



## FROM OFFICE TO ORATORY

# Bishop blesses chapel in new Chancery for Diocese

By Pamela Seal  
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — The work by staff at the Diocese of Lake Charles Chancery is all done for the Lord. Now those employees will have a chance to be renewed in the Lord's Presence with a chapel in the same building where they work.

Bishop Glen John Provost celebrated the first Mass and blessed the Oratory of Our Lady of Lourdes Tuesday, October 10, in the Chancery, which is the administrative office for the diocese serving approximately 103,000 Roman Catholics in five civil parishes.

"We commit and commend this chapel to the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes who listens to God and is always ready to do His Will," Bishop Provost said. "Employees now have the opportunity to come to the Lord during the day and be seated at His feet and listen to Him."

In his homily to those gathered for the early morning Mass, His Excellency encouraged any staff member who wants to meet with Our Lord to visit the chapel to regain strength for their task.

"Spending time with Jesus is absolutely necessary in the Christian life and certainly necessary for those who work for the Diocese," the bishop remarked, adding, "it is necessary for anyone who is involved in the ministry of the Church."

Referring to the Gospel of Luke 10:38-42, Bishop Provost said, "The better part is always to listen to the Lord, and for this reason we bless this chapel, placing it in the very heart and center of the new Chancery."

The beautiful oratory, while quaint in size, is overflowing with gifts of time and talent from several around the Diocese.

Father Sam Bond, Director for the Office of Liturgy, played a pivotal role in converting the former Safety Council of Southwest Louisiana office space to a place of prayer and adoration.

"By having the oratory accessible to the staff and those whom they serve, my hope is that it will be easier to remain focused that we are doing God's work," said Father Bond. "To have Christ so close and present will be a constant reminder to be refreshed and rejuvenated in our work."

The transition from office to oratory in just under a month's time could not have happened without volunteers using their talents to give back to God in such a meaningful and lasting way.

The project was a team effort by Father Bond and Father Joseph Caraway, Vice Chancellor.

Others who donated their time and talent were:

- Stephen Broussard, parishioner of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, who helped with the stenciling of the Marian Anthem, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, translated *Loving Mother of the Redeemer*. The chant, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, wraps around the room across the top of the walls.

- Lee Bond, parishioner of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy and brother to Father Bond, supplied lumber he milled from fallen trees in his yard after the 2020 hurricanes (Laura and Delta) to make the baseboards.

- Joseph and Mitzi Bond, parents of Father Bond and parishioners of Our Lady of LaSalette Parish, helped with stenciling, making the baseboards and doing trim work around the ceiling.

- Mike Nelson, parishioner of St. Henry Catholic Church, who served as electrician.

Above the altar are intricate carved images made in the Ukraine of St. John the Baptist, Our Lady of Lourdes, and the Crucifixion scene with the Blessed Mother and the Apostle John.

Seating for six is provided by choir stalls — decorated wooden seats — that had been in storage, at one time being used in the former Chancery chapel.

For Father Bond, working on the oratory project was a prayer of obedience.

"Bishop Provost asked me to do this, and it was a desire to do what he wished to make the oratory a reality. It really was a labor of love and holy obedience," Bond shared. "Hopefully, spiritual fruits will come because of the chapel."

In this time of Eucharistic Revival going on throughout the United States, the timing of the oratory is significant.

"Ultimately, the chapel will be for the good of the Diocese and those who work in the Chancery to be spiritually refreshed, that they have that opportunity to meet with Our Lord present in the tabernacle," said Father Bond. "The chapel will provide a sacred space for people working here and to make available for others visiting the Chancery."

At the conclusion of the Mass, Bishop Provost generously gifted to all the Chancery staff members rosaries from his September visit to the Holy Land. The rosaries, made of olive wood, were each placed at the site of Christ's birth in Bethlehem and at the site of Christ's tomb at the Holy Edicule in the Holy Sepulchre.



Bishop Glen John Provost concludes the first Mass in the Oratory of Our Lady of Lourdes, the chapel in the Chancery, on October 10. He is assisted by Rev. Sam Bond, who was responsible for converting the former office space into a chapel.

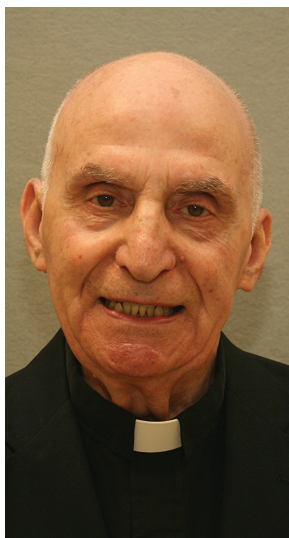
## Rev. John Poerio dies at 90; interred in New Bethany Cemetery

LAKE CHARLES — The Reverend John A. Poerio, 90, a priest for the Diocese of Lake Charles, died Thursday, October 26, in Villa Maria Retirement Center. He had been a priest for 63 years.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, was the celebrant and homilist for the Mass of Christian Burial Tuesday, Oct. 31, from Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. Burial followed the Mass in New Bethany Cemetery located on the grounds of Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff under the direction of Johnson Funeral Home.

Father Poerio, a native of Chicago Heights, Ill., was born April 13, 1933, to Peter and Rose Benedict Poerio.

He is survived by two sisters-in-law, Shirley and Angel Poerio along with



Rev. John A. Poerio

nieces and nephews.

Preceding him in death are his parents and siblings Mary Lou, Peter, and Joseph.

Father Poerio, the third of

the four children, grew up surrounded by the influence of two uncles - Msgr. Michael Benedict and Msgr. James Benedict, and an aunt, Sr. Angela Benedict, a member of the Sisters of St. Francis. His sister, (Mary Lou), would also join a religious order, the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, taking the name Sr. Anthony Poerio, IBVM.

Retired since 2003, Father Poerio served as associate pastor in the parishes of St. Margaret of Scotland in Lake Charles, St. John Cathedral in Lafayette, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in New Iberia, and St. Raphael in Iowa.

He was pastor to St. Lawrence in Raymond, Sacred Heart of Jesus in Oakdale, St. Raphael in Iowa, St. John Vianney in Bell City, and St. Mary of the Lake in Big Lake.



Bishop Glen John Provost shakes the hand of Philip Seilhan, a seminarian for the Diocese of Lake Charles, following the bishop's acceptance of Seilhan to Candidacy for Holy Orders during Mass celebrated by the Bishop in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The rite for Admission to Candidacy is an important step for each seminarian on his journey toward the priesthood. The rite is an opportunity for a seminarian to express publicly his intention to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders as a deacon and perhaps later as a priest. The rite of Admission to Candidacy includes three components: The call to candidacy, the scrutiny of the candidate, and the blessing of the candidate. The Bishop accepted Seilhan with the words, "The Church receives your declaration with joy. May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment." Seilhan, a parishioner of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings, is continuing his theological studies at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans.

## Advent Mission at OLQH features Father Anastos Dec. 4-6

LAKE CHARLES — Father Timothy Anastos, a Eucharistic Preacher for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, will lead the Advent Mission at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church

in December. The mission is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. nightly Monday through Wednesday, December 4-6. The theme is "The Holy Family Revealed" with reflections on Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and their intimate relationship as a human family.

Father Anastos is a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago and assistant chaplain at the St. John Paul II Newman Center at the University of Illinois-Chicago. He earned a bachelor's

degree in Linguistics from the University of Illinois and a bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome.

Father Anastos releases *Reel Homilies*, one-minute reflections on the Sunday Mass readings through the lens of Church tradition, pop culture, and self-improvement with Spirit Juice Studios.



Father Timothy Anastos  
USCCB  
Eucharistic Preacher

## 'Messiah' back at Bulber on Dec. 3

LAKE CHARLES — The 82nd annual George Frideric Handel's Messiah Oratorio will be performed by the Lake Charles Messiah Chorus and Orchestra at 3:00 p.m. Sunday, December 3, in the F.G. Bulber Auditorium at McNeese State University. Admission is free.

Conducted by Colette Bulber Tanner, the Lake Charles Messiah Chorus was organized in 1939 by her late father, Dr. Francis G. Bulber.

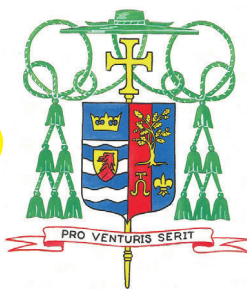
This year's presentation includes 55 vocalists and orchestra made up of community members from the five-parish area and McNeese vocal students as soloists. The concert is slightly over one hour in length.



## Fourth Degree Knights Support Religious Education

Bishop Glen John Provost accepts a check in the amount of \$2,090.00 from Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Diocesan Coordinator Sir Knight I.J. Tarou, representing contributions from members of Fourth Degree assemblies domiciled in the Diocese of Lake Charles for the annual statewide Excellence in Religious Education program. Others on hand for the presentation are Faithful Navigator Sir Knight David Trahan, Monsignor Cramer's Assembly #320 Lake Charles (left) and Faithful Navigator Sir Knight Al Gary, Fr. Veillard MS Assembly #2087 of Sulphur (right). Also making donations were Monsignor Peeters Assembly # 332 of Jennings and Fr. Shahrigan Assembly #2182 DeRidder.





## Clergy and Religious honored for milestone anniversaries

By Pamela Seal

### Diocese of Lake Charles

MOSS BLUFF — His Excellency, the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, was the celebrant and homilist for the 17th annual Clergy and Religious Recognition Celebration on Tuesday, September 12, at Camp Karol. The Mass took place on the Memorial of the Most Holy Name of Mary, Mother of God, followed by a luncheon for the honorees.

For a combined 410 years of service to the Catholic Church, this year's honorees included a total of 9 priests, 2 deacons, and 2 religious sisters. The following were recognized for significant anniversaries:

- 60 years — Sister Catherine Leroux, S.E. (Sisters of Emmanuel)
- 50 years — Rev. Michael Barras and Sister Mary Josephine Okafor, D.M.M.M. (Daughters Mary Mother of Mercy)
- 40 years — Deacon Norris Chapman and Deacon Ed McNally
- 30 years — Rev. John Welch, M.S., and Rev. Timothy Goodly
- 25 years — Very Rev. Keith Pellerin, V.F., and Rev. Felix Okey Alaribe

• 15 years — Very Rev. Ruben J. Buller, V.G.; Very Rev. Rojo Koonathan, V.F.; Rev. Nathan Long, and Rev. Jerish George, MOC

“By a happy coincidence, today we are celebrating the Holy Name of Mary as we congratulate and extend our gratitude to these holy men and women for their many years of service to the Church,” said Bishop Provost during his homily.

“We recognize in a special way Father Michael Barras who is celebrating his golden jubilee, 50 years as a priest,” the bishop remarked, noting that he and Father Barras were in seminary together.

Recalling the Commissioning of the Apostles — the initial selection of the Twelve Apostles among the disciples of Jesus — Bishop Provost emphasized the importance of priests doing God's work.

“The Apostles were a mixed group, kind of like diocesan priests, but no doubt, our Lord sees something in them that is of some merit in the Kingdom of God,” His Excellency remarked. “God's plan is all embracing.”

Making the point that the Lord sent the Apostles out to do his work, Bishop Provost said this is what happens through the administration of the sacraments.

“In the priesthood, the sacraments are the particular way in which priests serve the faithful,” he explained. “The Anointing of the Sick, for example, is an anointing of those who need healing. The forgiveness of sin in the Sacrament of Penance is also a healing which takes place.”

Bishop Provost remarked that our Lord did not ask his Apostles

to go out and write a book, but instead to live out what he instructed them to do.

“Today we celebrate those who have spoken with God, and we pray that they continue to do so in a more fervent way so that they can serve the Church and those committed to their care,” he said.

Reflecting on her 60th anniversary, Sister Catherine Leroux, S.E., said she is amazed at her boldness.

“I entered (religious life) straight out of high school at the age of 17. The novitiate was in Framingham, Mass., 500 miles from my home in Ogdensburg, N.Y.,” she recalled. “It was purely the Holy Spirit. I never wanted to leave.”

Sister Catherine said she loved the structure, the training, the time for prayer, and the others who entered with her. She has served in many places, but here in the South she taught in Vermilion Catholic in Abbeville, adult education in St. Peter Parish in Gueydan, weekly bible studies in Morse and Rayne, campus ministry in Eunice, pastoral work in St. Theodore Parish in Moss Bluff, and 23 years of mental health counseling before retiring in June of 2023.

“To pinpoint my greatest joy is difficult. These past 60 years of vowed life have been unbelievable,” said Sister Catherine. “I am so grateful. I continue to say that religious life is the best kept secret of the Catholic Church.”

Following the Mass, Rev. Michael Caraway, Serra Club chaplain, gave the invocation and blessing of the meal at the luncheon. The welcome and acknowledgments were given by Col. John Halloran, Serra Club past president, and closing remarks and benediction were given by Bishop Provost.

Music during the Liturgy of the Mass was provided by the St. Louis High School Concert Choir under the direction of Colette Tanner.

The annual recognition celebration is coordinated by the Serra Club of Lake Charles and supported by the Knights of Columbus Assemblies and Councils; Knights of Peter Claver Assemblies, Chapters, and Courts; Catholic Daughters of the Americas Courts, Christian Mothers, Parish Altar Societies, and East Deanery Serra Club. Other benefactors of time, talent, and/or treasures were Judy Boudreaux, Craig and Jackie Guillory, and Frank and Linda Zamora.

All honorees for 2023 received a check in \$10 increments for their years of service. Col. Halloran said to date, a total of 334 priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters have been honored over the past 17 years with contributing organizations donating a total of \$85,550 to the honorees.



Rev. Michael Barras, a retired priest of the Diocese, and Very Rev. Rojo Koonathan, V.F., Pastor of Christ the King Catholic Church, were among those honored for milestone anniversaries during the Clergy and Religious Recognition Celebration at Camp Karol in Moss Bluff on September 12. Father Barras marked his golden jubilee on May 19, and Father Koonathan celebrated 15 years in the priesthood on January 5 of this year.

### Diocesan offices closed for Thanksgiving, Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 23-24, for Thanksgiving, reopening on Monday, November 27, for regular business hours — 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. On behalf of Bishop Glen John Provost and the Diocese of Lake Charles, we wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving. Offices will also be closed on Friday, December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Publication dates for the *Catholic Calendar* in December are December 8 and December 22.

## SIXTH ANNUAL ROSARY AROUND THE LAKE

# Hundreds gather to unite in prayer for city, nation

By Pamela Seal

### Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — The saying “there is power in numbers” was on full display during the sixth annual Rosary Around the Lake on Sunday, October 1, in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

With rosaries in their hands and special intentions in their hearts, 550 people of all ages prayed for Divine protection of the community and nation, strength of families, the Catholic Church, true repentance for and reparation of sins, salvation of souls, and reunion of all Christians.

The event, organized by the Ruth Institute as part of the national Rosary Coast to Coast, took place outside the Lake Charles Civic Center. The Catholic Church designates October as the Month of the Holy Rosary.

This was 11-year-old Mae Giovanni's first year participating. She was one of several from the St. Pius X Catholic Church youth group leading the First Glorious Mystery, The Resurrection.

“It was exciting. I think it was very cool that everyone, even if they were not Catholic, could hear the rosary being prayed as a community,” said Giovanni. “When I pray the rosary, it makes me feel happy.”

Also attending for the first time from St. Pius X was Ashleigh Leger, a sophomore in high school. As a member of the St. Pius youth group, Leger said she was eager to help when she learned they were invited to lead the First Mystery.

“I enjoy praying the rosary in groups, but I also pray the rosary on my own,” she said. “It fills me with grace knowing Jesus' mother will intercede for us when we turn to her with our prayers and

intentions.”

Deacon Brian Soileau, who served as emcee, extended a special welcome to any non-Catholics in attendance as well as Catholics who may have been away from the Church. Soileau is director of Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol in Moss Bluff.

The rosary was recited in four languages — English, French, Latin, and Spanish.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, led the recitation of the Apostles Creed and the Our Father to begin the Marian devotion, followed by students at Immaculate Conception Cathedral School leading the first three Hail Mary prayers.

State Senator Jeremy Stine led — in French — the Second Glorious Mystery, The Ascension. He was assisted by Canon Jean-Marie Moreau, Rector of the St. Francis de Sales Oratory in Sulphur, and Bishop Provost.

The Third Glorious Mystery, The Descent of the Holy Spirit, was recited in Latin by the Rocky and Monica Harrington Family, members of St. Francis de Sales Oratory.

The Hispanic Community of St. Henry Catholic Church led — in Spanish — the Fourth Glorious Mystery, The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To conclude the rosary, members from Junior Catholic Daughters of the Americas at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Church and St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church led the Fifth Glorious Mystery, The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Margaret Zimmermann, a parishioner of Our

Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, has participated in Rosary Around the Lake every year since it started in 2018.

“The event feels so holy. It is wonderful to be a part of it,” she remarked, noting that she enjoyed hearing the rosary prayed in different languages. Several ladies from the St. Henry Catholic Church Altar Society had T-shirts designed with the message: Our Lady of Fatima. Pray the Rosary.

“It is awesome for everybody to be praying together,” said Deborah Richard, one of the ladies. “What better way to pray than to have everybody together. And now it is in four languages.”

Other ladies wearing the special T-shirts were Theresa Guillory, Joyce Lefrere, Paula Sheffield, Sandra Walker, and Ginnetta Bilbo.

Dr. Jennifer Roback Morse, Founder and President of the Ruth Institute, acknowledged several people and groups for the event's success:

• The Catholic Daughters of the Americas at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish, and the Lay Carmelites, for decorating the staging area

• Lucas Orsot, Francis Orsot, Richard Suarez, and John Pellerin for the sound equipment

• Boy Scout Troop 107 from Our Lady Queen of Heaven for Presentation of the Colors

• Lucas Orsot and Bianca Gonzales for assistance with music

• Knights of Columbus for providing chairs and tables

• Paula Michalko for arranging for boats to participate from the lake while the event was broadcast on FM 107.1

• Hispanic Community of St. Henry for the display of Our Lady of Guadalupe

• All the volunteers who helped on the day of the event and during the planning stages

## An Afternoon with Christ

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Sunday, December 3, 2023

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



Father Michael Beverung  
Parochial Vicar of  
Our Lady of Prompt  
Succor Parish



NATIONAL  
Eucharistic  
Revival



PRAISE · ADORE · REFLECT

Rev. Michael Beverung, Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur, will lead the next session of “An Afternoon with Christ,” 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday, December 3, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The afternoon will begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Beverung, 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.



Bishop Glen John Provost visits with members of the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus shortly after his arrival to lead the Apostles Creed for the annual Rosary Around the Lake at the Lake Charles Civic Center on Sunday, October 1.