



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK MASS

Bishop reflects on excellence in Catholic education

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Catholic school students in the Diocese of Lake Charles were treated to an impromptu piano performance by His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, following the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on January 29.

He was eager to grant the request of a student asking him to play but not before inquiring if anyone in the audience knew which famous composer's birthday occurred a couple of days prior on January 27.

St. Louis Catholic High School senior, Colin Tanner, shouted, "Mozart!" from the choir loft where he had been singing earlier with the St. Louis choir for the Mass.

In honor of the bishop's favorite composer, His Excellency played a piece from Mozart's *Andante* much to the delight of the students, teachers and principals gathered.

Since childhood, Bishop Provost (now 75) has studied music, enjoys playing the piano, and served as house organist at the seminaries where he attended in high school and college.

In celebration of National Catholic Schools Week — this year January 26-February 1 — Bishop Provost officiated a special Mass for seniors from St. Louis Catholic High and eighth-grade students from the other five Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles. Music was provided by choir students from St. Louis and Our Lady Queen

of Heaven Catholic School.

Seeking the intercession of St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of schools and universities, students, philosophers, theologians, apologists, academics, and chastity, the bishop reflected on the importance of excellence in Catholic education.

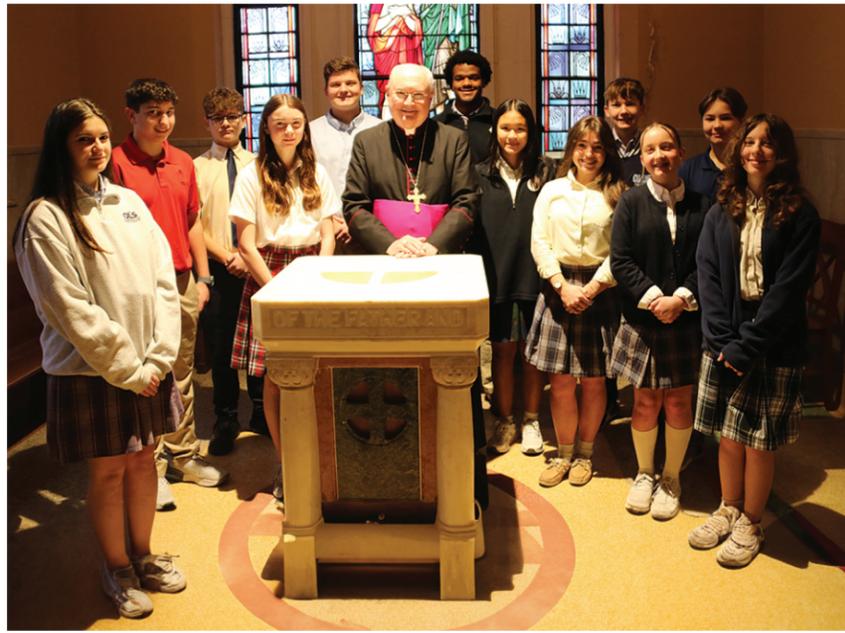
"We speak of excellence in education, but what does excellence mean for a school that is Catholic?" His Excellency asked, noting that the primary role is to instill in students a knowledge of the love of Jesus Christ.

"Excellence means doing something well. Excellence tells us we are dealing with something above average. Catholic education is excellent only when it meets the criteria set down for us by Christ himself," he explained.

Referencing the Gospel of Mark 4:1-20 when Jesus tells the Twelve Apostles, "The mystery of the Kingdom of God has been granted to you," Bishop Provost said that those words are challenging to him because all bishops descend from the Apostles.

"The message is challenging because Jesus wants his bishops to grasp the mysteries before anyone else," he remarked, "so that those mysteries can be explained and taught to those who will come to believe in Jesus Christ."

Redirecting his focus to Catholic Schools Week, Bishop Provost said, "Catholic schools are the extension of the teaching office of bishops, the successors of the Apostles. ... We are all teachers, but teachers in Catholic schools have an added responsibility."



School representatives joining Bishop Glen John Provost in the Baptistry of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception before the Catholic Schools Week Mass on January 29 are front row, from left, Lyvie Rosteet (OLS), Brooks Burleigh (ICCS), Tran Do (OLQH), Abigail Williams (SLCHS), Madison Chapman (OLI), and Alice Moreno (SMCS). Back row, from left, are Charis Bentley (ICCS), Raleigh Chapman (SMCS), Landry Taylor (OLS), Nathan Ughovwa (SLCHS), Jackson Downs (OLQH), and Abram Powell (OLI).

The bishop also emphasized to the students that their place in Catholic schools is all part of God's plan.

Prompting the teachers and students to recognize that they are called to excellence, not mediocrity, the bishop said, "True excellence consists in embracing the call of Jesus Christ to grasp the mystery of the Kingdom of God."

After Mass, Bishop Provost invited the students to ask him questions. They learned that St. Thomas Aquinas is among his favorite saints, the Eucharistic Prayer is his favorite part of the Mass, and a few of his favorite scriptures are Psalm 23, the Sermon on the Mount, and the beginning of St. Luke's Gospel during Advent.

When asked what advice he has for Catholics wanting to grow in their faith, Bishop Provost responded succinctly, "Make time for Catholicism. Go to Mass. Study what the Church teaches and follow Her advice."

Another student requested the bishop's advice for those who are leaders in their schools. "Be clear minded. Never act on impulse. Give your actions solid thought and prayer, then act decisively," he said.

Bishop Provost shared that he could remember wanting to be a doctor before he considered entering the seminary when he was in high school. He also added that he thought about being an archaeologist, a

musician, and a teacher. However, there were signs that led him to the path of priesthood.

"I knew a lot of dedicated priests and admired them. (Bishop Provost grew up in the Diocese of Lafayette.) I read a lot of history. When you read history and you are honest, you become a Catholic," he remarked. "It made sense for me to become a priest."

Concelebrating the Mass with Bishop Provost were the Very Rev. Ruben Buller, V.G., Pastor of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception; and the Very Rev. Keith Pellerin, Pastor of Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church in Jennings. The Very Rev. Joseph Caraway, Chancellor, served as master of ceremonies.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles are St. Louis Catholic High School, Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School, and Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School, all in Lake Charles; Our Lady's Catholic School in Sulphur; and Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School in Jennings.

The annual Catholic Schools Week Mass was coordinated by Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M., Director of the Office of Religious Education for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

To learn more about Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles, call the Office of Catholic Schools at 337-433-9640, Ext. 400.



At the request of a student, His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, plays the piano following the annual Catholic Schools Week Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on January 29.

2025 Diocesan Students of the Year announced

The Office of Catholic Schools announces the Diocese of Lake Charles 2025 Student of the Year winners for elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Winners are Abigail Williams, Grade 12, St. Louis Catholic High School in Lake Charles; Anna Alcock, Grade 8, St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School in Lake Charles; and Louis Harrell, Grade 5, Immaculate Conception Cathedral School in Lake Charles.

Abigail is the daughter of Luke and Alicia Williams; Anna is the daughter of Darren and Emily Alcock; and Louis is the son of Dr. Brian and Lauren Harrell.

The winners were chosen from the school level Students of the Year on Friday, February 7, at the Chancery of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles. They advanced to the state competition in the Diocese of Baton Rouge on Monday, March 10, to compete in the Louisiana Catholic Student of the Year Program.

The competition is open to Catholic schools in the state's seven dioceses — Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Houma-Thibodaux, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Shreveport, and the Archdiocese

of New Orleans. The program is designed to recognize outstanding students in grades 5, 8, and 12 who have demonstrated excellence in discipleship, leadership, service, citizenship, and academic achievement.

Other winners at the school level were:

• **Immaculate Conception Cathedral School:** Grade 8 — Charis Bentley, son of Mark and Erin Bentley

• **St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School:** Grade 5 — Christian Istre, son of Jeremy and Jennifer Istre

• **Our Lady Immaculate Catholic School (Jennings):** Grade 8 — Abram Powell, son of Casey and Erin Powell; Grade 5 — Abram Gillespie, son of Aaron and Valarie Gillespie

• **Our Lady's Catholic School (Sulphur):** Grade 8 — Lyvie Rosteet, daughter of Scott and Rozilind Rosteet; Grade 5 — Sam Benoit, son of Stephen and Mindy Benoit

Winners were selected for the Diocesan Student of the Year honor based on academic achievement, school organization participation, community service, leadership activities, an essay writing assignment, and an interview with a panel of four judges.



ABIGAIL WILLIAMS
Grade 12
SLCHS



ANNA ALCOCK
Grade 8
SMCS



LOUIS HARRELL
Grade 5
ICCS

Lenten food drive under way to help feed the hungry

In a letter addressing the Faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles, Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director for Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, made a plea to help fill the warehouse shelves with food for the monthly distributions across the

region of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis parishes.

"Lent is a special time of almsgiving to the poor, and today, I ask for your help," Sister Marie Josepha said. "Last year, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana distributed nearly 1 million pounds of food

to over 9,000 individuals across the Diocese of Lake Charles. However, due to recent cuts in USDA food deliveries, our Food Bank stock is critically low and we are relying more heavily on food collected through donations and food drives."

Many church parishes across the Diocese have

responded generously to the Lenten food drive in the past. Sister Marie Josepha stressed that this year, more than ever, the need is great for that generous response and continued support.

"I ask you to give generously to your parish's Lenten food drive to support CCSWLA, and

consider making regular donations throughout the year," she said. "All non-perishable canned and dry items are needed."

Food donations may be sent directly to Catholic Charities by using the link: <https://a.co/4gomYU0>. Monetary donations may be mailed to Catholic

Charities of Southwest Louisiana, 1225 Second Street, Lake Charles, LA 70601.

Sister Marie Josepha closed her letter with gratitude to the community for helping Catholic Charities be Christ's merciful love to those who suffer.

Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

March 21, 2025

March 30 Jazz Brunch will benefit Catholic Charities

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — For the first time since 2019, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana is bringing back its annual Jazz Brunch fundraiser to benefit its ministry of serving the poor.

The event will be Sunday, March 30, at the Historic Cash and Carry, 801 Enterprise Boulevard. Doors and silent auction open at 10:30 a.m. with the blessing and brunch beginning at 11:30 a.m.

While many associate Catholic Charities with food distribution and disaster recovery efforts, the agency provides a variety of other valuable services.

Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director, reminds people that Catholic Charities is here to serve the community, and it doesn't have to always be for massive disasters.

"We are also here for the disasters of everyday life and survival," she emphasized, noting that Catholic Charities is very grant dependent.

It has been more than four years since Hurricane Laura and six years since the last Jazz Brunch. The needs — both monetarily and through volunteer efforts — are great.

"I want to remind the community, remind our donors, and remind our friends across our five-parish region (Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis) that we are here," said Sister Marie Josepha, "but we need support to continue our good works."

Some of those good works include rent and utilities assistance, help with prescription and funeral costs, SNAP applications, food bank, prisoner re-entry services, homeless outreach and a laundry/shower trailer.

The theme for this year's Jazz Brunch is "Hope — a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" (cf. Hebrews 6:19).

Sister Marie Josepha said the theme is very fitting in this Jubilee Year of Hope. "A lot of what Catholic Charities does is give people hope," she remarked. "I see our work as a participation in the mission of the Church, to bring people to Christ, to help them experience in some kind of way in a moment of need, the mercy and love of God."

Entertainment for the brunch will feature professional saxophonist Marcus Davis, who volunteers his time with the laundry/shower trailer. The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, will also play a selection of music on the piano for the added enjoyment of those attending.

Another highlight of the brunch will be the recognition of Rick and Donna Richard, and Sandy Gay for their many years of service and generosity to Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

Sister Marie Josepha sees the fundraiser as valuable time to connect with people who have been supportive throughout the years.

She said that a goal of hers in 2025 is to get out more to the 11 food distribution sites to meet more of the volunteers and donors.

She remarked, "I am looking forward to seeing the people we are serving and meeting people who really want to be there serving. It is so enlivening!"

Ticket Information

Reserved tables of eight in the following categories include: Charity Table for \$3,000; Hope Table for \$2,000; and Faith Table for \$1,000; along with individual tickets for \$100 each.

To purchase tickets, donate a silent auction item, or make a monetary donation, visit www.catholiccharitiesswla.com. You may also call Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana at 337-439-7436 or email reception@catholiccharitiesswla.org for more information.

Cash, checks and credit cards will be accepted for payment of winning auction bids on the day of the Jazz Brunch.

Impact Report

Sister Marie Josepha shares highlights of how the faithful support of donors impacted the charitable works of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana during 2024.

- **Food Bank:** 994,251 pounds of food distributed to 9,030 individuals at 11 sites throughout Southwest Louisiana
- **SNAP (Food Stamps) Application Assistance:** over 400 individuals
- **Monetary Assistance:** 1,035 families and thousands of individuals reached with \$734,076.86 distributed for home repairs, rent and utility payments, prescription medications, funeral assistance, bus tickets and more

- **Disaster Relief:** 33 households were helped with furniture; 6 households with appliances; 30 households/55 individuals with repairs; and 45 households/80 individuals given A/C, fans, or heaters
- **Utilities:** 264 households and 662 individuals were helped with utilities for a total of \$79,180.09
- **Rent Assistance:** 474 households and 1,206 individuals were assisted with rent/mortgage for a total of \$341,352.15
- **Laundry / Shower Trailer:** 421 hot showers and 773 loads of laundry
- **Homeless Outreach:** over 318 individuals and 78 households achieved permanent housing
- **Volunteer Hours:** 8,551 hours logged

For more information on the amazing work of Catholic Charities, visit <https://www.catholiccharitiesswla.com/impact-report>

If you are interested in helping with the ministry of Catholic Charities, email volunteer@catholiccharitiesswla.org. Individuals and groups are welcome.



20 Jazz
25 Brunch

Benefitting Catholic Charities
of Southwest Louisiana

Sunday, March 30th
The Historic Cash and Carry
801 Enterprise Blvd

Doors and Silent Auction open at 10:30 AM
Brunch begins at 11:30 AM

	Charity	Hope	Faith
	\$3000 per table	\$2000 per table	\$1250 per table

	Gift from Bishop	Premium Champagne	Table Sponsors named in programs	Table Sponsors named on social media	Gift from Catholic Charities SWLA
Charity Table Seating for 8	🍷	🍷	🍷	🍷	🍷
Hope Table Seating for 8		🍷	🍷	🍷	🍷
Faith Table Seating for 8			🍷	🍷	🍷
Individual Ticket (\$100 each)					🍷



2025 Quiz Bowl Champions

The top teams in the 2025 Diocesan Quiz Bowl are from Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy (West Deanery) and a homeschool team, Saint John Paul II in Jennings (East Deanery). This year there were two divisions — PREP (for students who receive religious education weekly through their parish religious education program) and OPEN (for students who receive religious education daily).

A total of 14 teams from across the Diocese of Lake Charles — including area schools, church parishes, and homeschool groups — competed in the eighth annual Quiz Bowl at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic School on Saturday, February 22.

- The winning PREP teams are:**
- 1st place — Our Lady of LaSalette Parish, \$400 cash prize
 - 2nd place — St. Martin de Porres Parish, \$200 cash prize

- 3rd place — Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Lake Charles, \$100 cash prize
- 4th place — St. Joseph Parish in Vinton, \$60 cash prize

- The winning OPEN teams are:**
- 1st place — Saint John Paul II Homeschool Team, East Deanery, \$400 cash prize
 - 2nd place — Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Team #1, \$200 cash prize
 - 3rd place — Immaculate Conception Cathedral School, Team #2, \$100 cash prize
 - 4th place — Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Team #2, \$60 cash prize

Also participating this year were teams from St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School and St. Joseph Catholic Church in DeRidder. Congratulations to all of our students who participated and to Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M., Director of Religious Education, for all of her hard work for the annual event.

Diaconate ordination set for LaRocca on March 29



Hunter LaRocca

LAKE CHARLES — Hunter LaRocca will advance one step closer to the priesthood on Saturday, March 29, 2025, when he is ordained a transitional deacon by the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles.

The Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, 935 Bilbo Street. It will be livestreamed on the Lake Charles Vocations Facebook page for those unable to attend.

Hunter graduated with a

Master of Divinity from Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans on December 12, 2024. He has been serving at the Cathedral since that time under the guidance of the pastor, the Very Reverend Ruben J. Buller, Vicar General.

Hunter's home parish is Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in Lake Charles. Please keep Hunter and all our Seminarians in your prayers as they continue in their formation for priesthood for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

OBRA TEATRAL SOBRE LOS MISTERIOS LUMINOSOS Y DOLOROSOS

La vida de Jesús desde Su Bautismo hasta la Cruz
200 actores. Entrada gratuita, se aceptan donaciones

DOMINGO 6 DE ABRIL
2:15pm.
- SOLO 1 FUNCIÓN -
Iglesia Católica St. Henry

LIVE LUMINOUS & SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

Play about Jesus from His Baptism until the Cross
200 actors. Free event, donations welcome

SUNDAY, APRIL 6TH, at 2:15pm
- ONLY 1 SHOW -

St. Henry Catholic Church
1021 8th Avenue, Lake Charles, LA



OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM: Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M.; with team members and team leader (from left) Justin Edwards, Henry Purcell, Molly Fontenot, Isabelle Fontenot, Ruby Augustine, and Erin Fontenot.



PREP CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM: Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M.; with team members and team leader (from left) Jonah Hagen, Michael Arendt, Kinley Thompson, Lily Chiasson, and Twila Hagen.

Make plans to join the Saint Henry Catholic Church Community on Sunday, April 6, for a live performance of the Luminous and Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. Your one chance to watch this amazing and powerful play, with more than 200 International actors from 10 countries, will begin at 2:15 p.m. behind the Community Center. The length of the play is approximately 90 minutes. Take a trip back in time and experience in the most real way possible a bilingual theatrical performance (Spanish and English) about the Life and Death of Jesus Christ. The live performance is free; however, donations are welcome.