



## Powerful hurricanes no match for Josie's faith *Her heart will always be at Sacred Heart in Creole*

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

If the strength of a person's faith were measured like hurricanes — with Category 5 being the strongest — Josie Boudreaux would be off the charts when up against some of the most powerful storms to ever strike lower Cameron Parish.

The 84-year-old parishioner of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, East Cameron (in Creole) has lived through Audrey (1957), Rita (2005), Ike (2008), and most recently Laura in 2020, picking up the pieces and starting over every time. Her husband, John "T-Boy" Boudreaux, was right by her side until his death in January 2023. They would have been married 60 years this November.

Before every storm, Josie knows where to seek refuge. So, on the first day of the 2023 hurricane season (June 1), she was at Christ the King Catholic Church in south Lake Charles for the annual "Mass to Avert Storms" officiated by Bishop Glen John Provost.

A pilgrimage to the Historic Shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron immediately followed asking the Blessed Mother to spare all from past tragedies.

### Hurricane Path for Josie

A teacher for 35 years in Cameron Parish, Josie was the youngest of three and the only girl.

"My family survived Audrey. I had just graduated from South Cameron High School," she recalled. "My parents were responsible for repairing our house. After Audrey, just about everyone came back to Creole."

It would be 48 years before Cameron Parish would be devastated again.

"We lost our house in Rita and weren't able to move back to Creole until January 2007, downsizing from a 4,000-square-foot house to a 2,400-square-foot doublewide manufactured home," Josie said.

At the time, one of her four children, Jill (Darin) Thibodeaux lived in the house Josie grew up in.

"Rita destroyed my mother's childhood home. It survived Audrey, but Rita took it," said

Jill. "All that was left were the cinderblocks that it rested on and the back steps located in the pasture."

After Laura's landfall on August 27, 2020, the cement slab was the only thing that remained of Josie's doublewide home.

"I had no idea where our house was. I never found anything. I don't know if our belongings floated away or if they were whisked away in a tornado," she remarked. "Usually, you will find pieces of things. I couldn't find anything."

Starting over in Creole was not an option this time for Josie or her daughter Jill.

"My husband was the main reason I wanted to keep returning to Creole. I knew how much he enjoyed his cattle and horses," Josie said. "By the time Laura hit, T-Boy was in a wheelchair. We were much older. Insurance was much higher. We knew God was in control and allowed him to lead the way."

Since December 2020, a shared carport adjoins two houses — Jill and her family's house in the front and Josie's house in the back on a beautiful piece of property in Calcasieu Parish where she can still enjoy gardening vegetables and fruit for canning and preserves.

"After two-and-a-half years, I am beginning to adjust that this is home. My heart will always be in Creole, especially at Sacred Heart," said Josie. "That is where I received all my sacraments, as did our children. It is a big part of who I am."

When she is not attending Christ the King, and sometimes St. Henry or St. Margaret, Josie still makes the 20-mile commute to Creole to attend Mass at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Life Center. Since October 2021, she had been attending Mass in the temporary location of Sacred Heart in a barn. The life center now serves as the site for Masses in lower Cameron Parish.



Rev. Jerish George, MOC, far left, gathers with Bishop Provost, his brother priests, and the faithful in Cameron Parish on June 1, the first day of hurricane season, to pray for safety from storms. Father George serves as administrator of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, East Cameron. He recently moved back into the refurbished rectory since it was damaged by Hurricane Laura in August 2020. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

"I wish we could be in our original church," said Josie, "but knowing all the rules and regulations that go along with rebuilding on the coast, and higher insurance premiums, that is impossible."

### Priest Finally Home in Creole

Rev. Jerish George, MOC, Administrator of Sacred Heart since February 2, 2021, has been doing everything he can to minister to families along the coast — including Cameron, Grand Chenier, Creole and Sweetlake. That will be a little easier for him now.

On May 5, 2023, he moved into the newly renovated Sacred Heart rectory behind the life center. For the past two years, he had been living in the St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church rectory in Big Lake. Before that, he was sharing space with Father Rojo Koonathan in the rectory of Christ the King Parish for several months.

"I was traveling three times a week from Big Lake to Creole, a 60-mile round trip each time," Father George noted. "Anytime I traveled to Grand Chenier to visit the homebound, that was another 25 miles from Creole. Now that I am living in Creole, it is easier for me to move

around to see the people and do my ministry."

In addition to adding two more weekday Masses to the schedule, Father George is now celebrating Mass at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. He has been officiating the 4:00 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass since October 9, 2021.

"The people are very happy that I am here. They have been waiting for a long time," he said. "New people are coming to Mass, even during the week, with as many as 45-70 in attendance at the weekend Masses."

The Mass schedule at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, East Cameron, 5250 West Creole Highway, is as follows:

- Saturday, Anticipated Sunday Mass, 4:00 p.m.
- Sunday, 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday and Thursday, 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday and Friday, 7:15 a.m.

The response from the community has been much like the fortitude he has witnessed from Josie.

"The people are very strong since they have seen so many hurricanes. They don't complain to me. I celebrated Mass in a barn for nearly two

years with no air conditioning in the summer or no heat in the winter," said Father George. "They are happy to come to Mass. They are still sad about losing their church, but they love being a part of Sacred Heart of Jesus in Creole."

Just like they did at the Shrine on the first day of hurricane season, Father George said the faithful in Cameron Parish pray the Hurricane Prayer for Safety 365 days of the year.

"We trust in God and in Our Lady Star of the Sea every day of the year, not only during hurricane season," he said.

### Lessons Learned

The devastating storms have taught both Josie and Jill a little more about themselves and their trust in God.

"You don't realize just how dependent you are on certain things until it's not there and there is no quick fix," said Jill. "God will give you what you need at the time you need it. Just do what you have to do in the moment."

Josie added, "I have learned to always be strong in my faith, to pray, that God is good, he is in control, and he will get me through these hardships. We must accept whatever comes along."



Josie Boudreaux attends the annual Mass to Avert Storms on June 1 — the first day of the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season — at Christ the King Catholic Church in south Lake Charles. Boudreaux has lived through multiple life-altering hurricanes over the past 66 years, but always finds comfort and refuge in her faith. (Morris LeBleu/Diocese of Lake Charles)

### DIOCESAN RECOVERY UPDATE No. 12

The Diocese of Lake Charles continues to address more than \$150,000,000 worth of damages as a result of Hurricane Laura's destruction on August 27, 2020, exacerbated by Hurricane Delta's arrival a few weeks later, an atypical hard winter freeze, followed by the historic flooding of May 2021.

D.A. Lamont Public Adjustors, publicly procured in Spring 2023, is diligently working with FEMA personnel to further validate damages for the purpose of obligating federal funds to reimburse the Diocese of Lake Charles for ongoing expenditures to repair and rebuild structures within the Houses of Worship component. Parallel to those efforts are eligibility determinations of certain structures in alignment with the FEMA Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide. The eligibility issues arise, in many cases, due to multiple functions that take place within the same structure.

Figures below reflect the current monthly snapshot highlighting the ongoing recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles as of July 12, 2023:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURES	through May 2023	June 2023	as of July 12, 2023
Emergency Work (Category B)	\$10,351,279.01		\$10,351,279.01
Emergency Work (Insurance Contractors)	\$13,829,967.75		\$13,829,967.75
Permanent Work Repairs	\$21,091,655.94	\$813,950.66	\$21,905,606.60
Temporary Facilities (See below)	\$10,041,695.19		\$10,041,695.19
Restoration Design (Architects) and PM	\$7,826,079.33	\$86,430.99	\$7,912,510.32
Insurance Consultants	\$440,459.15		\$440,459.15
FEMA Consultants	\$2,342,335.30		\$2,342,335.30
<b>TOTAL Expenditures to date:</b>	<b>\$65,923,471.67</b>	<b>\$900,381.65</b>	<b>\$66,823,853.32</b>

TEMPORARY SITES (Expenditures to date)			
Our Lady's School Temp Facility	\$2,871,519.90	\$49,708.98	\$2,921,228.88
St. Louis High School Temp Facility	\$3,911,520.15	\$63,800.94	\$3,975,321.09
St. Margaret School Temp Facility	\$3,075,047.88	\$207,121.68	\$3,282,169.56
Christ the King Church	\$103,546.90		\$103,546.90
DOLC Storage	\$80,060.36	\$3,050.00	\$83,110.36
	\$10,041,695.19	\$323,681.60	\$10,365,376.79

PROJECTS COMPLETED / PROJECTS IN DESIGN	
A total of 65 DOLC project sites impacted by Hurricane Laura. (DOLC Misc properties consolidated into 1 pro)	
A total of 29 DOLC project sites are under active design or specifications development for repairs /	
A total of 20 DOLC project sites have a combination of active work and/or active design for repairs /	
A total of 16 DOLC project sites, restoration is complete.	

TOTAL INSURANCE PROCEEDS	\$30,000,000.00
FEMA OBLIGATIONS TO DATE	\$23,892,649.62
FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS TO DATE	\$8,961,269.19
FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS PENDING	\$442,129.12

Data as of 12 July 2023

## An Afternoon with Christ

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, August 13, 2023

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



Father Samuel Bond  
Parochial Vicar  
Our Lady Queen of  
Heaven Parish



NATIONAL  
Eucharistic  
Revival



### PRAISE · ADORE · REFLECT

Rev. Samuel Bond, Parochial Vicar of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church in Lake Charles, and Director of Worship, will lead the eighth session of "An Afternoon with Christ," 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, August 13, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The afternoon will begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Bond, 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.

### Catholic Schools' 2023-2024 Calendar Released

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles will begin the 2023-2024 school year with the return of students at the five schools located in Calcasieu Parish on Monday, August 14.

The schools include St. Louis Catholic High School, Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; and Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur.

Holidays during the school year — days the students are not in attendance — include:

- Labor Day: Monday, September 4
  - All Saints Day: Wednesday, November 1
  - Thanksgiving: Monday, November 20 to Friday, November 24
  - Christmas: Monday, December 25 to Friday, January 5; early dismissal on Friday, December 22
  - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: Monday, January 15
  - Mardi Gras: Monday, February 12 to Friday, February 16
  - Easter: Friday, March 29 to Friday, April 5; early dismissal on Friday, March 28
- The last day of classes will be Friday, May 24.

## Diocesan Wedding Jubilee Mass honors 41 couples

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

There is no magic formula to being married 70 years. If you ask Geri Christ Landry what the secret is, without a doubt she says it has been her Catholic faith.

Geri and her husband Lester are among those couples marking jubilee anniversaries of 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, or 70 years in 2023. The annual Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass honored 82 spouses on Trinity Sunday, June 4, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

For a combined 2,030 years of marriage, 41 couples registered for the annual Mass and reception hosted by the Office of Marriage and Family Life. The Mass included a special blessing by Bishop Glen John Provost.

Lester and Geri were married on August 8, 1953, in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church (now the Cathedral) by her first cousin, Rev. Wilson Matt.

“Lester and I met at a social at McNeese for some of the football players who were new to the campus. Lester was one of those players,” said Geri. “We dated for about two years. He proposed in 1952 on graduation night, and we married in 1953.”

Their marriage has always been about family and spending time together.

“I come from a large family. I am in the middle of seven, and Lester was the youngest of five boys,” Geri said. “We have always been close knit. We stayed on the river every summer. We all had boats and enjoyed water skiing.”

Lester (91) and Geri (92), both made sacrifices to provide a Catholic education for their daughters, Stephanie (Steve) Cochran and Joan (David) Kaspar, sending them to Immaculate Conception Cathedral School and St. Louis Catholic High School. Both daughters and their husbands continued the tradition of sending their own children to ICCS and St. Louis.

The Landrys’ commitment to Catholic education carries on through the Lester and Geri Christ Landry Scholarship Fund (for special needs students) within the St. Louis Catholic High School Foundation.

Known as Papa and Mimi to their five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, Lester and Geri are beautiful witnesses of what the Sacrament of Matrimony is all about as they live out their vows, much like Lester’s own parents who both lived into their 90s.

When asked what advice she has for young couples just starting out in their marriage, Geri said, “You need a lot of patience, sometimes you might have to grit your teeth, but most importantly, have God in your life.”

In congratulating all the couples, Bishop Provost said, “I wish you to know that you are an example to us all. Especially in these times of doubt and confusion, we desperately need your witness. You teach us the importance of perseverance.”

The bishop continued, “You have made numerous sacrifices in your lives. You have had to put aside your own pleasures and preferences so that your marriages and your families can navigate this rough and turbulent sea of life. We congratulate you and pray for many more faithful and rewarding years.”

Those celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2023 are:

### 70 YEARS

- Lester and Geri Landry, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles



**Lester and Geri (Christ) Landry were married on August 8, 1953, in Immaculate Conception Catholic Church (now the Cathedral) by Geri's first cousin, Rev. Wilson Matt.**

### 65 YEARS

- James and Remanuel Hollier, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Deacon Norris and Sandra Chapman, St. Joan of Arc, Oberlin
- Joe and Judy Simon, Immaculate Conception, Sulphur

### 60 YEARS

- Sigmund and Yvonne Babineaux, St. Joan of Arc, Oberlin
- Rodney and Patricia Breaux, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Richard and Thelma Kober, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Colonel James and Diann Manning, Our Lady Queen of Heaven
- Charles and Barbara Perry, St. Raphael, Iowa
- John and Jeanette Savoit, St. Joseph, Vinton

### 55 YEARS

- C.J. and Chris Bertrand, St. John the Evangelist Mission, Lacassine
- George and Alice Bertrand, St. Raphael, Iowa
- Art and Dot Gellner, Immaculate Conception, Sulphur
- Vernon and Mary Hidalgo, St. Raphael, Iowa
- Jimmie and Brenda Hughes, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Oakdale
- Woodley and Mary Simon, Christ the King, Lake Charles

### 50 YEARS

- Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Bellon, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Gregory and Perri Bourgeois, St. John the Evangelist Mission, Lacassine
- Robert and Roxanne Boxie, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Vic and Constance Darbonne, Our Lady Queen of Heaven
- Derrell and Marilyn Feverjean, Our Lady of the Lake, Lake Arthur



**Geri and Lester Landry of Lake Charles are among the 41 couples honored recently during the annual Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Landrys will be married 70 years on August 8, 2023.**

- Allen and Sue Ann Dupre, Our Lady of LaSalette, Sulphur
- Jerry and Vera Hollier, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss
- Kenneth and Earline Marchand, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Curtis and Veronica Miller, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Herman and Michelle Monceaux, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Michael and Linda Monceaux, St. Raphael, Iowa
- Larry and Connie Perkins, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Matthew and Patricia Price, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Donald and Debra Starkovich, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Mike and Angie Styron, Christ the King Parish, Lake Charles
- Jude and Debbie Theriot, Our Lady Queen of Heaven
- Russell and Brenda Touchet, St. Lawrence, Raymond
- Charles and Cindy Welch, St. Philip Neri, Kinder

### 25 YEARS

- John and Alice Adams, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Lee Allen and Carol Benoit, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Stephen and Monica Broussard, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles
- Tim and Nicole Kyle, St. Joseph, DeRidder
- Louis and Odelia Sweet, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Joseph and Shaalom St. Mary, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lake Charles
- Dennis and Lisa Thompson, St. Joseph, DeRidder

## Together in Holiness

# No time like the present to pray as a family

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

MOSS BLUFF — Troy and Jessica Findley of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Vinton summed up the recent Together in Holiness marriage enrichment day with one word: gift.

“To spend time with God and each other in community like this knowing we are going home more strengthened for the family is a gift. It has been a blessing,” Troy said about the event held at Camp Karol of Saint Charles Center on April 29.

The Findleys, who will be married 21 years this summer, joined more than 55 other couples — from newly married to more than 50 years — for the conference presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation and the Diocese of Lake Charles.

“When you think about family life, our seven children (ages 20 to 10 years) are the seven most important reasons to set aside days like this for our marriage,” Troy remarked, noting their family’s habit of praying together is essential.

The third annual conference featured a mix of guest speakers with a focus on the theme, “Family, a Believing and Evangelizing Community.” Mass was celebrated by Bishop Glen John Provost, and time was set aside for Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and private time for the couples.

*Together in Holiness* is an initiative of the St. John Paul II Foundation that inspires spouses to grow together in holiness and empowers parents to form their children in the Catholic faith.

Jessica said the day helped her and Troy refocus on their personal prayer life and couple prayer in addition to family prayer.

“It is important to set aside time together to grow in our marriage and make a conscious effort every morning to be available for each other, to serve each other, not just receive from the other,” she emphasized.

Owen and Erin Clanton, parishioners of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church in Lake Charles and members of Domestic Church, were featured on a panel with their pastor, Father Nathan Long, for the presentation, “Enkindling and Fanning the Flame: How to Pass on the Faith to Your Children.” Their

overall message was for parents to “show up” each day for their children.

“What we are trying to do with our children is model our faith,” said Erin. “Are we perfect at it? No, but we show up each day being present in their lives and giving them the time that they need from us.”

Figuring out the *right* time to pray as family looks different with each family, said Owen, but he noted that time is the key element amid the reality of family life.

Using the analogy, iron sharpens iron, Owen said, “Erin and I have made the decision that we are going to try sharpening each other to get each other to Heaven while trying to get our children to Heaven, too.”

No matter if you are already in a family prayer routine or just getting your feet wet, Father Long cautioned couples not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

“Don’t let what your expectation is of family prayer or couple prayer overcome what you are not seeing, which is a lot of good. Just start somewhere. God is OK with that,” said Father Long, warning spouses not to sacrifice individual prayer for couple prayer. “You need to do both because one will strengthen the other.”

This is the second year for Michael Lavine to attend with his wife, Ashley. Also parishioners of St. Margaret, they have been married for 15 years and recognize that their responsibility to keep the Church strong is by keeping the family strong.

“Every marriage needs prayer, and this conference strengthens us with our prayer life which will strengthen our marriage,” said Michael. “To express my love for Jesus Christ with my wife and for us to express that love together helps our relationship. To see other Catholic couples want to do the same thing is very exciting to see as well.”

The local panel with Father Long resonated with Andres Noguera and Darcy Garcia, parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church. The two have been married 30 years with two sons, ages 27 and 25.

Andres picked up on something Father Long said about children carrying on the Catholic faith and that parents are typically not the main influencers in their children’s lives after the age of 18.

“My wife and I are empty nesters,” said Andres, “My message to my sons has evolved as they have grown up. I tell them that their goal is to find a



**Owen and Erin Clanton were part of a panel with their pastor, Father Nathan Long, of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, during the “Together in Holiness” marriage conference at Camp Karol in Moss Bluff on April 29. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)**

good partner to create a family and a home with. There comes a time when it is our job to talk to God so our children can find the right influencers in their lives.”

Brad and Nicole Foreman, parishioners of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception were glad the timing of *Together in Holiness* worked out with their schedules this year. They were married 23 years on June 30 and welcomed the opportunity to reaffirm things they are already doing such as praying nightly family rosaries with their six children ranging from 21 to 6 years old.

“When Father Long talked about ‘just starting’ when it comes to praying as a family, that’s really the biggest step, just doing it, taking that step to pray with the family, then you can go from there,” said Brad.

Nicole said while many people are willing to fight battles, it is time for married couples to fight the battle they are in right now so other people will want to get married and keep the family unit strong.

After learning about the event on the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page, Samuel and Meredith Fulkerson from the Diocese of Lafayette were excited to spend the day together. Available childcare sealed the deal for them to travel from Estherwood to Moss Bluff.

After five years of marriage, the Fulkersons share a similar connection with other families by trying to grow in their faith even when it feels like the whole world is crashing down sometimes.

“Today made me realize when we are at home with our five children, 6 years and younger, and one is crying and pitching a fit and we are asking

ourselves what we are doing wrong, in reality, it is just life. We are not the only ones going through that,” said Samuel. “We might not always know what the right way is other than having this Catholic community in our lives. That is the right way.”

Even after being married nearly 52 years with two sons, Pat and Barbara Diamond of St. Martin de Porres Parish know the importance of keeping God in their marriage. It’s their advice to younger couples just starting out.

“Marriage is not a two-way street; it’s a three-way street,” said Pat. “When you can’t talk to your spouse, you can talk to God to help each other get through the tough times.”

Barbara recalls learning a message early on in their marriage that still applies more than 50 years later. “Couples must decide every day to love. It’s a decision, not a feeling or emotion,” she said while her husband affirmed making that decision is something they have always done throughout their marriage.

Other topics and speakers for the day included “The Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Prophetic Mission of the Family,” by Larry G. Freney, Director of Education and Assessments, Rejoice Counseling Apostolate; and “Becoming Witnesses to the Joy of Eucharistic Love,” by Ryan Hanning, Ph.D., Fellow, San Juan Diego Institute.

Learn more about the St. John Paul II Foundation and its initiative, *Together in Holiness* at <https://forlifeandfamily.org/together-in-holiness/>.