



## Bishop Provost's Easter Message 2024

*"They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first."*  
John 20:4

On a somewhat humid and very dark Wednesday morning in mid-September last year, we left the hotel at 4:30 to make our way to the *Via Crucis* in Jerusalem, the path our Savior walked to Calvary. Two weeks later the Hamas attacks would shatter peace and the war would begin. There was no indication that this conflict would take place, at least nothing out of the ordinary in this land so regrettably on the brink of catastrophe. The pre-dawn streets were silent, as we walked along praying and singing the fourteen stations.

Finally, we reached the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at 5:45. Here St. Helena in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century had found the True Cross, and her son, Constantine had commissioned a basilica. Here our Lord had breathed His last on Calvary hanging from the cross, and in an enclosure within the church was the tomb which the disciples and Mary of Magdala

found empty on that first Easter Sunday.

This inner "holy of holies" is called the *aedicule*. Its architecture is eclectic, representing the presence of Christians from all over the world who have visited through the centuries. Inside is a small room in which an altar is placed to celebrate Mass over the limestone slab, called the "Holy Bed," where the body of our Lord was placed at his burial.

Promptly at 6:00 a.m., the appointed time, I entered the *aedicule* with the pilgrims. The Mass celebrated was that of Easter Sunday, with the same readings from Scripture and the Sequence that we will hear this Sunday. In this small room, holding not more than 30 standing and in an even smaller enclosure where I stood to celebrate Mass, our Lord broke the chains of death. He left the burial cloths behind, testifying to His power to lay down His life and take it up again (cf.



John 10:18). Every stone, every ancient pavement, each holy site was a reminder of what we have all read and heard proclaimed to us in the Sacred Scriptures. Here, in that place, Life was stronger than death, God revealing His power through Jesus Christ, His Son.

I had visited the Holy Land a few times before. I had even celebrated Mass in the Holy Sepulchre at Calvary, but I had never done so within the tomb itself. It was an *experience* I will never forget. In fact, calling the occasion an experience does the moment a disservice. This was no "bucket list," an event to check off on my own life's journey, an accomplishment, a completed action.

The Resurrection is no completed action, the way we would recall an historic battle or the birth of person of importance. No, the Resurrection lives on. We have our Lord's promise in this regard. He lives on. In Word

and Sacrament He reminds us of His presence. He still speaks to us, heals us, teaches us, feeds us, redeems us. These are no simple encounters. They defy being termed "an experience."

As we left the *aedicule* that September day, what we took with us seemed as important as what we left behind. Had Mary of Magdala felt the same? What of Peter and John? Something had happened of such monumental proportion that even the disciples "did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead" (John 20:9). One returned to the upper room, another perhaps knelt in adoration, still someone else sought silence to absorb the moment. This was no simple experience. It was a profound encounter with the living Lord. The hope it engendered and the faith it enlivened were gifts of the Divine Love. These are mysteries, and they take time to absorb. God gives us that time. That time is now.

*A blessed and joyful Easter  
to you all!*

## Mass of Christian burial celebrated for Deacon George Carr

A Mass of Christian burial was observed on Friday, March 1, in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church for Deacon George Kiernan Carr, II, of Moss Bluff who passed away on Sunday, February 25. Monsignor James Gaddy was the celebrant and homilist and Bishop Glen John Provost gave the final commendation. Interment followed at Consolata Cemetery.

Deacon Carr, 74, was born in New Orleans, LA to George K. Carr and Audrey Biehl Carr on April 19, 1949. He was a graduate of Archbishop Shaw High School; University of Southwestern Louisiana (ULL) with a Bachelor of Arts; Miami University with a Master of Science; and the Graduate Theological Foundation with a Doctor of Ministry.

As a young pioneer in the cable television industry, he began his career as a field instructor for Southwest Ohio Instructional Television Association, then moved on to become an instructor of Mass Communication at Central Missouri State University, specializing in activities and production training between institutions and cable TV. This led to an offer of Systems Manager for Henderson cable TV in Kentucky, followed by various positions and management opportunities throughout Kentucky, Nebraska, Missouri, Louisiana and, ultimately, England. In 1996, Deacon Carr returned home to Louisiana and pursued his calling in ministry.

He began his studies for the diaconate in the United States and completed the process after moving to England. The Celebration of Ordination to the Diaconate occurred on September 5, 1992, at Holy Family Church in Luton, England where he began his ministry in the Diocese of Northampton. Upon his return home to Louisiana in 1996, Deacon Carr served the Diocese of Lake Charles, launching the diocese's website, as well as being assigned as Deacon to Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish. In this capacity, he provided support, empathy, wisdom, and spiritual guidance to engaged couples, married couples, young parents, and those who were grieving. He performed a multitude of baptisms as well as research and support for those seeking annulments

throughout his ministry. During his 31 years in ministry, his goal was to make a difference to all he encountered. His legacy confirms he had a special place in the hearts of all he served.

Deacon Carr had a passion for Ham Radio which began as a young boy and he was a licensed Amateur Radio (HAM) Operator, WA5KBH, for 59 years. He was also a talented chip carver and enjoyed gifting his works to family and friends.

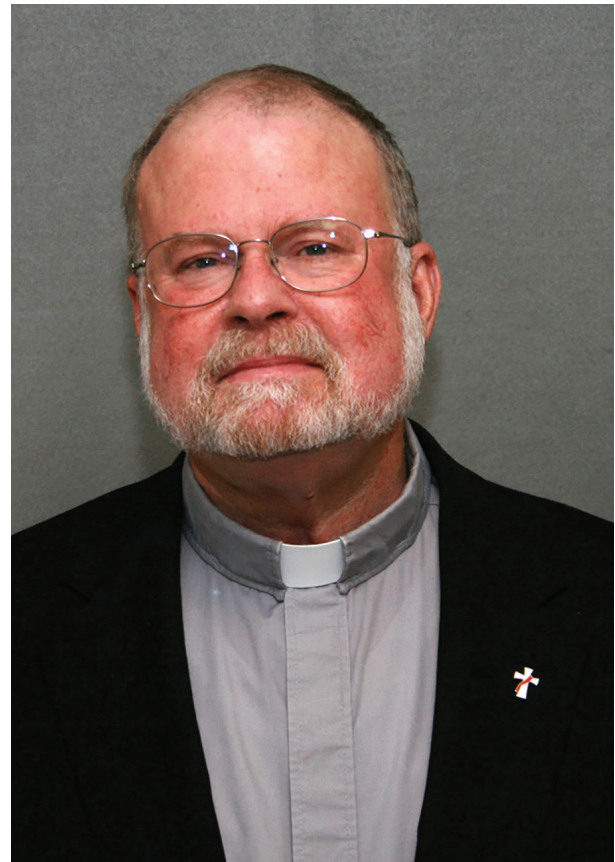
Deacon Carr was a well-respected pillar of his industry, his ministry, and within his communities. He was an active member of countless clubs, organizations, volunteer programs, and community events in every community in which he lived.

A truly humble, admirable man in every aspect of his life, it was imperative to him to maintain a balance between the needs of his family, demands of his job and his service to his ministry. He will be remembered for his listening ear, kind heart and boundless love and devotion to his faith and his family.

He leaves to cherish his memory, his loving wife of 53 years, Joan Abshire Carr of Moss Bluff; four children: Jennifer Munoz (Peggy Snyder) of Pagosa Springs, CO and grandchildren, Milagro and Mackenzie; George K Carr, III (Kristin Stiegel) of Holden, LA; Jacqueline Fontenot (Christopher) of Lubbock, TX; and Jessica Wilson (Jackson) of Lake Charles, LA; sister: Angelle Gonzalez (Robert) of Nine Mile Point, LA; brother-in-law: Craig Mundie of Seattle, WA; and sister-in-law: Linda Abshire Gremillion of Houston, TX; as well as several nieces and nephews. Also left to remember him is Hector Martinz (Samilia Fernadez) who came over from Cuba in 2015 and were embraced and mentored by George and Joan as their own.

He was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Marie Therese Mundie.

Memorial donations may be made to Saint Joseph Seminary College via their website <https://www.saintjosephabbey.com/donate-seminary-college-general>



DEACON GEORGE CARR

## Together in Holiness returning to diocese

MOSS BLUFF — The fourth annual *Together in Holiness* in the Diocese of Lake Charles will be held 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Saturday, April 13, at Camp Karol, 1087 Bozo Road.

Bishop Glen John Provost encourages all engaged and married couples to attend this conference to grow in their love for Christ and one another. The one-day event is presented in partnership with the St. John Paul II Foundation.

"I am delighted to welcome the fourth annual *Together in Holiness* conference to the Diocese of Lake Charles," said Bishop Provost. "In this day of prayer and formation, married couples have the opportunity to form their households into a faithful school of virtue."

The bishop continued,

"They can lead their children, grandchildren, or friends to the authentic freedom that comes from living a moral life in Jesus Christ."

*Together in Holiness* inspires spouses to live out their vocation in holiness and joy while empowering parents to form their children in the Catholic faith. It is intended for married couples — from newlyweds to empty nesters — as well as engaged couples.

The St. John Paul II Foundation is a national Catholic apostolate proclaiming the good news about life and family through education and formation. As St. John Paul II famously said, "As goes the family, so goes the nation, so goes the entire world in which we live."

The conference offers presentations from national and local speakers, Mass, Reconciliation, and Eucharistic Adoration.

National speaker will be Danielle Bean, creator and host of a weekly Catholic women's television talk show "The Gist," and host of the Girlfriends podcast. A wife and mother of eight, it is in her primary vocation to marriage and motherhood that Danielle finds the inspiration for all her work.

The Most Rev. Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will be the celebrant for the Mass and Marriage Blessing at 11:45 a.m. Conference topics and speakers include:

- Two presentations by Danielle Bean: The Family: A School of Virtue, and Overcoming Challenges of Living a Virtuous Life

- Thriving, Not Just Surviving: Virtues of a Joyful Marriage, presented by Rev. Whitney G. Miller, PhD, LPC; and Katie and Tommy McGrady, all from the Diocese of Lake Charles

A registration fee of \$64 per couple and \$40 per individual includes a box lunch and light afternoon snack. On-site childcare is available for \$5 per child. Partial or full scholarships are available for families needing financial assistance with registration costs.

For those interested in attending *Together in Holiness*, the full schedule and registration is available at [togetherinholiness.org](http://togetherinholiness.org). You can also contact Ellen Santoro, Senior Conference Coordinator, at [ellen@forlifeandfamily.org](mailto:ellen@forlifeandfamily.org) or 832-779-1070, for more information.

## Holy Week continues with Bishop Provost presiding

LAKE CHARLES — The Most Reverend Glen John Provost continues the celebration of Holy Week with the Solemn Commemoration of the Lord's Passion today – Good Friday – at 3 p.m. in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street.

The service begins with the Liturgy of the Word, followed by Veneration of the Cross with the faithful recognizing the "Cross of Christ" as their only hope of salvation. The celebration concludes with Holy Communion and all leaving in silence.

The Easter Vigil on Saturday, March 30, will begin at 8 p.m. in the Cathedral with the Service of Light outside the church.

The Cathedral parish will participate in the Seven Church Walk that will begin at 8:15 a.m. from the Convent of the Religious Sisters of Mercy at 1414 Martha Street. The walk, based on the Seven Last Words of Christ, will conclude at the Cathedral at approximately 1 p.m. Other stops on the Walk are Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church, St. Henry Catholic Church, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church, and the Chapel at St. Louis Catholic High School.

The Stations of the Cross will be prayed in the Cathedral at 10:00 a.m. with confessions (the Sacrament of Reconciliation) available from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon.

Cathedral Mass times for Easter Sunday, March 31, are 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., with Mass in Latin at 12:45 p.m. Bishop Provost is scheduled to celebrate the 9:30 a.m. Solemn Mass on Easter Sunday in the Cathedral.

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles remain closed today and on Easter Monday, April 1, reopening on Tuesday, April 2, at 8:30 a.m.



## Awarded with highest diocesan honor Deacon Stearns retires as Chancellor

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

MOSS BLUFF — Just when Deacon George Stearns had his professional life all mapped out, a phone call in 1972 began a chain of events rerouting him from Lubbock, Texas, to Lafayette, and eventually as long-time chancellor for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

“You never know how life is going to unfold,” Stearns told a room full of clergy and staff in The Lodge of Camp Karol for his farewell luncheon on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

After some 44 years of tireless dedication to the Diocese of Lake Charles — with close to 36 of those years as chancellor — Stearns retired on March 1. Before his work locally, he served the Diocese of Lafayette with various administrative assignments dating back to that phone call in 1972.

Bishop Glen John Provost, the third bishop for whom Deacon Stearns served as chancellor, described him as *sans pareil* — French for “peerless” or “without equal.”

“I would always call him the ‘memory of the Diocese,’” said Bishop Provost. “He had overseen the rebuilding of diocesan properties following storms, assisted three bishops with his expertise, functioned wearing innumerable ‘hats,’ including personnel director and insurance negotiator, and worked countless times over-and-above what was expected of him.”

In a letter written to Deacon Stearns upon the news of his retirement, Bishop Provost referred to him as a true “churchman,” stating, “Only those of a certain age and experience can truly understand how much of a compliment that is!”

He went on to say, “The Church is everything to a ‘churchman’ and guides his every thought and act of service.... Anyone holding a canonical office in the Church must have the good of the Church first and foremost in his mind. He is ‘on call’ and available to be of service at any time, to answer questions, keeping the larger picture in mind, and loving the Lord above all.”

### Road to the Chancery

After completing a master’s degree in history in 1970 from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now ULL), then being awarded a graduate teaching position at Texas Tech University in Lubbock to pursue a doctorate in U.S. diplomatic history, Stearns had his sights set on working for the State Department.

“In 1972, my wife received a phone call from a priest who was influential in my life and hers,” remarked Stearns. “Monsignor Richard Mouton called Suzanne, not me, saying, ‘It is time for George to come home.’”

At the time, Monsignor Mouton was the Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Lafayette. Two schools, each one going on 100 years old, were part of a desegregation

court case. Neither school wanted to merge.

“I was asked to administer two campuses, three nun principals, roughly 1,000 students, and 2,000 parents. Looking back on this, I was probably his last resort,” Stearns recalled with a chuckle.

“Whatever the case, I accepted the offer, still needing to finish my doctoral work. However, in time, I took a left turn from my dissertation, and I never turned back because my priorities changed,” he said.

It would take two years, but Stearns was successful in getting the schools to merge.

“It wasn’t easy working this situation out, but there was enough leadership among the students, parents, teachers, principals and community to make it work,” he said. “Those two years between 1972-1974 were the hardest and one of the most satisfying times in my life when things came together.”

Another phone call, this time from Father Charles LeBlanc, would redirect Stearns in 1974 to a teaching position at St. Louis Catholic High School while serving as Director of the Calcasieu Center for Catholic Studies, which was part of St. Louis at the time.

Stearns would make yet another turn, but it was the right time, he said. He and Suzanne moved their family to Lake Charles. They were still part of the Diocese of Lafayette until the Diocese of Lake Charles was established in 1980. He was also ordained a deacon in 1980 by Bishop Jude Speyrer, founding Bishop for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

Deacon Stearns remained at St. Louis and became Vicar for Christian Formation for the Diocese in 1983 until August 1988 when he was appointed chancellor, overseeing the diocese’s daily operations and serving as archivist.

At the time of his retirement, Stearns had also been serving as canonical Chief Finance Officer since January 2022 among countless other responsibilities over the years.

“I am so glad for Monsignor Mouton’s phone call in 1972. I would have been bored to death working behind a desk,” he said to a room full of laughter.

“My life has been very full and challenging with a whole lot of reward. Most importantly, without Suzanne’s support and sacrifice, none of this would have happened,” Stearns expressed. He and Suzanne have been married 56 years and have five daughters, 13 grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

“I thank Monsignor Mouton, Bishop Speyrer, Bishop (Edward) Braxton, and Bishop Provost for their confidence in me, along with the clergy and hundreds of others who have added their friendship and support.”

### Expression of gratitude

To show sincere gratitude on the part of the



Bishop Glen John Provost, the third bishop under whom Deacon George Stearns has worked in his nearly 44 years serving the local church of the Diocese of Lake Charles, presents Stearns with the Order of Saint Charles in the Companion class at a retirement luncheon in the Lodge of Camp Karol on March 7. This is the highest award that the bishop can bestow. Deacon Stearns retired on March 1, 2024, having been the Chancellor of the Diocese since August 1988.

Diocese, His Excellency presented Deacon Stearns with the Order of St. Charles in the Companion class. Named for the patron saint of the City of Lake Charles, this is the highest diocesan honor one can receive. The Companion class is limited to 12 living recipients.

In bestowing the honor, Bishop Provost said, “George, you must know of our love and admiration for you. I hope you realize the esteem with which this is given.”

“You were a gift, and are, to the Diocese because you used the gifts that God gave you with integrity and wisdom,” Bishop Provost continued. “We all benefited from it, George, and you need to know that.”

Bishop Speyrer created the award to afford

the diocesan bishop an opportunity to express his personal thanks to those who contributed in a special way to the welfare and development of the Church and the Diocese of Lake Charles. The award may be presented to members of the clergy and laity.

Bishop Provost extended his “abiding gratitude” and that of the entire diocese to Deacon Stearns.

“Your work and ministry have exceeded the common definition of *diaconia*, and you have raised expectations to another level,” His Excellency remarked. “You, Suzanne, and your family remain in our thoughts and prayers.”

## D.E.E.P. retreat for men slated for June 26-29

MOSS BLUFF — Saint Charles Center will host a “D.E.E.P.” retreat for men Wednesday, June 26, through Saturday, June 29, at Tabor Retreat House at Saint Charles Center, 2151 Sam Houston Jones Parkway. To register, call 337-855-1232, during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

D.E.E.P. is an acronym

for Discipleship, Eucharist, Evangelization, and Prayer. This retreat was developed to help attendees go “deeper” in their faith, by developing a closer relationship with the Lord, Jesus Christ by focusing on the removal of the vices that stand in the way of that relationship and striving to live the virtues which counteract those vices. There is a strong emphasis on building that

relationship with Christ through knowledge of the Catholic Faith, the Sacraments, and the points of the acronym — Discipleship, Eucharist, Evangelization and Prayer.

The D.E.E.P. Retreat is presented by Catholic priests, deacons and religious, with support provided by Catholic laity.

## An Afternoon with Christ

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Sunday, April 21, 2024

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



Father Michael Caraway  
Director of Vocations  
and Seminarians



NATIONAL  
Eucharistic  
Revival



PRAISE · ADORE · REFLECT

Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations and Seminarians, will lead the next session of “An Afternoon with Christ,” on Sunday, April 21 (World Day of Prayer for Vocations), in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Father Caraway also serves as Chaplain at St. Louis Catholic High School. The afternoon will begin at 3:00 p.m. with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a reflection by Father Caraway, and conclude with Benediction to end the afternoon by 4:00 p.m. 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.