



LONGEST MARRIED COUPLE CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass honors 71 couples for marriage milestones

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

There was never a doubt in Whitney Derise’s mind that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with his wife, Lois.

“She is my everything. If I don’t see or hear her for a few minutes, I start whistling for her,” he said. “I have a fear of her not being there. We still say our prayers every night holding hands.”

The still-very-much-in-love couple will celebrate 75 years of marriage on October 9, 2026.

Parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles, and before that at Our Lady Queen of Heaven, the Derises were among 142 spouses honored during the 11:15 a.m. Mass on Sunday, June 14, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

For a combined total of 3,475 years of marriage, 71 couples registered for the Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass and reception hosted by the Office of Marriage and Family Life.

His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost blessed those marking jubilee anniversaries of 25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70 and 75 years in 2026.

Concelebrating with the bishop was Rev. Justin Cormie from the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, who is a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Derise.

In congratulating all the couples, Bishop Provost expressed that celebrating the annual Diocesan Wedding Jubilee Mass is among the top five things he enjoys most about being a bishop.

“I am filled with a great deal of admiration for your perseverance and for your example you have given to us all,” he said in remarks to all the couples. “This is no easy task which you have accomplished in persevering in marriage through the ups and downs, which are numerous, sometimes daunting, and yet you persevered with God’s grace and with your own good efforts and prayers.”



Whitney and Lois Derise will celebrate 75 years of marriage on October 9, 2026. They were among 71 couples honored during the annual Diocesan Wedding Anniversary Mass on Sunday, June 14, in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception with Bishop Glen John Provost. (Photography credit: Rae of Rose Photography)

A Marriage Filled with Love and Laughter

Both 93 years old, Whitney is a month and 10 days older than Lois admitting that is the only time he gets to be the boss. He doesn’t seem to mind much since as long as she is by his side, life is just as it should be.

They can trace their journey back to their childhood days in Rayne where they both grew up on the same street with one house between them. Whitney had one brother eight years older, and Lois was one of nine children in the Moss family.

Reflecting back on first impressions of one another, Whitney said without hesitation, “Lois had it all. She dressed well. She was very ladylike, very proper. There was none better.”

Lois remembers Whitney being kind and funny. “He had a great sense of humor and was fun to be with. There was always a lot of laughter in our family,” she recalled.

They raised four boys and four girls while growing their family tree to 16 grandchildren, 23 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren.

The couple enjoys reminiscing about the early days.

“We both worked at the movie theater in Rayne,” recalled Whitney. “On our way home one day, there was a small sidewalk with a lot of bamboo, and it had rained. I carried Lois home on my back. That was the biggest thrill for me.” His marriage advice: Think of her more than yourself.

Lois said that she could never have loved somebody who did not have a sense of humor and who wasn’t a positive person as she shared a heartwarming memory of a simpler time of life.

“Whitney doubled me on his bicycle, and we would ride to the bakery shop around the corner from where we lived to get some fresh hot bread,” she said with a big smile. “We sat on the porch steps eating and talking. We had fun doing simple things together.”

When Whitney was in high school, his family moved to Lake Charles in 1948. He never stopped pursuing Lois even after enlisting in the Navy.

“I came home on leave from bootcamp and hitchhiked from Lake Charles to Rayne with 10 cents in my pocket,” he said. “When I made it there, I went to the store

and bought her a pack of spearmint gum. I begged her to marry me.”

While both sets of parents supported their marriage, Lois said that Whitney’s mother would have preferred that they waited. “I think she felt we were a little too young at 18 and 19 years old.”

The Derises were married by Father Hubert Lerschen on October 9, 1951, in St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rayne, the same church where they were both baptized.

Something about that day has stuck with Whitney all these years.

“My parents drove me to Rayne to get married and brought Lois and I back to Lake Charles after the wedding. My dad’s cousin who rode with us on the way home said, in French, ‘It is not going last.’ I wish she was alive now to let her know.”

While stationed in Guam, their first house was on stilts with a kerosene refrigerator, stove and generator. More than seven decades later they have called the Verandah at Graywood home for nine years after living about a mile away on Big Lake Road for 45 years.

Whitney retired from the U.S. Postal Service with 26 years and also worked for the Calcasieu Parish School Board driving a school bus for Special Education students. Lois worked for the School Board as coordinator of Library Services before retiring with 20 years. They also owned the A&W at 2901 Ryan Street for 10 years.

Whether in their younger days of belonging to the Buccaneers Club when Whitney was Jean LaFitte in 1974, or simply spending time together now watching television in their one-bedroom apartment, they each shared secrets to their long and happy marriage.

“A lot of handholding,” said Whitney. “Lois has been my Holy Spirit. God has put her in my life in that way. She is always there when I need her. In February of this year when I broke my arm and in April when I broke my hip, she was there to help me through all of it.”

Lois said they have always talked things out. “We don’t carry grudges. We love each other and find a lot of humor in life,” she said. “We are not complicated. Our marriage has been a closeness where we can always relate to each other.”

Those celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2026 are:

75 YEARS

- Whitney and Lois Derise, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles

70 YEARS

- James and Clara Fontenot, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles
- Maurice and Barbara Moreau, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles

65 YEARS

- Leroy and Emma Jean Crochet, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Dr. Larry and Marlene DeRouen, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Lake Charles
- Rodney and Ann Frey, St. Raphael, Iowa
- Lynn and Martha Lee, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles

60 YEARS

- Alvin and Carolyn Edwards, St. Henry, Lake Charles
- Noral and Beatrice Fontenot, St. Joseph, DeRidder
- Carl and Ganelle Johnson, St. Charles Borromeo, Fenton
- Gary and Claudine Keller, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Lake Charles
- Clayton and Sandra Lafleur, St. John Bosco, Westlake
- Bradley and Sonja Moreaux, Our Lady of LaSalette, Sulphur
- Hurist and Enola Pitre, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Deacon Fred and Judy Reed, St. John Bosco, Westlake
- Donald and Earline Ryder, Our Lady of Seven Dolors, Welsh
- Paul and Linda Touchet, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Sulphur

55 YEARS

- Dr. Keith and Dale DeSonier, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles
- Patrick and Barbara Diamond, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Michael and Glynda Dougherty, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss
- Keith and Charlotte Ellender, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss
- Juan and Luz Ledesma, St. Joseph, DeRidder

- Greg and Cathy Maylen, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Raymond and Loretta Maylen, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Deacon Ed and Flo McNally, Our Lady Help of Christians, Jennings
- Andrew and Brenda Myers, Immaculate Conception, Jennings
- Roger and Judy Newman, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Lester and Sandra Orpheo, St. Henry, Lake Charles
- Lucas and Deborah Papania, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles
- Robert and Linda Richard, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Randy and Paulette Salisbury, St. Pius X, Ragley
- Cleven and Elaine Trahan, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles

50 YEARS

- David and Lorraine Bertrand, St. Paul, Elton
- Louis and Kathleen Bonnet, Our Lady of Seven Dolors, Welsh
- William and Kathy Clark, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, Carlyss
- Michael and Jacinta Cormier, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Joe and Phyllis Crawford, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Oakdale
- Stan and Linda Czepiel, Immaculate Conception, Sulphur
- Deacon Richard and Denise Donahoe, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Ronald and Pamela Gill, St. Joseph, DeRidder
- Martin and Jackie Guillory, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Johnny and Becky Hensgens, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Milton and Veronica Johnson, St. Henry, Lake Charles
- Richard and Nancy LaMotte, St. Martin de Porres, Lake Charles
- Julien and Linda LeBleu, Our Lady Queen of Heaven, Lake Charles
- Karl and Becky Matte, Immaculate Conception, Sulphur
- Mike and Ruth McDaniel, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Charles and Flossie McGee, St. Joan of Arc, Oberlin
- William and Angela Perkins Jr., St. Henry and Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Denny and Patricia “Patty” Primeaux, St. Henry, Lake Charles
- Dr. Carl and Mary Ann Ross Sr., Sacred Heart of Jesus, Lake Charles
- Jeff and Cheryl Sanders, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Sulphur
- Gus and Lisa Schram III, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles
- George and Geraldine Simonet, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lake Charles
- Curtis and Beverly St. Mary, St. Joseph, LeBleu Settlement
- Clark and Sandy Yelverton, St. Margaret of Scotland, Lake Charles

25 YEARS

- David and Christine Almaguer, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Nicholas and Amanda Bebee, St. Charles Borromeo, Fenton
- Bruce and Lindsay Campbell, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles
- Kenneth and JoAnna Constance, Christ the King, Lake Charles
- Kyle and Shelly Landry, Immaculate Conception, Sulphur
- Greg and Pam LeBlanc, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles
- Chad and Sandra LeBoeuf, St. Joseph, DeRidder
- Brian and Courtney McCain, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles
- Jeremy and Barbara McCall, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Manolo and Leticia Morales, St. Henry, Lake Charles
- Terry and Lorrie Odom, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Oakdale
- David and Hope Simon, Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Sulphur
- Chris and Kristina Talbert, St. Theodore, Moss Bluff
- Jesse and Misty Thibodeaux II, St. Lawrence, Raymond
- Scott and Rozilind Rosteet, Jr., Our Lady of Prompt Succor, Sulphur



CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA

Homeless Outreach Team assists most vulnerable residents

By Kay Morgan
Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana

Each year, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana provides hope, support and essential services to hundreds of individuals and families experiencing homelessness throughout the region. Last year alone, the agency assisted 539 people facing homelessness across the five-parish area.

Leading this important work is the Catholic Charities Homeless Outreach Team, composed of three dedicated and experienced professionals: Alisa Stevens, Homeless Outreach Coordinator; Carolyn Washington, Case Manager and Shanna Hebert, Homeless Outreach Specialist.

“Our goal is to meet our unsheltered clients where they are and help them take the next step toward stability and self-sufficiency,” said Alisa Stevens. “Whether that means connecting a client to housing resources, helping them obtain identification documents, accessing healthcare services or simply providing food, encouragement and support, we walk alongside our clients every step of the way.”

The Homeless Outreach Team works throughout Southwest Louisiana to connect individuals and families with critical resources, including case management, benefits enrollment, transportation assistance, housing navigation and referrals to community partners. By building relationships based on trust and respect, team members help clients overcome barriers and move toward long-term stability.

In addition to case management services, the team provides practical assistance that many people take for granted.

“For someone experiencing homelessness, a warm shower and freshly cleaned clothes can make a tremendous difference in their day,” said Shanna Hebert. “These simple services help restore dignity and improve their overall mental health and wellbeing.”

The Catholic Charities Laundry and Shower Trailer travels regularly to outreach locations, including Abraham’s Tent in Lake Charles and Open Door Biker Church in Sulphur, bringing essential hygiene services



Members of the Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana Homeless Outreach Team include, from left: Carolyn Washington, Shanna Hebert and Alisa Stevens. (Photography credit: Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana)

directly to those in need at no cost.

Last year, Catholic Charities volunteers and employees provided nearly 700 warm showers and washed 1,113 loads of laundry for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. These services not only address immediate needs but also create opportunities to build trust and connect clients with housing, healthcare, employment assistance and other vital resources.

“Many of our clients face complex challenges and often feel invisible or forgotten,” said Carolyn Washington. “By showing up consistently, listening to their stories and offering support without judgment, we help people regain hope and take positive steps

“Our goal is to meet our unsheltered clients where they are and help them take the next step toward stability and self-sufficiency.”

— Alisa Stevens

toward a better future. At the end of the day, that’s what it is all about.”

The Catholic Charities Homeless Outreach Team spends countless hours in

the field conducting street outreach, often searching for clients and checking on them in wooded areas, abandoned locations and other places where they may be living. Through compassion, dedication and an unwavering commitment to serving those most in need, the team continues to make a meaningful and lasting impact in the lives of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the area.

For more information about the Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana Homeless Outreach Program, or to find out how you can support this vital program, please visit www.catholiccharitiesswla.org or call (337) 439-7436.

VERITAS Conference

Saturday
SEPTEMBER 19, 2026

“In this is love...”
1 John 4:10

Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Center
3939 Kingston Street, Lake Charles

Doors open at 8:30 AM
Conference from 9:30 AM-3:30 PM

Includes breakout sessions, and Catholic vendors, Confession and Eucharistic Adoration. 4:00 PM Vigil Mass will be available at church.

More Information:

✉ veritas@lcdiocese.org

☎ (337) 439-7400 ext 309



Keynote Speaker:
Fr. Michael Champagne, STD

Catholic Scouts, Little Flowers, and Proverbs 31 Foundation present annual awards

The 2026 Religious Emblems Recognition Brunch was held on Saturday, May 2, at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School. The awards presentation, hosted by the Catholic Committee on Scouting in the Diocese of Lake Charles, recognizes worthy scouts who completed the National Catholic Committee on Scouting requirements to earn a religious emblem.

Also recognized for dedication to their Catholic faith were young girls for the apostolate ministry and service organization — Little Flowers and Proverbs 31 Foundation — who worked on a religious achievement in accordance with their rank and organization.

Committee members are Rev. Trey Ange, Chaplain for Catholic Committee on Scouting; Chrissy LeFranc, chairperson; Melissa Murphy, vice chairperson; Jessie Dupre, secretary; and Scott Willis, treasurer.

While blessing the religious emblems before the meal, Bishop Glen John Provost prayed, “Send down Your blessings upon these, Your youthful servants, and grant that they may be worthy leaders in faith, not hesitating on account of their youthfulness, but witnessing to Your holy gospel in the whole of their lives.”

Awards this year included *Parvuli Dei* and Light of Christ.

Earning the *Parvuli Dei* Religious Emblem was **David Harrell**. Earning the Light of Christ Religious Emblem were **Coltin Breaux**, **Charlie Metoyer**, and **Milton Saltzman**.

Completing the requirements

for the Little Flowers program (through Grade 5) were:

- **Ruth Jeane** — Virtue of Truthfulness and Strength Award
- **Mary Agnes Jones** — Virtue of Generosity Award
- **Addie Miller** — Virtue of Responsibility Award
- **Kynlee Trahan** — Virtue of Cheerfulness and Joy Award
- **Camille Hebert** — Virtue of Love of Neighbor Award
- **Maggie Hartley** — Virtue of Joy and Eutrapelia Award
- **Kate Johnson** — Virtue of Friendliness Award
- **Abigail Rose Dupre** — Virtue of Piety Award
- Completing the requirements for the Proverbs 31 program (ages 12-18) were:
- **Naomi Doise** — Virtue of Perseverance Award
- **Mary Vick** — Virtue of Piety Award
- **Cecilia Sonnier** — Virtue of Patience Award
- **Sophia Sonnier** — Virtue of Fortitude Award
- **Ezra Denton** — Virtue of Love of Neighbor and Generosity Awards
- **Lucia Hardey** — Virtue of Courage Award
- **Cecilia Hardey** — Virtues of Eutrapelia and Joy; Virtue of Wisdom Awards
- **Jacquie Pierrotti** — Virtues of Faith and Wisdom Awards
- **Genevieve Campbell** — Virtue of Wisdom; Virtue of Reverence Awards
- **Agnes Pousson** — Virtue of Piety Award; Virtue of Joy Award
- **Vivienne Burnett** — Virtue of Faith Award
- **Jane Irwin** — Virtue of Cheerfulness Award
- **Romy Fontenot** — Virtue of Courage Award
- **Gemma Dyson** — Virtue of Patience Award



Together in Holiness: Keeping God at center of marriage

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

MOSS BLUFF — Bryan and Ginger LeDoux describe their marriage as being “God-centered” and took advantage of a recent opportunity to make sure it remains that way.

Longtime parishioners of St. Theodore Catholic Church, the LeDoux were among 18 couples from around the Diocese of Lake Charles who registered for the sixth annual *Together in Holiness* marriage enrichment day at Camp Karol on March 28, Palm Sunday weekend.

Presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation and the Diocese of Lake Charles, this year’s theme was “Hope in the Domestic Church.”

Guest speakers included Greg Schutte, MSW, LISW-S, Senior Director of Marriage Works! Ohio, marriage therapist, and author; and Trevor and Jessica Jolie, parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles.

The Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, celebrated Mass with a special Marriage Blessing, and time was set aside for Eucharistic Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and one-on-one time for couples. His Excellency commended those in attendance for their commitment to marriage.

“The daily sacrifices of marriage, the patient love offering in moments of difficulty, the faithfulness chosen anew each day: these are not burdens to be endured but signs of hope to be embraced,” the Bishop remarked.

Approaching 39 years of marriage, Ginger signed up for the one-day conference that benefits newlyweds to couples married several decades or more.

“Bryan went through a conversion in his faith a couple of years ago, so this is something we wanted to do together because I knew he would enjoy it,” said Ginger.

The Jolie’s talk on “In Good Times and In Bad” hit home with the LeDoux. Trevor and Jessica, married for nearly 18 years and parents to three, shared their early struggles of separate prayer lives, no communication, unfaithfulness, putting everything else before each other, and how God eventually became the center of their marriage. Their testimony highlighted ways in which a married couple is called upon to focus on Jesus Christ as the ultimate source of hope for marriage.

“The couple who spoke, their story is very similar to ours,” Bryan said while



Bryan and Ginger LeDoux pose for a photo with Bishop Glen John Provost of the Diocese of Lake Charles at Camp Karol on Saturday, March 28, 2026. The couple was among those attending the sixth annual “Together in Holiness” conference. This was their first time participating and were excited to have some items blessed and have their photo taken with the bishop. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

“The daily sacrifices of marriage, the patient love offering in moments of difficulty, the faithfulness chosen anew each day: these are not burdens to be endured but signs of hope to be embraced.”

—The Most Reverend Glen John Provost

sitting on a swing next to Ginger. Looking at his wife, he admitted, “Through her heart of Christ that showed mercy and forgiveness to me is really what brought me to Christ. I still grieve over my past life because of all the heartache I brought, but it is all in my past now.”

After making an A.C.T.S. retreat in May 2024 at Saint Charles Center, Bryan said that is where God met him.

“It was a profound experience and a catapult. I have been growing and growing (in my faith) since then,” he remarked. “Since I have gone through my



In their presentation, “In Good Times and In Bad,” Trevor and Jessica Jolie, parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles, shared their testimony of navigating challenging storms of married and family life. The Jolies have been married 18 years and have three children. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

conversion, I have taken the anchor out of the water on her ship, so she is able to pursue her faith.” Ginger is in formation for the Secular Franciscan Order, making her profession in another 18 months of the three-year program at which time she will become a member.

The LeDoux said they were blessed to have Bishop Provost celebrate Mass and felt the presence of Christ through him.

In his homily, the bishop spoke about the importance of Christian resignation in accepting God’s help when we pray, “Thy Will be done.”

“This Christian resignation is not merely enduring trials and tribulations,” Bishop Provost noted. “This virtue of resignation requires, most importantly, the steadfast and living faith in God’s Providence to bring good out of the most impossible circumstances.”

He continued, “When I hear what people complain about, and when I listen to my own petty frustrations, I say what is this in the face of Good Friday? And then I ask, what did our Lord do? He resigned himself to steadfast faith in the Father’s will, and this is what Christian resignation is.”

To learn more about the St. John Paul II Foundation and its initiative, *Together in Holiness*, visit <https://forlifeandfamily.org/together-in-holiness/>

OLQH unveils statue, artwork of newly canonized Saints

By Rev. Monsignor Daniel Torres
Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church

“It has been a joy to witness two special additions to our parish campus in recent weeks, each honoring a young saint whose life continues to inspire Catholics throughout the world.

“We recently unveiled a beautiful piece of artwork depicting St. Pier Giorgio Frassati in our Family Life Community Center. Known for his deep love of Christ, devotion to the poor, and joyful witness to the faith, St. Pier Giorgio reminds us that holiness is not reserved for a select few but is attainable in the midst of everyday life. We hope his presence in the Life Center lobby will encourage all who gather there, especially our young people, to pursue a life of faith, service, and authentic Christian friendship.

“We are deeply grateful to Patty McCarrroll and Fred Delaney for their generosity in making this artwork possible in honor of Herman and Patsy Manuel establishing the Youth Scholarship Fund. This scholarship helps cover tuition costs for marginalized youth attending such events as The Christian Leadership Institute and the Diocesan Youth Conference. Their gift serves as a lasting reminder of faith, family, and

the call to holiness. We also thank Gavin Gautreaux for helping with the unveiling.

“We also had the blessing of unveiling our new statue of St. Carlo Acutis outside the Adoration Chapel. Carlo’s love for the Eucharist and his desire to lead others to Jesus continue to inspire countless people around the world. Placed near the chapel, his statue serves as a fitting reminder of his famous words that the Eucharist is our ‘highway to heaven.’ May all who pass by be encouraged to spend time with Our Lord in Eucharistic Adoration and deepen their relationship with Him.

“We extend our sincere thanks to Mr. Dale Ditcharo for donating the statue in memory of his family and friends and in honor of his son, Andrew. This meaningful gift will inspire parishioners and visitors alike for years to come. We also thank the Jorge & Lori Sanserveigni Family as well as their sons Carlo, Matteo, & Marco, for helping with the unveiling.

“These two young saints show us that holiness is possible in every age and circumstance. Through the generosity of these families, our parish has been enriched with visible reminders of lives dedicated to Christ. May the examples of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis inspire us all to seek the Lord more faithfully and to share His love with others.”



The newly donated artwork depicting St. Pier Giorgio Frassati was donated recently in honor of Herman and Patsy Manuel for establishing the Youth Scholarship Fund. Pictured with the Manuels following the unveiling of the artwork is Monsignor Daniel Torres. (Photography credit: Shannon Barlow)



Jorge and Lori Sanserveigni are pictured with their sons Carlo, Matteo, and Marco following the statue unveiling of St. Carlo Acutis on the grounds of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. The family assisted with the unveiling of the statue donated in honor of Andrew Ditcharo.

(Photography credit: Shannon Barlow)