



'HEART SPEAKS TO HEART'

Pastoral Letter from Bishop Provost on Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

June 12, 2026

The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

"Heart Speaks to Heart"

My dear People of God,

On the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I could turn to many sources to examine the rich significance of this Catholic devotion. I think of the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Haurietis Aquas* [*Thirst for the Waters*] (May 15th, 1956), written to commemorate the centennial of the feast's institution, or *Annum Sacrum* [*the Holy Year*] (May 25th, 1899) of Pope Leo XIII which spoke of consecrating the human race to the Sacred Heart. We could also stretch back to St. Bonaventure's (1217-1274) *Lignum Vitae* or St. John Eudes who wrote the prayers for the first office honoring the Sacred Heart, for which reason Pope Leo XIII, in proclaiming his virtues heroic in 1903, gave him the title of "Author of the Liturgical Worship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Holy Heart of Mary."

The Church is not at a loss listing the great saints who contributed to our understanding of God's immense love and mercy, manifested in the Sacred Heart: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in her *Autobiography*; St. Claude de la Colombière who was St. Margaret Mary's confessor; St. Francis de Sales who inspired the devotion in his writings. It is a real challenge to list them all. God has, furthermore, placed us in 2026, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The Bishops of our country have chosen to consecrate this nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and I am privileged to be your Bishop at this time and to share with you some thoughts on this important moment.

First, we must acknowledge that the "Heart" is the seat of love and mercy. Just as without a heart we die and with a heart our body is nourished with rich blood to sustain life, so we embrace the "heart" as a symbol of all that is good, genuine, sincere, and loving. In one of her visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which occurred from 1673 to 1675, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque reported that our Lord, pointing to His heart, declared: "Behold the Heart which has so loved man that it has spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to testify its love." We could quote many reflections and meditations from our Catholic tradition to underline the importance of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, but let us turn to the Sacred Scriptures.

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, is the living embodiment of God's love and mercy. He not only preaches a Gospel of love but also practices that love. This love and mercy are not permissive (cf. John 8:11; Matthew 22:11-13) but prodigal (cf. Luke 10:25-37). Love manifests itself flowing from the Heart of Christ to the end (cf. John 13:1). We see this most especially at Calvary.

Before breathing His last, Jesus Christ forgives one of the criminals crucified with Him (cf. Luke 23:39-43). Tradition calls him St. Dismas. Bishop Sheen has a beautiful reflection on the Crucifixion in which he points out, citing ancient Roman sources, that those being crucified frequently cursed and blasphemed, displaying vehement anger at their fate. Here, however, at Calvary we find our Lord serenely submitting to the Father's Will, making the ultimate sacrifice (cf. John 15:13), and a "good thief" making a request. In this sacrifice, Jesus Christ gives His life as a ransom for many (cf. Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45). At this critical moment, St. Dismas is to become a recipient of this mercy and cries out, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The Heart of our Lord opens to him and says, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).



To emphasize further this Heart of mercy, in the subsequent Gospel of St. John, we read of the Roman soldier opening the side of Christ with a lance (cf. John 19:34). From that open womb flows blood and water, which we see as the Sacramental life of the Church flowing from the Heart of Christ. The beloved disciple finds the episode so significant that he adds this reflection immediately following: "An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe" (John 19:35).

Indeed, any of those who basked in the sunshine of the Lord's heartfelt mercy could testify to this, from the woman caught in adultery (cf.

John 8) to the paralytic (cf. Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). The Gospels show not only a heartfelt love manifested in forgiveness but also in friendship, as when Jesus raises Lazarus, His friend, from the dead (cf. John 11:38-44) and even in loving response to the tragic death of an only son of the widow from Naim (cf. Luke 7:11-17). The Gospels are filled with such examples because these come from the source of God's love and mercy, His Heart, the Heart of a Son, whose intention it is to redeem. How can we fail to embrace this Heart of mercy?

The modern world is filled with cynicism. I think it is this distrust, rooted in a distortion of human motive, that prompts us to ignore the Heart of Christ. The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus contradicts our acceptance of selfishness and self-interest as the motive for human behavior. Some simply cannot believe that God could love them. Some others deny God because He stands in opposition to their distorted view of the world. Still others find the sins of other Christian men and women, even the failings of those in Church leadership, as reason to reject the entire Christian message, regardless of the truth and goodness that message conveys. We must beware of this cynical, spiritual suicide.

To paraphrase Pope St. Paul VI, only faith tells us who we are and what we are called to be. This faith opens itself constantly to the Heart of Christ. There we find forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace. God made us that we might live with Him for all eternity, and that eternal life begins now with our participation in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ, manifested through His open Heart.

It is my prayer, and I would hope yours as well, that we heed this message. The Consecration of our Nation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is an important moment to bring about conversion. This conversion will not be dramatic. It will occur all in good time, in the way that God intends. We must not be discouraged but rather optimistic that the Heart of Christ will prevail. We see signs of it already, in the renewal of family life, in the numerous conversions of youth to the Faith, in the lives of the martyrs, in the often-heroic witness to the truth by opposing falsehood, and in sobering lives of faith and reason that contradict the folly of the world.

Let us be hopeful. The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus would have us be so, as I remain

Devotedly yours in the Sacred Heart,

✠ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles



HISTORIC MOMENT IN LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Diocese of Lake Charles joins in Consecration of U.S. to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — In solidarity with U.S. bishops, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, consecrated the United States to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus on Thursday, June 11, 2026, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

The Diocesan Consecration Mass took place at 6:00 p.m. in what is considered an historic moment in the life the Church as the United States of America commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this year.

Earlier in the day, as many U.S. bishops gathered for their spring plenary assembly in Orlando, Florida, they consecrated the Church in the U.S. to the Sacred Heart, entrusting people, families, and communities of our nation to the Lord's abundant mercy and healing love.

Several hundred faithful parishioners, clergy, and seminarians participated locally in the Diocesan Consecration Mass to join in prayer for the nation.

"I wish to express my gratitude to all of you for joining me in this consecration," Bishop Provost said in remarks to the congregation. "As we celebrate this consecration of our country to the Most Sacred Heart of Our Lord, may He continue to protect this great nation and be always present to us as we strive to fulfill God's will and to live up to the principles and ideals that He has revealed to us through His Son."

Bishop Provost said in his homily, "Our nation has prospered in large part from the presupposition of God's blessing and a faith that somehow its destiny is part of God's plan."

He noted that if people experience a loss of confidence in what many call the "American dream," then perhaps this is due in large part to a loss of faith in God.

The Act of Consecration was prayed moments after Bishop Provost lit the candle that was placed on the Sacred Heart of Jesus side altar.

A Pastoral Letter on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was shared by His Excellency, Bishop Provost on the diocesan website and Facebook page. It was also read at all weekend Masses June 13-14.

In his letter titled, "*Heart Speaks to Heart*," the bishop said that the Consecration of our Nation to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is an important moment to bring about conversion.

"This conversion will not be dramatic. It will occur all in good time, in the way that God intends," Bishop Provost wrote. "We must not be discouraged but rather optimistic that the Heart of Christ will prevail."

To live out this historic occasion of the Catholic Church in our homes and parishes, the faithful are encouraged to:

- Spend time in Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament
- Pray a Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Display the Sacred Heart image in a prominent place in your home
- Pray the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Offer a prayer of reparation for our nation's healing and unity

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!



His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, lights the candle to be placed on the Sacred Heart of Jesus side altar (see photo below) during the Diocesan Consecration Mass on Thursday, June 11, 2026, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

O Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:

You know the longings of our hearts, and you desire that we enjoy friendship with you.

From your pierced side, you have poured out the wellspring of life, for which we thirst.

Your heart burns with a love for all people to return to a right relationship with you.

We celebrate the abundant gifts you have given this nation, founded on the self-evident truths that our Creator has endowed all people with the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We make reparation for the offenses against you and against

human dignity that have taken place in this nation.

May our hearts be united to yours, so that our families and communities enjoy peace and happiness; may broken relationships be reconciled, injustices repaired, and the wounds of our land be healed.

May your holy Catholic Church serve as a sign, pointing all people to your infinite love.

O Desire of Nations and Center of History, we ask you to bless these United States of America.

Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Clergy, seminarians, and faithful from across the Diocese of Lake Charles participated in a significant spiritual moment for our nation by joining the U.S. bishops who consecrated the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on June 11, 2026. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)





Bishop Provost: 'It is our duty to fulfill whatever God expects of us'

Three seminarians accepted to Candidacy for Holy Orders

LAKE CHARLES — Three seminarians for the Diocese of Lake Charles received their call to candidacy on June 10, 2026. Bishop Glen John Provost accepted Justin Fontenot, Luka Hagen, and Nicholas Poncho to Candidacy for Holy Orders during the 12:05 p.m. Mass in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

Serving as concelebrants were Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations; Very Rev. Edward Richard, M.S., V.F., Pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur; Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, Pastor of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley, and Rev. Luis Tigga, H.G.N., Pastor of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy.

Very Rev. Joseph Caraway served as Master of Ceremonies assisted by several seminarians.

Referencing the Gospel of Matthew (5:17-19), His Excellency pointed out how God charged his Apostles with fulfilling the law.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. . . . Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."

Just as God expected something from the Apostles, Bishop Provost remarked that God expects something from "each and every one of us."

"The great challenge of the Christian life is to discover what that expectation is, through our prayer," he continued, "particularly through our vocation. It is our duty to fulfill whatever God expects of us."

In the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders, the candidate for ordination publicly expresses his intention to receive ordination as a Deacon and subsequently as a Priest.

The rite includes three components: The call to candidacy, the scrutiny of the candidate, and the blessing of the candidate. Bishop Provost accepted Justin, Luka, and Nicholas with the words, "The Church receives your declaration with joy. May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment."



Bishop Glen John Provost accepted Justin Fontenot, from left, Nicholas Poncho, and Luka Hagen, right, to Candidacy for Holy Orders on June 10, 2026, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He is joined by Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations. The Rite of Admission for Candidacy to Holy Orders is an important step for each seminarian on his journey to the priesthood. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

Justin is the son of Kevin and Michelle Fontenot and is a parishioner of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley. Justin began his formation in the Fall of 2022 and graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree at St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College on May 8, 2026. Justin has been assigned to Pontifical North American College in Rome, where he will begin his theological studies and formation in the Fall. Luka is the son of Scott and Twila

Hagen and is a parishioner of Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy. Luka began his formation at Notre Dame Seminary in the Fall of 2024 after discerning the priesthood for a year at the Vianney House in Lake Charles. He received his Bachelor of Philosophy degree at Notre Dame Seminary on May 14, 2026.

Nicholas is the son of Adrienne Hebert Poncho and the late Jerold Poncho and is a parishioner of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. Nicholas began his formation in the Fall of 2022 and graduated with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree at Notre Dame Seminary on May 14, 2026.

Both Luka and Nicholas will begin their theological studies in the Fall at Notre Dame Seminary.

Please keep all our seminarians in your prayers as they discern their call from God to the priesthood.

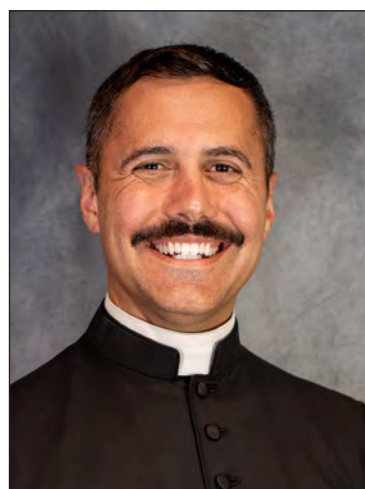
Announcement of Pastoral Assignments



Reverend Father Levi Thompson



Reverend Father Jerish George, M.O.C.



Reverend Father Sam "Trey" Ange



Reverend Father Carlos Garcia



Reverend Father Michael Beverung

Be it known that the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, after mature deliberation and for the good of the flock entrusted to his care, has decided to make the following assignment of offices in the Diocese of Lake Charles, in this Year of Salvation two-thousand twenty-six.

Taking effect on Wednesday, July 1st, 2026:

The Reverend Father Levi Thompson — as Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in DeRidder, for a term of six years;


The Reverend Father Jerish George, M.O.C. — as Pastor of Saint Joseph Parish in Vinton, for a term of six years;

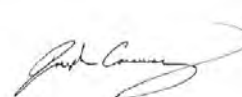
The Reverend Father Sam Anthony "Trey" Ange — as Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, Creole, and of Saint Mary of the Lake Parish, Big Lake, for a term of six years;

The Reverend Father Carlos Garcia — as Pastor of Saint Henry Parish, as well as Chaplain to the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Center and as Director of the Hispanic Ministry, for a period of six years;

The Reverend Father Michael Beverung — as Parochial Vicar of Saint Henry Parish and as priestly assistant in the Hispanic Ministry, for a period of three years.

Given at the Chancery on June 3rd, 2026, by order of the Most Reverend Ordinary.


* Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles


The Very Reverend
Joseph Caraway
Chancellor



Faithful pray for protection at start of 2026 hurricane season

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

CAMERON PARISH — A “Blessing of the Coast” took place at the Historic Shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron by His Excellency, The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, on Sunday, May 31, 2026.

The blessing followed the annual “Mass to Avert Storms” — this year on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity — in the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Life Center in Creole to pray for protection from storms during the 2026 Hurricane Season (June 1 through November 30).

At the Shrine, those gathered sang “Immaculate Mary” before Bishop Provost led all in praying the “Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Loreto” before he sprinkled everyone with holy water.

The same year Bishop Provost was installed as the third Bishop of the Diocese of Lake Charles in 2007, it was the 50th anniversary year of Hurricane Audrey when more than 500 people were killed on June 27, 1957.

“I remember it very well and the devastation that you experienced here in Cameron Parish. I was 8 years old at the time,” he said. “When I came to the Diocese, I was immediately requested to visit the burial sites of those who had died in Hurricane Audrey,” he recalled. “You know better than anyone else what that catastrophe meant.”

The communities of Oak Grove, Holly Beach, Grand Chenier and Little Chenier bore the brunt of Audrey’s fury and were almost completely wiped off the map, according to a newspaper report. More than 400 were killed in Cameron Parish alone.

“I visited all the mass graves in the region where the victims were buried and offered prayers for the repose of the souls of those who had died,” Bishop Provost shared.

In the years following Hurricane Audrey, The Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder, second Bishop of the Lafayette Diocese, commissioned Enrico Randi to sculpt a shrine honoring the deadly storm’s victims. The seven-foot marble statue depicts a young woman with her left arm around her daughter’s shoulders as they stare out into the Gulf of Mexico. The shrine was consecrated on October 6, 1963.

“As you know, the images of Mary and the child are based upon images of people who were killed in Hurricane Audrey,” the bishop remarked.

At the request of Bishop Provost in 2013, the Shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea enjoys, with papal approval, the same spiritual privileges as would a pilgrimage to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major in Rome, one of the four major basilicas in the Eternal City.

“We gather together on this day to invoke intercession of our



ABOVE: The faithful gather in front of the Historic Shrine of Our Lady Star of the Sea in Cameron to ask for protection during the 2026 hurricane season. BELOW: The Historic Shrine was erected in 1963 to remember the victims of the devastating hurricanes of Audrey in 1957 and Carla in 1961. (Photography credit: Matthew R. Johnson)



Blessed Mother, Our Lady Star of the Sea, for protection during the upcoming hurricane season,” the bishop said as he thanked Rev. Jerish George, Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Creole and St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church in Big Lake, for his hospitality. “May God protect us through this hurricane season and may our Blessed Mother’s prayers accompany us for that purpose.”



Prayer for Protection during Hurricane Season

By The Most Reverend Maurice Schexnayder
Second Bishop of Lafayette
Written in 1957 following Hurricane Audrey

O God, Master of this passing world, hear the humble voices of your children. The Sea of Galilee obeyed your order and returned to its former quietude; you are still the Master of land and sea.

We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control. The Gulf, like a provoked and angry giant, can awake from its seeming lethargy, overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land, and spread chaos and disaster.

During this hurricane season, we turn to You, O loving Father. Spares us from past tragedies whose memories are still so vivid and whose wounds seems to refuse to heal with the passing of time. O Virgin, Star of the Sea, Our Beloved Mother, we ask you to plead with your Son in our behalf, so that spared from the calamities common to this area and animated with a true spirit of gratitude, we will walk in the footsteps of your Divine Son to reach the heavenly Jerusalem where a stormless eternity awaits us. Amen.

Crossroads Catholic Books & Gifts closes doors

After many years of serving the Southwest Louisiana community, Crossroads Catholic Books & Gifts Store closed its doors on May 31, 2026.

Upon announcing the closure, Reverend Monsignor Daniel A. Torres, Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, said, “With much prayer, consultation and evaluation of financial reports for the past two years, the decision has come to close the business.”

According to Monsignor Torres, Hurricane Laura forced the closure of the Prien Lake Road location due to structural wall damage. Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish owned the building and property and were



no longer paying on it. Therefore, they sold the property and this brought the move to the Pzazz Shopping Center on Ryan Street.

Torres said that this move did not produce the sales previously experienced, and the added cost of rent created financial hardship.

“With the resignation of the store manager recently as well as solving other staffing challenges, this appears to be the appropriate time for the closure,” Torres added.

In the spirit of good stewardship of Our Lord’s treasures, Our Lady Queen of

Heaven Parish will donate all remaining inventory to Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana as well as the remaining funds, after paying the expenses of Crossroads Catholic Book Store. It is the hope of Our Lady Queen of Heaven that this gift will help Catholic Charities to consider opening a new book store and religious gift shop to serve the Southwest Louisiana community or assist in their mission in helping the poor.

Monsignor Torres said that Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish is deeply grateful for the many years of support the community has given to Crossroads.