



Following his Ordination and Installation as the Third Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles on Monday, April 23, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost stands between his predecessors, at left The Most Reverend Jude Speyrer, Founding Bishop, and The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, at right, the Second Bishop. Bishop-emeritus Speyrer served the Diocese from April 25, 1980 to Dec. 12, 2000 and Bishop Braxton led the Diocese from Feb. 22, 2001 to March 15, 2005.

Proud 2B Catholic Music Festival September 8

SULPHUR - The Second Annual Proud 2B Catholic Music Festival of Louisiana is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 8, from 12:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on the Sulphur High School Freshman Campus. The event is sponsored by the Office of Youth Ministry of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

This indoor event will open its doors at 12 noon and Eucharistic Adoration is scheduled on the main stage from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., according to Milissa Thibodeaux, director of the Office of Youth Ministry.

"This all-day festival is more than a concert," Thibodeaux said. "It is a faith-filled event for the entire family, featuring Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, an opportunity for Confession, motivational speakers, breakout sessions on key topics, and some of the best international recording artists, food concessions, Catholic product vendors and various organizations and ministries. It is an event with the youth in-mind, but is open to all ages and denominations."

One of the featured performers will be Tony Melendez, who plays the guitar with his feet. Melendez came to international prominence when he played for Pope John Paul II in 1987 in Los Angeles.

According to the biography on his website, Melendez was a "thalidomide baby," born without arms because his mother was prescribed thalidomide a drug used to help calm morning sickness during her pregnancy. He was brought to the Los Angeles area from Nicaragua to be fitted with artificial arms. He wore them until he was ten, when he disposed of them. "I didn't feel comfortable," he explains, "I could use my feet so much more."

His proficiency with his feet extended to more areas than just day-to-day care. He remembers that "at first, I started playing push-button organ. Then in high school I began playing around with the guitar and harmonica." He also began writing his own songs. Whether it was "playing around" with music or merely adjusting to a normal high school routine, Tony never let his handicap get in his way. "I was pretty secure in what I could do," he says.

It was also in high school that he became deeply involved in the Catholic Church. "I went when I was a kid because my parents took me. I drifted away as I got a little older. When I was in high school, my brother kept saying 'come on, you've gotta go. It's great!' So I went again and made a lot of friends, and wound up changing my life in the process."

A variety of Catholic Christian music will also be performed by Father Stan Fortuna, Josh Blakesley, Cooper Ray, Nichole Ackoury, Gabriel's Cry, Endless Days, Clay Vessel and more.

Keynote speakers will include Father Stan, Jesse Romero, Cooper Ray, Josh Blakesley, Karlo Broussard, Christina Theriot, Dumb Ox Productions, Kenny Lantier, Augie and more.

Last year's festival had an attendance of more than 1,500 people. "It is our prayer that this event brings over 3,000 people from Louisiana and other Southern states to the festival this year," Thibodeaux said.

For those interested in registering for the event, tickets may be purchased online at www.proud2bcatholic.com or by contacting Thibodeaux at the Diocese of Lake Charles at 337-439-7426 Ext. 301. She can also be reached via e-mail at youth.ministry@lcdioocese.org.

Afternoon of Reflection on HIV/AIDS held

LAKE CHARLES - A crowd of 170, 125 youth and 45 adults, attended the "Afternoon of Reflection on HIV/AIDS Awareness" for African youth of the Central and North Lake Charles communities held at Sacred Heart of Jesus gymnasium. The April 15 event was sponsored by the Diocese of Lake Charles Office of Black Catholics and the Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). Area churches were also invited to participate in the event.

According to Deacon Edward Lavine, Director of the Office of Black Catholics, statistics indicate African American adolescents and young adults account for 46 percent of total AIDS cases

diagnosed in people 13-24 years old through the year 2002. With 61 percent of AIDS cases newly diagnosed among the above age groups in 2002, this indicates the figures are increasing and that African Americans account for 40 percent of total estimated AIDS diagnoses through 2004, although African Americans make up only 12.2 percent of the population. They also represent an estimated 50 percent of persons newly diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 2004.

Hispanics account for 19 percent of total estimated AIDS diagnosis through 2004, though they make up only 14.2 percent of the population.

The number of Asian/Pa-

cific Islanders and American/Alaskan natives living with AIDS continue to rise. With approximately a 10 percent increase each year over the past five years.

White adolescents and young adults represent an estimated 25 percent of all persons ages 20-24 who were newly diagnosed with HIV in 2002.

According to Deacon Lavine, because of the epidemic proportions of AIDS cases in the African American community, the Black Catholic Office will continue to share with the African American community the importance of AIDS awareness and promoting abstinence as was the main thrust and objective of the conference.

Dr. Donald R. Parker was the keynote speaker and presented a power-point presentation, reviewing with those present that they are responsible for their actions and noting that they need to be aware of the consequences if they indulge in premarital sex. Dr. Parker made an effort to emphasize Christian principles referring to the Scriptures in reference to promiscuous behavior.

All the youth present were given a pledge card promising to abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage.

Truman Trail, a Senior at McNeese State University, gave a faith testimonial to the audience with reference to his conversion experience which the youth present were able to identify. Mr. Trail himself a young man in his early 20s, conveyed his message to the youth in a way the young people could really understand.

The Southwest LA Health Service Center, through Mrs. Deborah Guillory, handed out information to the attendees in reference to practicing celibacy until marriage, as well as information and tools to use as they may have peer pressure: how to say no and mean it, and males needing to understand that NO means NO.

Craig Johnson, Sacred Heart Youth Director announced that churches represented were Christian Baptist Church, Zion Tabernacle Baptist Church, Christian Baptist Church, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Mount Olive Baptist Church, Throne of Grace Fellowship Church, St. Henry Catholic Church, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, all of Lake Charles, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Welsh and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church of Jennings.

The conference was the second of two, the first following the return from the National Black Catholic Congress IX in 2002, at which principles were set and the agenda for Black Catholics to follow through for five years, planting the seed on different issues - Spirituality, Parish Life, Youth and Young Adults, Catholic Education, Social Justice, Africa and HIV/AIDS.

The Office of Black Catholics has been focusing in Social Justice, Youth and Young Adults, HIV/AIDS and Catholic Education since Congress IX and as the diocese begins preparation to participate in Congress X, which is scheduled for July 12-15. According to Deacon Lavine, the focus continues to be on the previously mentioned principles.



A crowd of 175 young people and adults were on hand for the recent Afternoon of Reflection on HIV/AIDS for African-American youth held in the Sacred Heart of Jesus gymnasium. The Diocesan Office of Black Catholics and the Sacred Heart Catholic Youth Organization sponsored the event, according to Deacon Edward Lavine, Director of the Office of Black Catholics.

Bishop Provost makes several appointments

LAKE CHARLES - The Most Reverend Glen John Provost has made a number of appointments, confirmations, and affirmations to provide for the needs of the Church entrusted to his care in his first official act following his Ordination and Installation as Bishop of Lake Charles.

In the decree signed by Bishop Provost on Monday, April 23, he confirmed Deacon George Stearns in the office of Chancellor of the Diocese. Deacon Stearns has served as Chancellor under

previous Bishops Jude Speyrer and Edward K. Braxton.

Bishop Provost also re-established the Presbyteral Council as well as noted that the College of Consultors continues to function according to the common law of the Church.

The Bishop also decreed that the Deans of the three deaneries of the Diocese, Rev. Archimandrite Herbert J. May in the East Deanery, Rev. William Miller, Central Deanery, and Rev. Msgr. Vincent Sedita in the Western

Deanery, would continue to fulfill the office entrusted to them.

Rev. Msgr. Jace Eskin, Rev. Albert Borel, and Rev. Archimandrite May were also confirmed as Judicial Vicar, Adjutant Judicial Vicar, and Judge, respectively, in the Diocesan Tribunal.

The Bishop also decreed that all other diocesan officials, committees, and commissions are to fulfill the mandate issued them by his predecessor.



Ruben Buller, left, and Nathan Long, right, were admitted to candidacy for Holy Orders during a recent ceremony in the Chapel at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans by The Most Reverend David Choby, Bishop of Nashville.

Two admitted to Candidacy for Holy Orders

NEW ORLEANS - Two seminarians studying for the priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles were admitted to Candidacy for Holy Orders recently in ceremonies held in the Chapel of Notre Dame Seminary.

The Most Reverend David Choby, Bishop of Nashville, officially admitted Ruben Joshua Buller of St. Charles Borromeo Church in Fenton and Nathan Long of St. Raphael Church in Iowa. The Rite of Admission is celebrated when a seminarian has reached maturity of purpose regarding his vocation and has shown the necessary qualities for ordained ministry. Through this liturgical rite, a seminarian makes a public intention of receiving Holy Orders and resolves to continue his preparation, in mind and spirit, in order to give faithful service to Christ and His Church.

During the celebration, Bishop Choby reflected on the instruction inviting the candidates to recognize the challenges they will face in their lives as seminarians and as priests in the future. He encouraged the candidates to continue their preparation for ordination confident that Christ would support them through the Church.

In June, the candidates will begin a seven-month internship, during which they will continue to learn more about ministry through parish experience and pastoral supervision.