.”

In addition to meeting the diocese’s long-term goal of a consolidated central office, officials cite cost savings, in particular, as one impetus for making the move now. Based on diocesan estimates, purchasing this building is cheaper than repairing and modifying existing administrative structures, which have remained in disrepair since the 2020 hurricanes. The purchase also represents a savings of 75 percent versus demolishing the damaged properties and rebuilding on the same sites.

Jacob Troutman, Director of Fiscal Affairs for the Diocese of Lake Charles, said, “The price of purchasing the new building comes in significantly lower than actually rebuilding. Even better, we anticipate financing it without the use of recovery funds meant for other needs throughout our diocese. That will enable those recovery efforts to continue – and in fact perhaps more quickly given our goal for more administrative efficiency in a central office.”

Martin G. DeRouen, a member of the Diocesan Finance Council, had some thoughts on the recovery of the diocese and its church parishes as it related to the consolidation of diocesan offices in one building saying, “Very much like the individual church parishes have experienced, the diocese’s own property damages were a significant loss and a setback to diocese operations. While recovering from the storms is an ongoing financial challenge with no easy decisions, it’s imperative to make progress and move forward wherever individual opportunities present themselves. This former Safety Council property to serve as the Chancery, given the package of price, location, layout, visibility and “storm performance” was just such an opportunity.”

The new building features approximately 19,000 square feet of usable space – more than triple the amount available at the diocese’s current administrative buildings combined. In addition to consolidating administrative functions and the associated efficiencies the diocese can achieve, the new chancery will also feature physical spaces to help meet the needs of countless diocesan stakeholders. The new collaborative spaces, including those suitable for meetings, trainings and more, will be available to diocesan organizations like schools and churches.

C. Gayle Zembower, a retired architect and current member of the diocesan building commission, oversaw architectural work of the construction of Saint Charles Center, found the possibility of the diocese obtaining the building, “a great deal.” On a walkthrough with Bishop Provost and others, Zembower said he felt that there would be a minimal amount of work to be done to bring it up to the needs of the diocese.



Diocesan offices will consolidate at 1201 Ryan Street, effective July 1, 2023

“There are meeting rooms on either side of the building with adequate parking and good concrete. It has a standard seam roof and the lighting, electrical, and air conditioning all were adequate. It is a great match and a great deal financially. The building couldn’t be reproduced for the purchase price,” Zembower said.

The diocese has no plans to abandon its buildings – the former Chancery at 414 Iris Street and the Bishop Harold Perry Building located at 411 Iris Street in Lake Charles. The diocese notes that they have already fielded some interest in potentially selling or leasing these spaces. The diocesan faithful are invited to submit input regarding the future of these buildings at the link lcdioocese.org/new-chancery-2023.

“This move did not come without much prayer and discernment,” said the Very Reverend Ruben Buller, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for the Diocese.

“Our due diligence included a three-month inspection period, along with our own assurances that vital activities – like ongoing hurricane repairs across the diocese – will go uninterrupted. We look forward to improving our operations to serve Southwest Louisiana even better.”

Ribbeck Construction Company and its owner, Edward M. “Buzzy” Ribbeck were brought in to do some those inspections.

“I was informed that the Diocese of Lake Charles was

considering the purchase of the Safety Council Building located at the southeast corner of Ryan and Clarence streets and asked by the Diocese to inspect the roof and provide a report of opinion on the condition,” Ribbeck said. “We obtained the original plans (of the building) to study, made inspections of the roof, walls, and attic. Based on the fact that this building has weathered three hurricanes and is still in great condition says a lot. Though very minimal damage occurred, the roof, attic and walls are in great shape.

“Based on sales price, size, quality, and location, this is a blessing for the Diocese and will allow the Diocese to be much more efficient allowing all entities under the Diocesan umbrella to work under the same roof and be centrally located,” Ribbeck continued. “This size building and the parking could not be constructed today along with the price of land for anywhere close to the purchase price.”

Effective July 1, 2023, the following diocesan offices will relocate to the new chancery on Ryan Street: Administration; the Office of Catholic Schools; Tribunal; Offices of Marriage, Family and Pro-Life; Communications; Religious Education and Evangelization; Fiscal Services; Vocations; Archives; Child and Youth Protection and Safe Environment; Human Resources; Clergy Immigration; Recovery; and Development.

For more information about the new chancery building, the Diocese of Lake Charles has set up an informational hub on its website at lcdioocese.org/new-chancery-2023.

Consolidation Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the Diocese of Lake Charles purchasing a new chancery building?

There are several reasons the diocese is pursuing a new chancery building. First, this is the most cost-effective option. Second, a centralized office that consolidates everyone has long been a goal for the diocese – one pursued in some way by every bishop since our inception in 1980. That it is happening now is a combination of factors that include the availability of an ideal building at a good price and the financial prudence of purchasing this building when compared to repairing or replacing existing structures.

2. Why is the Diocese of Lake Charles consolidating?

Currently, at least 35 administrative staff members work from five locations across the diocese. Some diocesan functions operate from leased space – a monthly cost that will cease to exist with a new chancery space. Two offices currently operate

from space borrowed from Saint Charles Center and Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, taking up precious resources in both of those places. Naturally, this separation creates inefficiencies in our work – from addressing our churches and organizations’ needs in a timely manner to costs associated with employee travel from place to place. A central office will reduce or eliminate these issues, as well as provide additional benefits to our diocesan faithful.

3. Is this a good financial decision?

Yes, it is the most cost-effective option. Existing diocesan administrative facilities remain in disrepair since the 2020 hurricanes. This is due to the estimated cost of at least \$6 million that would be required to address the damage and provide for current needs. Replacement, too, was a non-starter due to an estimated cost of at least \$15 million for new construction.

See **FREQUENTLY** on Catholic Page

DECREE

Implementing the motu proprio

Traditionis custodes, Responsa ad dubia, and the Rescriptum ex Audientia

Whereas, on July 16, 2021, the Supreme Pontiff, Pope Francis, issued the apostolic letter *Traditionis custodes*, given *motu proprio*, regarding the use of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reform of 1970;

Whereas, on December 4, 2021, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued *Responsa ad Dubia* on certain provisions of the aforementioned apostolic letter;

Whereas, on February 21, 2023, the Holy See published a Rescript by means of which the Holy Father confirmed that the dispensations of art. 3 §2 and art. 4 of *Traditionis custodes* are reserved to the Apostolic See;

Whereas there are several groups of the faithful throughout the diocese rooted in the form of the Roman Liturgy prior to the reform of 1970;

Whereas there is neither widespread dissension from nor denial of the validity and the legitimacy of the liturgical reform established by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council within these groups of the faithful or otherwise within the diocese;

Whereas Latin remains the liturgical language of the Roman Rite (cf. can. 928; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 36, §1)

Whereas it is the duty of the diocesan bishop to care for the spiritual good of the aforementioned groups of the faithful;

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

DECREEES

that in accord with the *Responsa ad dubia* and the *Rescriptum ex Audientia* suitable locations in the territories of the Parish of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and the Parish of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Sulphur, Louisiana, are hereby designated as locations where the faithful adherents of these groups may gather for the eucharistic celebration according to the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, following their current respective schedules, which may be amended at the discretion of their respective pastors;

that priests who wish to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 shall request in writing the faculty to do so from the diocesan bishop. A priest will be granted this faculty provided he has been found *idoneus*, that is qualified to celebrate using the *usus antiquior*;

that in order to be found *idoneus*, a priest must:

- Not be impeded by Canon Law;
- Evidence a basic knowledge of the Latin language;
- Demonstrate competency in the celebration of the *usus antiquior* of the Mass;

that the faculty to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962 includes:

- Permission to celebrate this Mass privately at any time;
- Permission to pray the *Breviarum Romanum* as a means of fulfilling the obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours;

that priests ordained after July 16, 2021, who desire the faculty to celebrate Mass using the *Missale Romanum* of 1962, must address a written request to the diocesan bishop and explain the reasons motivating his request;

- Such priests must first be found *idoneus*, according to the requirements established above;
- In accord with the requirements of *Traditionis custodes*, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments will be consulted before the granting of the request;

that in accord with *Traditionis custodes*, a priest delegate has been assigned by means of a separate decree to moderate all such activities;

that priests of the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest assigned to or residing at the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales retain the faculty to celebrate the sacraments in the *usus antiquior* of the Roman Rite, and that the Rector of the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales may, according to his pastoral judgment, establish and amend the liturgical schedule of said oratory;

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding. This decree is to be promulgated by publication in the *Catholic Calendar* and will have immediate effect upon its publication.

Given at the Diocese of Lake Charles on day 16 of April, Divine Mercy Sunday, in the year of our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Three, under the signature and seal of the Bishop of Lake Charles and that of his Chancellor.

✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Deacon George Stearns
Chancellor