



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, sprinkles Holy Water onto the people and the church building of St. Eugene Parish in Grand Chenier on Saturday, June 16. Bishop Provost, assisted by Deacon George Stearns, re-dedicated the church, which had to be rebuilt following the destruction caused by Hurricane Rita in September 2005.

## Bishop Provost blesses, re-dedicates St. Eugene

GRAND CHENIER – St. Eugene Church became the first church of the Diocese of Lake Charles in lower Cameron Parish to be re-dedicated recently. The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, blessed St. Eugene during Mass on Saturday, June 16. The church was devastated in September 2005 by wind and water from Hurricane Rita's landfall on the Gulf Coast.

Work nears completion at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron, while reconstruction at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Creole continues. On the western side of the Calcasieu Ship Channel, in Hackberry, work also continues at St. Peter the Apostle Church.

The Chapel of the Assumption at Johnson Bayou, the church closest to landfall of Hurricane Rita, was reopened in time for Easter 2006.

In upper Cameron Parish, St. Mary of the Lake Church in Big Lake, which was inundated by more than 18 inches of water from the storm, was restored and blessed in late January 2007 by the Reverend Monsignor Harry D. Greig.

An overflow crowd of parishioners and well wishers were on hand for Saturday's blessing including leaders of other faith traditions in the area.

Bishop Provost blessed water and then walked throughout the church sprinkling the people and the walls of the church.

He told those in attendance, which included Pat and Elton Louviere who were responsible for the painting of a wall size mural behind the altar depicting the Crucifixion, that St. Eugene was the first church he visited on the coast after he arrived in Lake Charles.

"I went to visit each of the churches devastated by Hurricane Rita and St. Eugene here was the first I visited," Bishop Provost said. "I was most impressed with the indomitable spirit of the people, that would resurrect, as it were, such an edifice for worship of God and for the community here in Grand Chenier. I want to complement you and Father Vincent on the very fine re-building of this church. I am delighted to be here this afternoon to bless the building and to designate it as a very special place for worship and prayer as it has been for so many years."

Bishop Provost next spoke about a recent interview he had with a reporter from the New Orleans Times Picayune. The reporter had been seeking information about the area post-Rita and as the interview was finishing, asked the Bishop, "What in your opinion does the Catholic Church have to offer to the area, especially in light of the storms and the destruction afterward?"

"I said, I think that the Catholic Church is here to stay," Bishop Provost said, "A lot of things come and go but the Catholic Church and its witness sticks around. It stuck around in the 19th century with the Yellow Fever epidemic in this area and New Orleans. We can not forget that it was the priests and the nuns of the Church, when everyone else fled, it was the Church that was there during those dreadful times of cholera and yellow fever. This is in our history books."

"Throughout the storms that occurred, particularly of Hurricane Audrey, which I remember as a child growing up and the devastation that followed it, and the response of people like Bishop Schexnayder and those in this area and the rebuilding of the churches, it is that same spirit that continues," the Bishop said. "Some things come and go and some people come and go, some organizations come and go but the Church is always here to stay. It is that fidelity, it is that perse-

verance, it is that patience which I think is the mark of the presence of the Catholic Church."

He noted the great symbolism achieved with the rebuilding of St. Eugene. "It is highly symbolic in the sense that it represents a resurrection of sorts, a continuance of that same presence of the Church in this area. It is more than just a building, it is representative of the spirit, the faith, that can not be conquered. The faith which does not die. The faith that has been with us for centuries, which is manifested in the lives of the faithful such as you who join this afternoon to re-dedicate this church."

The Bishop noted that at the start of the Liturgy the walls of the church and the people within those walls were blessed with Holy Water.

"How tame that water was!" he said. "It wasn't tame almost two years ago with Hurricane Rita – nothing tame about that. We look back in the scriptures and see this destructive force. Chaos was always represented in the Old Testament with water."

He then went on to point out instances in the Bible where water played a role, such as in Genesis, with the creation of the world, the story of Noah and the Flood, and the story of Jonah and the Whale. In the New Testament, there is Jesus changing water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana.

"The first miracle of Jesus – changing of water into wine – is a sign and a foreshadowing of what he will do when he takes that same wine and says "this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant," Bishop Provost said.

"Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night and speaks about eternal life and Jesus says to him "unless one is born again by water and the spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God," the Bishop continued. "That "born again" we celebrate in two important sacraments which are pivotal to the life of any Christian, not to mention Catholic. One is the sacrament of Baptism, which is water tamed to bring about new life, and other is the blood of the Eucharist which is that blood that we drink in union with our Lord, to become more fully like him."

St. Eugene's pastor, Father Vincent Vadakkedath, told the crowd how he and they should "rejoice and be glad".

To rousing applause, he said. "We are so happy to be here. We have been waiting for this glorious day. Bishop Provost we are so happy you are with us today. I thank you for coming to Grand Chenier. This the very first church you have blessed as Bishop of Lake Charles, it is your first born, never forget it."

## Blessings of Audrey mass graves July 1

LAKE CHARLES – The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will preside over the blessing of the mass graves of more than 150 victims of Hurricane Audrey on Sunday, July 1. Last Wednesday, June 27, was the 50th Anniversary of the storm that killed more than 500 people.

The Bishop will bless the gravesite of victims at Combre Memorial Park, located at 2701 Opelousas Street, at 4:30 p.m., then travel to Highland Memorial Gardens, 6325 Common Street to bless the gravesite there.

## Delegation set for Congress X

LAKE CHARLES – A delegation of Catholic men and women will represent the Diocese of Lake Charles next month at the National Black Catholic Congress X in Buffalo, New York. Deacon Edward Lavine, Director of the Office of Black Catholics for the Diocese, will lead the group, which includes Paul Pitre of St Joseph Parish in Welsh; La Wanda Gibson of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Jennings; Jo Ann Garland of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Lake Charles; and Jackie Matthews and Chantell Smith, both of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Lake Charles. Also attending will be the Rev. Timothy Goodly, Pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary.

They will be among thousands of other representatives from dioceses across the country at Congress X on July 12-15. Those attending will be reflecting on the eight Core Principles within a Sacramental Vision, which were espoused at Congress

IX. Those eight Principles are Spirituality, Parish Life, Catholic Education, Youth And Young Adults Social Justice, Africa, Racism and HIV/AIDS.

According to Deacon Lavine, the delegation will return home with a national plan of action as a guide for the local dioceses throughout the country connecting the spiritual gifts of the Sacraments and the action called for by the Principles. "This will enable us to build up our parishes and institutions by continuing to promote a logical understanding of Liturgy and Life, retaining and reclaiming parishioners and strengthening our Evangelization efforts of which Social Justice is an essential part," Deacon Lavine said.

In preparation for the Congress several hundred took part in a Day of Reflection for Black Catholics. "Those who attended reflected on the above eight principles and how spiritual renewal through the Seven Sacraments transform our

lives and also move us to work for transformation of our communities," Deacon Lavine continued. "The Day of Reflection attendees connected the Spiritual Gifts of the Sacraments and the called for Actions by the eight principles."

The focus questions reflected on throughout the Day of Reflection, as well as throughout the year were:

- How do the Sacraments speak to our experiences and nourish us in our journeys, both as individuals and as a community?
- How can Black Catholics bring our particular experiences and gifts to enrich the Sacramental Life of the Church?
- How do the Sacraments, which are so fundamental to our Catholicism, also serve as the foundation and impetus for our action in the Black community, that is for our ongoing work to fulfill the eight core principles declared at the National Black Congress IX?



The Diocese of Lake Charles will be represented by a delegation at the National Black Catholic Congress X to be held July 12-15 in Buffalo, New York. Deacon Edward Lavine, director of Black Catholic Ministry for the Diocese, will lead the group. Those attending include, from left, Paul Pitre, Chantell Smith, Jo Ann Garland, Deacon Lavine, and La Wanda Gibson. Others attending will be Jackie Matthews and Rev. Timothy Goodly.



A large number of young people and staff attended the 2007 Christian Leadership and the Advanced Christian Leadership Institutes held at Emory Wallace Retreat Center at Bundick Lake near DeRidder recently. The annual events provide leadership training for Catholic youth and young adults.