



## Veritas 2023 will feature Dr. Brant Pitre on Sept. 9

LAKE CHARLES — The annual Veritas Conference will feature Dr. Brant Pitre, PhD, as keynote speaker on Saturday, September 9, at the Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive. The conference coincides with the Memorial of St. Peter Claver, the patron saint for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Doors will open at 8:00 a.m. with the Welcome at 9:00 a.m. and keynote beginning at 9:30 a.m. This year's theme is "Behold, the Lamb of God."

Dr. Pitre, a Louisiana native, is a world-renowned scripture scholar who has written extensively on the topic of Our Lord, Jewish tradition, and the Scriptures. Among his writings are *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist*, and *The Case for Jesus*.

*Veritas*, which is Latin for Truth, is a one-day conference strengthening the faith of believers and teaching attendees to love God more deeply in His Holy Scriptures and in the Eucharist.

In addition to the keynote, other highlights include breakout sessions by local clergy and lay presenters. New this year will be a session in Spanish by Ricardo Ruvalcaba, Spanish Pastoral Assistant for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Exhibits by local Catholic organizations, artists, and businesses will also be a returning favorite.

Breakout session presenters and topics include:

- **Tolton Ambassadors Louisiana:** Altha Jordan Green and Alberto Maxwell — *Venerable Father Augustus Tolton*. Read more about Tolton's legacy at <https://tolton.archchicago.org/about/biography>

- **Father Ruben Villarreal** PhL, JCL — *HOC FACITE IN MEAM COMMEMORATIONEM: Do This in Memory of Me*. Father Villarreal is Dean of Christian Philosophy of Academics at St. Louis Catholic High School. He also serves as Judicial Vicar on the Diocesan Tribunal.

- **Blaine and Denise Wyninger** — *Eucharistic and Family Life*. The Wyningers are co-directors for the Offices of Marriage, Family Life, and Pro-Life for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

- **Father Nathan Long** — *Saint Paul's Eucharistic Theology*. Father Long is Pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church and Rector of St. Louis Catholic High School.

- **Father Whitney Miller**, PhD, LPC — *Eucharistic Themes in Culture and the Arts*. Father Miller serves as Diocesan Director of Counseling Services.

- **Ricardo Ruvalcaba** — *Tema: No hay verdadera Sanacion ni Esperanza, sin las Bienaventuranzas*. English translation — Theme: There is No True Healing or Hope without the Beatitudes

Follow the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page for updates on breakout session speakers.

Cost is \$40 per person. Register at: [www.lcdiocese.org/resources/event-registration](http://www.lcdiocese.org/resources/event-registration) and click on Veritas Conference; or call 337-439-7400, Ext. 200. Email [cassie.meaux@lcdiocese.org](mailto:cassie.meaux@lcdiocese.org) for more information.

Registration forms are also available in the parishes of the Diocese of Lake Charles and at the Office of Religious Education, 1201 Ryan Street, Lake Charles.

Make checks payable to Diocese of Lake Charles and mail to Office of Religious Education. Cash will be accepted when paying in person.

A limited number of box lunches may be purchased separately for \$7.00 per lunch. Lunches are pre-purchase only. There will be a one hour, 20-minute break for lunch with several local restaurants available in the area.

The conference schedule, which is subject to change, is as follows:

- 8:00 a.m. — Optional Memorial Mass at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street
- 8:00 a.m. — Doors open at Lake Charles Civic Center for registration and exhibits
- 9:00 a.m. — Welcome
- 9:30 a.m. — Keynote: Dr. Brant Pitre, morning session
- 10:30 a.m. — Break and Exhibits
- 11:00 a.m. — Breakout Session I
- 11:50 a.m. — Lunch and Exhibits
- 1:10 p.m. — Drawings for door prizes
- 1:15 p.m. — Keynote: Dr. Brant Pitre, afternoon session
- 2:20 p.m. — Breakout Session II
- 3:10 p.m. — Procession to Cathedral
- 4:00 p.m. — Anticipated Sunday Vigil Mass at Cathedral



**DR. BRANT PITRE, PhD**  
Keynote Speaker



**Altha Jordan Green**



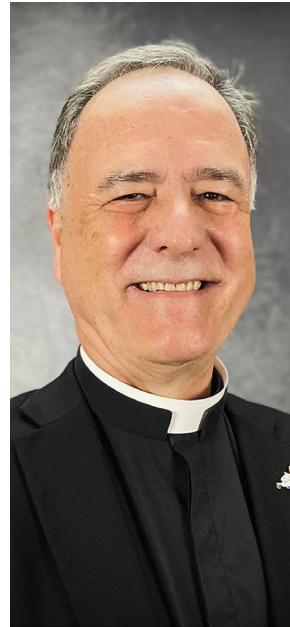
**Alberto Maxwell**



**Reverend Ruben Villarreal**



**Reverend Nathan Long**



**Reverend Whitney Miller**



**Blaine Wyninger**



**Denise Wyninger**



**Ricardo Ruvalcaba**

## Prayer for Safety in Hurricane Season

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, has asked that during the hurricane season of 2022 the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles pray the following prayer, composed in 1957 by The Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder, Second Bishop of Lafayette, following Hurricane Audrey:

O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children. The Sea of Galilee obeyed your order and returned to its former quietude. You are still the Master of the land and sea. We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control: the Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, and overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land and spread chaos and disaster.

During this hurricane season we turn to You, O loving Father. Spare us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seem to refuse to heal with passing of time. O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our Beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son on our behalf, so that spared from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem where a stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.

**The Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder**  
Second Bishop of Lafayette

## St. Theodore Parish fundraiser Oct. 13

SULPHUR — St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff will host a fundraiser on Friday, October 13, at the West Cal Event Center, 401 Arena Road. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m., with food and entertainment beginning at 7:00 p.m. Featured music will be provided by Ryan Foret & Foret Tradition.

table of eight. Call the church office at 337-855-6662 to purchase tickets.

Auction items are being gathered for both the live and silent auctions. Call Ruthie Singer at the church office, 337-855-6662, for more information. For questions about the main event, call Christy Moore Clark at 337-304-5956 or Ricky Bellon at 337-274-2995.

## IHM Parish Revival will feature Father Blount Aug. 29-30

LAKE CHARLES — Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church will host a two-night Parish Revival August 29-30 featuring Rev. James Blount, a Priest of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT). Father Blount is a spiritual director, confessor, and charismatic preacher dedicated to his healing and deliverance ministry.

The schedule each night:

- 5:00 p.m. — Confessions and Recitation of the Flame of Love Rosary
- 6:00 p.m. — The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with Father Blount as celebrant and homilist
- Immediately following the Mass — Revival led by Father Blount, ending at 9:00 p.m.

Space is limited to 450 in the Church (Suggested donation: \$25 per person) and 350 in the Hall (Suggested donation: \$10 per person), where the event will be live-streamed. Register online at <https://immaculateheartofmary4.flocknote.com/signup/131159>. Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church is located at 2031 Opelousas Street in Lake Charles. Doors will open at 4:30 p.m.

## DIOCESAN RECOVERY UPDATE No. 13

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. FEMA provides for support to repair and rebuild certain structures within the Houses of Worship component, but the path to validating damages to meet FEMA's demands has been and continues to be laborious. Whereas public entities must prove damages, House of Worship applicants must also prove eligibility, in addition to damages. Once projects move forward from state FEMA review to the regional office in Denton, Texas, the U.S. Corps of Engineers meticulously reviews all submissions, often returning the project to the state for additional or revised information. Recently, the Diocese of Lake Charles was offered an opportunity through Congressman Clay Higgins' office for weekly meetings with Eddie Williams, Louisiana FEMA Public Assistance Lead, and Lynne Browning, GOHSEP Assistant Deputy Director, along with Elizabeth McLaughlin and Congressional Staff, FEMA and GOHSEP staff with diocesan recovery leadership and consultants. To date, projects are moving at a faster path toward obligation.

Figures below illustrate the current monthly snapshot highlighting the ongoing recovery in the Diocese of Lake Charles as of August 2, 2023:

DIOCESAN EXPENDITURES	through June 2023	July 2023	through July 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	\$21,905,606.60	\$430,846.36	\$22,336,452.96
Temporary Facilities (See below)	\$10,365,376.79	\$5,560.00	\$10,370,936.79
Restoration Design (Architects) and PM	\$7,912,510.32	\$106,031.37	\$8,018,541.69
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>\$67,147,534.92</b>	<b>\$542,437.73</b>	<b>\$67,689,972.65</b>

TEMPORARY SITES (Expenditures to date)			
Our Lady's School Temp Facility	\$2,921,228.88	\$760.00	\$2,921,988.88
St. Louis High School Temp Facility	\$3,975,321.09		\$3,975,321.09
St. Margaret School Temp Facility	\$3,282,169.56		\$3,282,169.56
Christ the King Church	\$103,546.90		\$103,546.90
DOLC Storage	\$83,110.36	\$4,800.00	\$87,910.36
	\$10,365,376.79	\$5,560.00	\$10,370,936.79

PROJECTS COMPLETED / PROJECTS IN DESIGN	
A total of 65 DOLC project sites impacted by Hurricane Laura. (DOLC Misc properties consolidated into 1 project site)	
A total of 27 DOLC project sites are under active design or specifications development for repairs / restoration.	
A total of 22 DOLC project sites have a combination of active work and / or active design for repairs / restoration.	
A total of 16 DOLC project sites, restoration is complete.	

<b>TOTAL INSURANCE PROCEEDS</b>	\$30,000,000.00
<b>FEMA OBLIGATIONS TO DATE</b>	\$23,892,649.62
<b>FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS TO DATE</b>	\$9,724,236.20
<b>FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS PENDING</b>	\$934,000.00

Data as of 2 Aug 2023





## Sacred icon created, donated in memory of first Saint Charles Center volunteer

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

The memory of the first volunteer at Saint Charles Center will live on through the generosity of her daughter and longtime friendship of the Center's first director.

A donation by Miriam E. "Mim" John, daughter of the late George and Gloria John of Lake Charles, made it possible for an icon of the *Kazan Mother of God* to be commissioned in honor of Gloria for her faithfulness to the Moss Bluff retreat facility in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

On July 20, 2023, the iconographer, Sylvia Marcantel, presented the Byzantine icon to Rev. Don Piraro, former director, and Deacon Brian Soileau, current director of Saint Charles Center. The donation was made at Villa Maria Retirement Center in Lake Charles where Piraro resides.

A priest now for 56 years, Father Piraro said his friendship with the Johns goes back to his time at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in the 1980s. He was named Director of Saint Charles Center in 1993 ahead of its opening in 1995.

"Their daughter Mim has been supporting the Center financially in memory of her parents," Piraro recalled. "A couple of years ago, she sent a check directly to me. I knew immediately I wanted to commission this icon in memory of her mother."

An icon is one of the earliest forms of sacred images in the Catholic Church. The classic way of praying before an icon, according to Father Piraro, is to sit in silence and simply gaze at the image, letting the response to the image emerge from the heart into the consciousness of the one who is praying.

Pope Francis is known to go to Saint Mary Major Basilica in Rome and pray before an icon of Mary from the sixth century called *Salus Populi Romani*. Father Piraro credits this for the resurgence of interest in icons today.

When Father Piraro saw the 9 1/2-by-12 1/2-inch icon created by Marcantel, he was deeply moved.

"My first response upon seeing the icon was to go to the chapel with it and spend some time in prayer with the image," he said.

According to Russian tradition, the icon of the *Kazan Mother of God* appeared in 1579 in the city of Kazan. The icon is attributed to saving Moscow and All Russia from the invasion of the Poles in 1612.

Marcantel was chosen by Father Piraro to create the icon because of her involvement with iconography workshops at Saint Charles Center over the years. He also knew she had a deep love for the Blessed Mother.

Working on such an intensive and precise project for the better part of two years was a prayer for Marcantel.

"When creating icons, I open with a prayer asking God to guide my hands and accept this as my way of offering glory to God," she said noting that none of her icons are signed. "It is not my work but rather the hands of God. I am just a willing participant."

Deacon Soileau pointed out the weight that prayer carries in iconography.

"The fact that the 'writer' of the icon also prayed the entire time the icon was being created, to me, adds to the importance it plays in our own prayer lives," he said.

"Icons invite us to pray with our eyes open to Christ," Soileau continued. "They are a bridge to Christ and a link to the saints. Icons bring a visual image to what we have already tried to imagine in our minds and, therefore, bring life to our prayer."

Upon seeing the icon at its unveiling, Deacon Soileau said, "I was drawn in by its vibrant colors and its beauty. If one could see the Blessed Mother, I can imagine that her beauty and vibrance of life and spirit would be the first things that would attract one to her."

*The Kazan Mother of God* icon is of the genre of icons of Our Lady known as the Hodegtria Mother of God: images in which the Virgin is presenting her Son to the world, telling us He is the one to follow, the one who knows the way.

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For information on iconography workshops at Saint Charles Center, call Deacon Soileau at 337-855-1232 or email [brian.soileau@lcdiocese.org](mailto:brian.soileau@lcdiocese.org).



Sylvia Marcantel presents a Byzantine icon she created at the request of Rev. Don Piraro, seated, who served as the first director of Saint Charles Center when it opened in 1995 in Moss Bluff. They are joined by Deacon Brian Soileau, current director of the retreat facility. The icon was donated in memory of Gloria John, the first volunteer at the Center. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)



Iconographer Sylvia Marcantel offers the following description: Christ Emmanuel is dressed in the cloth of gold that symbolizes his divinity. The red band on his shoulder is a *klav*, a symbol of authority in the Byzantine court. His right hand is extended to us in a sign of blessing — his two extended fingers symbolize his two natures, human and divine. His three fingers together symbolize the Trinity. The Virgin is dressed in a red, outer robe, symbolizing her humanity. The gold stars on her robe symbolize her virginity — before, during and after the birth of Christ. In accord with ancient iconographic tradition, the names of the Virgin and the Christ Child are inscribed in Greek abbreviations: *MP OY*, Mother of God, and *IC XC*, Jesus Christ.



Receiving the Knights of Columbus Louisiana State Convention 2023 "Faith Award" from District Deputy Knight Daniel Reyes (second from right), are from left, Stephen Broussard, financial secretary; Jimmy Bushnell, Grand Knight; and Very Rev. Ruben Buller, V.G., Rector of Cathedral. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

## KC Council 1207 receives state award

LAKE CHARLES — Knights of Columbus Council 1207 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception received the Faith Award at the Louisiana State Council Knights of Columbus 118th State Convention in Lafayette on May 5, 2023.

Accomplishing the request of Rev. Rommel Tolentino, Cathedral rector in February

2022, the award reflects Council 1207's faith in action for their volunteer work in converting the former day chapel into an adoration chapel.

Now referred to as the St. Bernadette Oratory, some of the renovations included re-wiring the 820-square-foot chapel, sanding and restaining eight wooden pews

removed from the Cathedral during the 2019 restoration project, replacing carpet with wood-look vinyl flooring, and painting and stenciling on walls. The carpentry, electrical, painting and various other skills of the KC members all came into play during a three-week period under direction of Father Tolentino, then-Grand Knight Scott Riviere, and project supervisor, Stephen Broussard.

On March 6, 2022, Bishop Glen John Provost dedicated the Oratory, choosing its name because the Blessed Mother identified herself to St. Bernadette as the "Immaculate Conception," for whom the Cathedral is named. The renovation project was funded by KC Council 1207 along with donations from Cathedral parishioners.

St. Bernadette Oratory, located at 935 Bilbo Street, is open to the public during the Cathedral office hours, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and on Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

## Food drive on Aug. 27 benefits Abraham's Tent

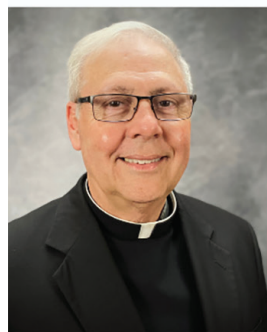
LAKE CHARLES — The annual Clean Out the Freezer and Pantry Day, sponsored by Sportsmen For the Hungry, in affiliation with Hunters For the Hungry, is scheduled for Sunday, August 27, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in The Pathology Laboratory parking lot, 830 West Bayou Pines Drive. A drive-through drop-off service will be provided. When dropping off donations, participants are asked to use The Pathology Laboratory parking lot entrance on Lake Street for convenience and efficiency.

Lake Area residents are encouraged to clean out their freezers and pantries to help feed the hungry in the local community. Donations of wrapped and labeled frozen meat and fish (wild and domestic), canned or boxed foods, rice, cooking oil, seasonings, vegetables, and paper goods will be accepted. All donations will be delivered directly to Abraham's Tent, a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide food for the poor and hungry in Lake Charles every day of the year.

## An Afternoon with Christ

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10, 2023

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



Father Aubrey Guilbeau  
Pastor of St. Theodore  
Catholic Church

NATIONAL  
Eucharistic  
Revival



PRAISE · ADORE · REFLECT

Very Rev. Aubrey Guilbeau, Pastor of St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff, and Vicar for Clergy, will lead the ninth session of "An Afternoon with Christ," 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, September 10, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The afternoon will begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Guilbeau, 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.