



New school year begins for 10 seminarians

It was the beginning of a new school year in August for 10 seminarians representing the Diocese of Lake Charles. Two are beginning their seminarian formation after completing a year at the Vianney House of Discernment in Lake Charles, while eight are continuing at various stages of their journeys to the priesthood.

Hunter LaRocca and **John Souder** returned to Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans for their third year of the Configuration Stage. Their home parishes are Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church for LaRocca, and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for Souder, both in Lake Charles.

Also at Notre Dame, **Philip Seilhan** entered his first year of the Configuration Stage, joined by **Cameron Fontenot** who has begun his first year of the Discipleship Stage. Seilhan's home parish is Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings, while Fontenot is from St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles.

Returning seminarians to St. Joseph Seminary College in Saint Benedict, La., include **Michael DesOrmeaux**, of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and **Nicholas Poncho**, of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. They both began their third year of the Discipleship Stage.

Also in the third year of the Discipleship Stage is **Liam Leonard** at the Theological College the National Seminary of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Leonard's home parish is Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur.

Justin Fontenot, of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley, has entered the second year of the Discipleship Stage at St. Joseph Seminary College with **Logan Guillot** also at St. Joseph for his Propaedeutic Year. Guillot's home parish is Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy.

Seth Rodriguez, of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings, is taking a Pastoral Year at the Vianney House.

Please pray for these young men in seminarian formation for the Diocese of Lake Charles as they discern their call to priesthood. For more information about the priesthood or consecrated life, email Father Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations, at michael.caraway@lcdioocese.org.



Hunter LaRocca

John Souder

Philip Seilhan

Liam Leonard

Michael DesOrmeaux

Nicholas Poncho

Justin Fontenot

Seth Rodriguez

Cameron Fontenot

Logan Guillot

2023 DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES SEMINARIANS 2024

Bishop's Services Appeal begins 2023-2024 campaign

The 43rd annual Bishop's Services Appeal (BSA), a fundraising campaign to aid in the operation of these various ministries and programs, will kick off the weekend of September 16-17 in church parishes throughout the Diocese.

Your gift to the Bishop's Services Appeal makes a difference to the ministries it supports and the thousands of people it impacts.

Some of those ministries include Catholic education, vocations and seminarians, youth ministry, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, family life, diocesan counseling, communications, Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol, annulment and other tribunal fees, services to maritime personnel, and evangelization throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles.

This year's campaign, which continues until the end of the fiscal year — June 30, 2024, with a goal of \$824,000 — has as its theme: "Bring them here to me," a scripture reference from Matthew 14:18.

In this time of Eucharistic Revival, Bishop Glen John Provost turns our focus to the multiplication of the loaves and fish when Jesus sees the crowd and tells his disciples to give the people something to eat. In response, the disciples say that they have only five loaves and two fish, to which Jesus responds, "Bring them here to me."



"While not enough, Christ makes it enough," the Bishop remarks.

In his annual BSA message, His Excellency acknowledged that many are still recovering from the devastation of 2020 and 2021, but said, "This makes our giving even more pertinent. The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ because Jesus identifies with the gift. Our giving then should be identified in what we can do for others."

Bishop Provost points out the approximate \$40,000 a year it cost for the specialized education per seminarian, of which the Diocese of Lake Charles is blessed to have 10 seminarians in formation for the priesthood.

"We cannot prepare these young men by ourselves, but bringing our gifts to Jesus, He makes it enough," he said.

As of May 2023, there are 14 priests in active ministry in our Diocese who were

ordained by Bishop Provost since his installation on April 23, 2007.

The BSA continues to make visible a variety of ministries, particularly:

- **Office of Religious Education** that oversees the parishes' Religious Education Program and the Catholic Religion Studies at the six Catholic schools in the Diocese providing for the consistency in the presentation of our Faith.
- **Catholic Education** that offers rigorous academics grounded in teachings of service to others and serving as a vital tool of evangelization.
- **Seminarian Education** that supports the education and welfare of diocesan seminarians with a vision to secure celebrations of the Sacraments into the future.
- Vision of **Catholic Charities** to help ensure that we, the Catholic Church, care for both bodily and spiritual needs. Catholic Charities continues to

expand locations (currently 11) making ever-evolving resources available to all areas of the Diocese.

• The work of **Saint Charles Center** offers the opportunity for priests and lay faithful to get away from the world and be alone with Christ and allow Him to speak to us and regain His vision.

• **Office of Communications** continues to share vital information in a wide array of formats through printing of the *Catholic Calendar* diocesan newspaper; online via the diocesan website at www.lcdioocese.org; and through social media on the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page.

"Because of your past generosity, I am confident of your future support for the Diocese of Lake Charles," Bishop Provost said in a letter to the faithful.

Donors can choose from the following options to make their contribution:

- By check or cash in your parish's designated BSA collection envelope
 - By designating a donation at any time in your parish's collection
 - By credit card or electronic check (ACH) through the Diocese of Lake Charles website at <http://www.lcdioocese.org/resources/support-the-diocese>.
- The first weekend of collections in church parishes will be at all Masses September 23-24.

Prayer for Safety in Hurricane Season

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, has asked that during the hurricane season of 2023 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

Rosary Around the Lake Oct. 1

LAKE CHARLES — The sixth annual Rosary Around the Lake, sponsored by the Ruth Institute, will take place Sunday, October 1, beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Lake Charles Civic Center. The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will lead the recitation of the Apostles Creed.

The Catholic Church designates October as the Month of the Holy Rosary. During this month, the faithful venerate the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially under her title of Our Lady of the Rosary and make special effort to honor the Holy Rosary with group recitations.

Deacon Brian Soileau, Director of Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol in the Diocese of Lake Charles, will emcee the event. Inspired by the Rosary Coast to Coast nationwide event, various groups and organizations within church parishes are encouraged to participate.

Boaters are welcome to join the annual devotion to Our Lady by contacting Paula Michalko at selfishdreams@gmail.com. The event will be broadcast on FM 107.1 in the immediate area around the Civic Center. This will allow the boaters to hear from the boats.

State Senator Jeremy Stine will lead a decade in French, and members of the Hispanic community at St. Henry Catholic Church will lead a decade in Spanish. The other decades will be led in English.

Participants will meet at 2:30 p.m. in the area on the west side of the Civic Center. Any size groups are welcome.

To learn more information, visit www.RosaryAroundTheLake.com or call the Ruth Institute at 760-295-9278. If you would like to serve as a volunteer, please contact Dr. Jennifer Morse via email at jmorse@ruthinstitute.org.

Bishop's Bible Study features Book of Psalms

LAKE CHARLES — The second session of the 2023-2024 series of Bishop Glen John Provost's Men's Prayer Breakfasts and Women's Prayer Luncheons will meet in October — Friday, October 6, for the men, and Wednesday, October 11, for the women. The topic of discussion and study is the Book of Psalms.

The Men's bible study and breakfast begins after the 6:30 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street. There is no cost for the breakfast which is held in the Ave Maria Hall across the street from the Cathedral.

The Women's luncheon begins at 11:30 a.m. in the Ave Maria Hall with the Bishop's teachings starting at noon.

Remaining dates in 2023 for the Men's Prayer Breakfasts are Oct. 6, Nov. 3, and Dec. 1. In 2024, the bishop's teachings are set for Feb. 2, March 1, April 12, and May 10.

The Women's Prayer Luncheons, catered by Treasures of Marilyn's, will continue October 11 and November 8 for the remainder of 2023. Dates in 2024 are Feb. 7, March 6, April 10, and May 8. Reservations should be made one week in advance to reserve a lunch. Cost is \$14. Contact Cassie Meaux at 337-439-7400, Ext. 200 or email cassie.meaux@lcdioocese.org.



NEW BEGINNINGS AT SAINT PIUS X CATHOLIC CHURCH Bishop blesses refurbished church, parish hall in Ragley

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

RAGLEY — On August 4, 1903, Pope Pius X devoted his papacy to *Instaurare Omnia in Christo*, “Restore all things in Christ.” That motto was on full display 120 years later at Saint Pius X Catholic Church in the Diocese of Lake Charles as Bishop Glen John Provost blessed the newly refurbished church and parish hall on August 20, 2023.

“Our goal at Saint Pius X is to give everyone an encounter with Christ through beauty,” said Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, Pastor of Saint Pius X in Beauregard Parish since July 1, 2018. “We believe a beautiful liturgy, expressed in a beautiful faith, creates beautiful family and community. We want to put Christ first in all we do.”

The sprinkling of holy water on the walls of the church, in the sanctuary, and among the congregation occurred at the 11:00 Mass on the eve of the Feast Day of Pope Saint Pius X. It was three years that Hurricane Laura devastated Saint Pius X church and parish hall on August 27, 2020.

“It’s been a long three years, but we give thanks to God for the many blessings that we share together,” said Father Starkovich.

Hurricane Laura caused significant damage to the campus of Saint Pius X. According to Starkovich, the classroom building was destroyed, and the church was gutted to the studs, as was the church hall.

“We also suffered effects from the floods and Winter Storm Uri. Then, we had a tornado in January 2023 that damaged the roofs and bricks of the hall and the church,” he said. “We are still working to recover from the tornado, and we have a long way to go on exterior work.”

Rev. Starkovich, a priest now for 12 years, has seen firsthand what people can achieve when they are willing to sacrifice for God and one another.

“I am reminded of the Elter and Forst girls. I sent a text to the parish that I would have Mass on Sunday, August 30, 2020, for anyone still in Ragley,” he recalled. “Alaina Elter, Blake Elter, and Isla Forst wanted to ‘put on their Sunday best for Jesus’ after the storm, so they put on dresses and came to Mass.”

Despite water everywhere, damaged sheetrock, and no air-conditioning, Father Starkovich offered Mass while the storm-wearied faithful prayed.

When parishioners were not at Mass or cleaning up at their homes, they were in the church parking lot handing out supplies, hot meals, water and ice. Supplies distributed totaled 200,000 pounds because of the generosity of so many. That generosity has extended several years later.

The altar in the newly renovated church was donated by the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. It had been used in Immaculate Conception Parish since the early 1970s after the Second Vatican Council but was replaced with a smaller altar during the Cathedral’s extensive restoration in 2019 to conserve space in the sanctuary.

“When Saint Pius X parishioners expressed a desire to rebuild their church, having been damaged during Hurricanes Laura and Delta, I offered the Altar of Sacrifice to the parish and the people of Saint Pius X,” said the Very Rev. Ruben Buller, Pastor of the Cathedral.

“Their dedication to the rebuilding and improving of their parish is admirable, and the Cathedral wanted to support them in any way possible as it has for other parishes throughout the Diocese,” Father Buller remarked.

The kindness shown to Saint Pius X shines a light on the importance of helping one another during times of struggle.

“I am personally edified that the Mother Parish of the Diocese of Lake Charles has been able to assist the youngest Parish of the Diocese of Lake Charles. This shows the continued growth and vitality of the Church!” said Father Buller.

Bishop Provost likened the faith of Saint Pius X parishioners to that of the Canaanite woman in the Gospel of Matthew 15:21-28.

“The faith of the Canaanite woman was in the Lord. She persisted in asking God to heal her daughter,” the bishop said. “She was no wilting lily.”

Starkovich remarked how God brings goodness out of suffering, noting this is a challenge to keep in mind.

“Our people have suffered much. Many lost their homes and livelihoods in five natural disasters. Yet, they are generous, and I have seen God create bountiful love and faith,” he said.

Among those inspired by examples of great faith is Justin Fontenot, a second-year seminarian whose home parish is Saint Pius X.

“I am grateful that I am a part of this parish. To witness the ways the people of Saint Pius have grown from the multiple storms over the past three years, I have realized how the challenges have made the parish stronger,” he said, noting that Father Starkovich has been a great role model for him.

“Whenever I think of Father Jeff, I think of ‘all things for all men.’ That is what the priest is,” Justin shared. “There is no job that is beneath Father Jeff. He will do anything that needs doing, but the greatest thing he does is offer the Mass.”

Justin’s parents, Kevin and Michelle Fontenot of Moss Bluff, have been a part



Bishop Glen John Provost sprinkles the sanctuary at Saint Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley with holy water during a blessing of the newly refurbished church on Sunday, August 20, 2023. The blessing came nearly three years after Hurricane Laura which heavily damaged the church on August 27, 2020. (Diocese of Lake Charles)



Without electricity or air-conditioning, Hurricane Laura survivors gathered for Mass on Sunday, August 30, 2020, at Saint Pius X Catholic Church only three days after the catastrophic Category 4 storm forced the church to be gutted to the studs. (Diocese of Lake Charles)

of Saint Pius X since it was a mission of Saint Theodore Catholic Church before being established as a Parish on August 21, 2014. Now, it is where they call home and where Justin discerned before entering the seminary.

“It was very overwhelming and humbling to be a part of the Mass and blessing,” said Michelle, who remembers the recovery progress taking a few steps backward earlier this year when a tornado struck down in Ragley on January 24.

“Hurricane repairs were completed in the church hall where Masses were being held temporarily. The next week, we were supposed to move back into the church following reconstruction, but each structure would require new roofs for a second time,” Michelle recalled.

While Saint Pius X Catholic Church has seen its share of hardships the past several years, Michelle credits its first two pastors with continued growth and energy of the thriving parish.

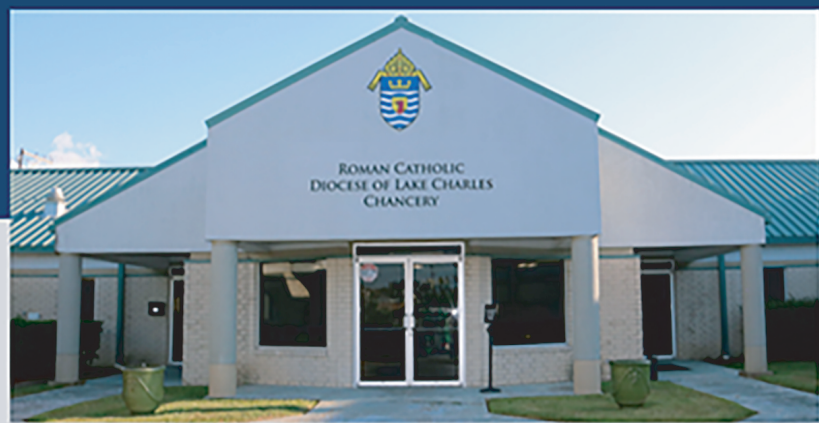
“Our first pastor, Father Tim Goodly, brought so much to our parish when it was first established, and now Father Starkovich has built on top of that and expanded our ministries. He has done so much for our parish, and people are responding in a positive way,” she remarked.

Father Starkovich sums up the perseverance and resiliency on the part of Saint Pius X parishioners best.

“Whenever we focus on Christ, he will give us what we need. As we all continue in recovery, the more we focus on the presence of Christ, the more he leads us to the heavenly homeland.”

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Pro-life banquet planned Oct. 3

LAKE CHARLES — New Life Counseling will host its 32nd annual Pro-Life Banquet featuring keynote speaker Ashley Bratcher on Tuesday, October 3, at the Lake Charles Civic Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. with event beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the coliseum.

Bratcher, the award-winning actress and star of the box office hit, “Unplanned,” will share her own deeply moving testimony. She serves as a pro-life ambassador with Heartbeat International and Save the Storks.

Sponsorship levels include: Friend of Life, \$75 per ticket; Supporter of Life, \$600 for table of eight; Advocate of Life, \$800, donation with one table (8 tickets); Sustainer of Life, \$1,500, donation with one table (8 tickets); Champion of Life, \$3,000, donation with two tables (16 tickets); and Life Saver, \$5,000 donation with two tables.

Tickets may be picked up at New Life Counseling or call 337-474-7003 to specify if you want tickets mailed to your home. For more information, email nlcbanquet@gmail.com. Ticket deadline is Friday, September 29.

An Afternoon with Christ

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, October 8, 2023

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



Father Keith Pellerin
Pastor of
Our Lady Help of
Christians Parish



NATIONAL
Eucharistic
Revival



PRAISE • ADORE • REFLECT

Very Rev. Keith Pellerin, Pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings, and Dean of the East Deanery, will lead the next session of “An Afternoon with Christ,” 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, October 8, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The afternoon will begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Pellerin, 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.