



BISHOP PROVOST'S 2026 EASTER MESSAGE

Sacraments are born during Sacred Triduum

"I have seen the Lord." John 20:18

Let us hasten to the tomb with Mary Magdalen, where she is disturbed to find it empty. The angel asks her and the two accompanying her why they seek the living among the dead (cf. Luke 24:5).

Let us sit with her as she ponders the silence of that first Easter morning and meets the Lord Himself, whom she mistakes for the gardener and does so until He speaks her name.

Let us accompany her as she goes immediately to the Apostles to announce, "I have seen the Lord."

What amazement she must have experienced, the muted joy transformed into proclamation!

Let us hasten with Peter and John to sense the Paschal Mystery's marvelous culmination, the burial cloths lying folded, the tension between shock and belief. In the empty tomb did the prophecy of Ezekiel enter their minds: "Thus says the Lord God, O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them!" (Ezekiel 37:12).

Let us enter the Upper Room, where the apostles are locked for fear of arrest. Suddenly our resurrected Lord appears to them saying, "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). Only John was present at the Crucifixion. Peter had denied Jesus three times. Judas had despaired fatally. As best we know, all the others had sought to hide. The first words of our Lord to them are not words of reprimand but of reconciliation and forgiveness. He explains Himself by giving them a commission: "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (John 20:22-23).

The Sacraments are born within the Passion, Death, and Resurrection. Beginning with the Sacrament of Penance, God's forgiveness teaches us how we are to forgive. If God can forgive us, as wretched as we are and guilty of the evil to which we consent, then we can forgive others. The source of this reconciliation is the Paschal Mystery.

In fact, Easter is the climax of the Paschal Mystery. The Passion, Death, and Resurrection merge, as it were, into one victorious, salvific moment. That mys-



Pedro Carlucci receives the Sacrament of Confirmation by Bishop Glen John Provost during the Easter Vigil on Saturday, April 4, 2026, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Carlucci was among 260 throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles who were sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and brought into full communion with the Catholic Church. (Photography credit: Matthew R. Johnson)

tery is the origin of the Sacraments. The Sacraments are born during the Sacred Triduum. The Eucharist finds its origins here, as well as Baptism with Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Priesthood.

Through the Sacraments God shares His redemptive life with us. When our Lord commands His apostles to "do this in memory of me" (cf. Luke 22:19), the priesthood is made manifest. When at Calvary the side of our Lord is pierced with a lance, blood and water flow forth (cf. John 19:34) to herald the waters of Baptism and the redemptive Blood of the Eucharist. When on that first Easter night our Lord speaks those words of forgiveness and commission to His apostles (cf. John 20:19, 22-23), the Church is tasked with celebrating forgiveness and bringing this reconciliation to the world.

Mystery here is not meant to be a puzzle. Paschal mystery refers to its inexhaustibility. We never reach

the bottom of the well, for the water never stops flowing. We could spend an entire lifetime in contemplation and fail to articulate the mystery's depth. We would have only scratched the surface of reality.

So, we enter the empty tomb. We join Mary Magdalen in wonder, Peter and John in marveling at the dawn of faith, the Apostles in receiving forgiveness and peace. We are the recipients of the Graces flowing from Sacraments whose origin is the Last Supper, the Sacrifice of Calvary, and the liberation of the Resurrection. To the Body of Christ, we say, "Amen." At the confession of our sins, we hear, "Go in peace." In Baptism we share the life of the Trinity. When confirmed, we receive the Holy Spirit's Seven Gifts. "From His fulness we have all received, grace in place of grace" (John 1:16).

With Mary Magdalen, we say to the world, "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18).



LEFT: Bishop Glen John Provost holds a palm branch after blessing the palms at the beginning of Holy Week. **MIDDLE:** Bishop Provost genuflects before venerating the Wood of the Cross on Good Friday. **RIGHT:** The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception is illuminated with the Light of Christ at the beginning of the Solemn Easter Vigil on April 4. **BELOW RIGHT:** The faithful gather inside and outside the St. Bernadette Oratory as the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the Altar of Repose following the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. **BELOW LEFT:** Bishop Provost consecrates the Oil of Chrism and blesses the Oil of Catechumens and Oil of the Sick that will be used at parishes throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles during celebration of the sacraments.



Photography credit: Victoria Watson



Photography credit for images above: Matthew R. Johnson



CATHOLIC CHARITIES JAZZ BRUNCH



Fundraiser shines spotlight on silent heroes who help carry out mission of serving the poor

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — One could easily agree that the good works of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana can be described as “active love.” It is all about the day in and day out labor in showing up for the people God places in our path.

The annual Jazz Brunch fundraiser on *Laetare* Sunday, March 15, 2026, offered a festive opportunity at the Historic Cash & Carry for approximately 225 supporters to hear how the non-profit agency brings Christ’s merciful love to those in need throughout Southwest Louisiana.

Laetare is Latin for rejoice, and there was plenty to celebrate — from a silent auction with competitive online bidding; a delicious brunch provided by Roderick Stutes and Cheers Event Services; the smooth sounds of “The Sharp Nines,” a jazz trio featuring local musicians Mason Feduccia, Wesley Royer and Taylor Teague; His Excellency Bishop Glen John Provost playing “As Time Goes By” on the keyboard; and Father Trey Ange sharing his gift of enthusiasm as emcee for the joyful event.

The theme for this year’s Jazz Brunch was “I have loved you” (Rev 3:9) based on the Pope Leo XIV’s first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, to all Christians on love for the poor.

“Sometimes people speak of charity in terms of giving the poor a hand-up versus a hand-out. Christ showed us that both are necessary,” said Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director. “Jesus taught huge crowds, gave them words that transformed their lives, and grace that opened Heaven itself. That is a hand-up if there ever was one,” she continued, “yet He also fed those same crowds so that they would not faint on their way home.”

Sister said that Catholic Charities seeks to help people secure work or to find affordable housing, to be able to become self-sufficient as much as a human being can be self-sufficient.

“We cannot solve every social problem, nor or the factors contributing to poverty easily resolved. When we cannot overcome these barriers, we should not think that a hand-out is not worthwhile,” she remarked. “We cannot, as the Holy Father tells us, risk abandoning those who lack the necessities of life. We will always have the poor with us, and this side of Heaven, almsgiving will always be a critical part of loving the poor.”

Before sharing highlights from the 2024-2025 Impact Report, Sister Marie Josepha expressed her gratitude to those in attendance at the brunch.

“I want to thank you all so much for coming out today to celebrate with us, to fundraise with us, and enjoy this beautiful Sunday afternoon in Lent,” she said, followed by praise for her staff. “I am continually inspired by their goodness and their generosity and how much they go above and beyond to meet the needs of our clients.”

Critical Programs, Services Offered

Among the numerous services provided by Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana is its monthly food distributions, a total of 12 in all — two



The *Caritas Award* was bestowed on Wade Boyett for exemplifying a life of selfless giving through both time and talent. Presenting the award on March 15, 2026, is Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

(Photography Credit: Victoria Watson)

at the Catholic Charities site in Lake Charles, and 10 sites spread out over the five-parish region in Big Lake, Bell City, Creole, DeRidder, Elton, Jennings, Kinder, Ragley, Sulphur, and Vinton.

“Feeding the hungry is one of our greatest works. It is at the heart of our mission at Catholic Charities,” remarked Sister Marie Josepha. “We can often take for granted having enough to eat and sometimes forget that people truly experience hunger in our community.”

Last fiscal year, Catholic Charities distributed more than 917,000 pounds of food to almost 3,700 hungry families.

“We also hand out ‘homeless bags’ that include about a day’s worth of shelf stable food,” Sister said. “Our food bank manager told me recently that after handing out one of those bags, he saw the man a minute later sitting across the street eating the food.”

Another critical part of the agency’s mission is to help families find housing. Over the last year, the Homeless Outreach team helped 70 individuals move into permanent housing.

“One man the team recently helped move into housing proudly sent a little video of his immaculately clean pantry filled with food,” Sister Marie Josepha shared. “He remarked, ‘I have never had this much food. I used to spend my money on drugs, and now that I am clean, I spend it on rent and food.’”

Getting choked up and teary eyed, Sister Marie Josepha said that a total of 681 showers were provided with the laundry/shower trailer and more than 1,100 loads of laundry for the clients. The trailer rotates to several sites throughout the month as well as during times of winter emergency sheltering

at Water’s Edge in Lake Charles.

“The clients look forward to this as for most of them, it is the only shower they receive that month. It is not just being able to wash their clothes and take a shower, it is the kindness that they receive from our staff and our volunteers that affects them,” she pointed out. “They feel loved and tell our staff that we are the closest thing they have to family.”

Sister Marie Josepha said that all these numbers represent more than just services provided. She said that they represent “lives that are touched and God’s love made visible across Southwest Louisiana.”

Additional services offered include rent and utilities assistance, help with prescription and funeral costs, SNAP applications, employment assistance, bus tickets, and disaster relief.

SPECIAL HONOREES

The highlight of the brunch was the recognition of Wade Boyett and Ron Bertrand for their many years of service and generosity to Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

Caritas Award

This year’s *Caritas Award* was presented to **Wade Boyett** for exemplifying a life of selfless giving.

“The best way I know to describe Wade’s generosity is simple: If he has it, you are welcome to it,” said Sister Marie Josepha as she began her remarks. “He first shows that generosity in his own family to his wife Becky and their children, Eric, Amy, and Scott.”

Through his company Industrial Refrigeration Corporation, Wade has quietly helped countless people in the community.

“After hurricanes, when families were trying to recover



The *St. Peter Claver Award* was bestowed on Ron Bertrand for exemplifying service “to the least” through countless volunteer hours supporting the Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana Food Bank and Food Distributions. Presenting the award on March 15, 2026, is Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director.

(Photography Credit: Victoria Watson)

and homes were hot and humid, Wade gave out extra air-conditioning units to those who needed them,” Sister shared. “The generosity that began at home has overflowed to the entire community, especially Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.”

A longtime benefactor of Catholic Charities giving his time, talent, and treasure, Sister Marie Josepha said that Wade’s support goes back at least to the time of former executive director, Sister Mary Vianney Walsh, RSM.

“Through both his personal and his company generosity, Wade has donated funds to provide turkeys for our food bank clients’ holiday meals. Before Catholic Charities purchased our refrigerated food truck, Wade provided his own refrigerated trailer to store overflow food,” Sister continued.

“Whenever we have needed to repair or replace freezers or refrigerators in our warehouse, Wade has often waived labor costs for us and intentionally made sure his bid was the lowest. Last but not least, every Christmas, Wade sends our staff giant bars of chocolate,” Sister said with delight.

St. Peter Claver Award

This year’s recipient of the *Saint Peter Claver Award* is **Ron Bertrand**. The award, named for the patron saint of the Diocese of Lake Charles, honors service to the least among us, and Sister Marie Josepha said that Ron is “truly someone who lives that calling.”

A man of deep faith, placing his love for God first and his family close behind it, Ron and his wife, Luisa, have been married for 40 years and built a loving family with their two children, Anthony and Nicole, and their four grandchildren.

Kaden, Riggs, Victoria and Lola.

Following his retirement after 38 years at PPG Industries as a safety shift supervisor, Ron put those skills to work by volunteering at Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

“For more than seven years, Ron faithfully served as one of our dedicated food truck drivers, recently retiring from that role to care for his family,” Sister Marie Josepha shared, explaining that a typical food distribution day requires about six hours of service from the food truck drivers.

“Ron showed up at our warehouse in the cold and heat, wind and rain, helped train new volunteers and worked closely with site coordinators to ensure each site ran smoothly,” Sister said. “Ron is a man who has put his faith in action always lending a hand at St. John Bosco Catholic Church (in Westlake) or serving communities across Southwest Louisiana. By conservative estimates, Ron has given to Catholic Charities alone more than 5,500 volunteer hours to serve the hungry families throughout our region.”

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

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

To learn more about the connection between Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana and the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, visit <http://www.lcdiocese.org/3-news/3930-road-to-catholic-charities-leads-to-religious-sisters-of-mercy>