



GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY SET FOR AUGUST 21

St. Pius X invites all to be part of new church

RAGLEY — It is an exciting time at St. Pius X Catholic Church as parishioners count down the hours until they break ground on their new church at 16816 Highway 171.

The much-anticipated ceremony is set for 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 21, 2026, on Feast of St. Pius X and the 12th anniversary of the parish's founding.

Since being established as a canonical parish in 2014, St. Pius X has outgrown its worship space by more than 135% and has been working hard toward this joyful milestone for the Ragley community. The new church will triple the current seating to nearly 600 people.

The Capital Campaign — “Building the Future, Rooted in Faith” — kicked off in 2024 with a goal of raising \$5 million of the estimated \$10 million. Before the end of January 2025, the St. Pius X community exceeded its goal with over \$5.2 million in pledges.

It is more than simply building a structure. It is about giving everyone who walks through the doors an encounter with Christ.

“This is a parish that loves their Catholic faith. When we were impacted by the storms in 2020, parishioners showed up the day after Hurricane Laura to start cleaning the grounds and spent six weeks handing out supplies,” said Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, Pastor of St. Pius X in Beauregard Parish. “We want our new church to proclaim the beauty of God and provide the sacraments for years to come.”

All are welcome to attend the

groundbreaking and reception to follow in the church hall. It will be a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving to God for his perfect timing in the history of St. Pius X Catholic Church.

Legacy of Faith

As part of the building project, Father Starkovich acquired 11 stained glass windows from the “Sacred Window Rescue Project” that preserves sacred windows from a closed church. The windows for St. Pius X were a set from Our Lady of Holy Souls Catholic Church in Philadelphia that closed when it merged with another parish.

In gratitude to Bishop Glen John Provost for his faithful ministry in the Diocese of Lake Charles, the window depicting the Ascension of Jesus will be dedicated in his honor. The window will also honor all Priests who have served in the Diocese.

A once-in-a-generation opportunity is being offered to anyone who would like to contribute toward the \$75,000 total cost of the window.

Gifts of any amount may be made online at <https://www.spx.church/stainedglass>, by cash, or by check, allowing families, parishioners, and friends of Bishop Provost and the Priests of the Diocese of Lake Charles to take part in this shared tribute of gratitude and remembrance.

If you are interested in learning more about the St. Pius X Capital Campaign building project, visit <https://www.spx.church/campaign>.



The Ascension of Jesus stained glass window will be located in the right-side transept of the new St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley and will stand as a lasting tribute to The Most Reverend Glen John Provost's service to the Diocese of Lake Charles and the St. Pius X parish family as well as honor all Priests who have served in the Diocese since its founding in 1980. For more information, visit <https://www.spx.church/stainedglass>.

Saint Charles Center

Weekly Eucharistic Adoration

Deacon Brian Soileau, Director of Saint Charles Center, presides over Eucharistic Adoration and Divine Mercy Chaplet at 7:00 p.m. every Tuesday in the Chapel of the Assumption at Saint Charles Center.

Please check the calendar at stcharlescenter.com, the Saint Charles Center Facebook page, or call the office at 337-855-1232 to check for change of venue due to retreats during the week or some unforeseen situation.

Saint Charles Center is located at 2151 Sam Houston Jones Parkway in Moss Bluff.

Grief to Grace planned Sept. 15-19

Take the first step on the path to healing with a Grief to Grace retreat September 15-19, 2026.

The five-day spiritual journey at Saint Charles Center in the Diocese of Lake Charles provides safety and support for anyone who has suffered degradation or violation through physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect.

Grief to Grace is a pilgrimage to discover the love, tenderness, belonging, safety, joy and peace that are often missing from the stories of abuse victims.

For more information, call Marjorie Long at 337-489-2473 or email griegtograncelouisiana@lcdiocese.org. You can also visit www.GriegttoGrace.org. All inquiries are confidential.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat is Nov. 6-8

If you or someone you know is hurting after abortion, please know that healing is possible.

Rachel's Vineyard is ready to welcome you with open arms to start your healing journey today!

The next Rachel's Vineyard retreat is scheduled November 6-8, 2026, at Saint Charles Center, 2151 Sam Houston Jones Parkway.

The retreat, sponsored by the Diocese of Lake Charles, is strictly confidential and offers a beautiful opportunity to experience God's love, forgiveness, and compassion.

It is open to parents, grandparents, siblings or friends affected by abortion who struggle with guilt, depression, regret or other forms of difficult emotions from an abortion.

For more information or registration, contact Marjorie Long, site leader for Rachel's Vineyard of Southwest Louisiana, at 337-489-2473 or email rachels.vineyard@lcdiocese.org.

D.E.E.P. Retreat for Women

The final D.E.E.P. Retreat for Women in 2026 is set for Wednesday through Saturday, November 11-14, at Saint Charles Center in Moss Bluff.

D.E.E.P. is an acronym for Discipleship, Eucharist, Evangelization, and Prayer. Developed to help attendees to go “deeper” in their faith, the retreat is presented by Catholic priests, deacons, and religious, with support provided by Catholic laity.

A D.E.E.P. Retreat focuses on the removal of vices that stand in the way of a relationship with Jesus Christ and helps the retreatant live the virtues that counteract those vices.

For more information or to register, contact Saint Charles Center at 337-855-1232. Both men's and women's retreats are offered multiple times a year. Visit stcharlescenter.com for the 2027 calendar.

FAITH-FILLED STORIES OF NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

SAVE THE DATE: Traveling museum making a visit to Diocese Oct. 19-20

LAKE CHARLES — The People of Hope Museum is coming to the Diocese of Lake Charles.

This free, immersive experience will be hosted by Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana on Monday and Tuesday, October 19-20, 2026, at the Lake Charles Event Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive. The traveling exhibition is sponsored by Catholic Charities USA.

Made possible by a generous grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., Catholic Charities USA launched the People of Hope Museum, housed in a 53-foot tractor trailer, in the spring of 2026 with a goal of visiting more than 150 communities across 21 states through June 2028.

The one-of-a-kind traveling museum shares professionally produced, first-person stories from Catholic Charities staff and volunteers across the country, highlighting meaningful encounters with individuals and families in need.

“I hope our community will come out in force to experience the People of Hope Museum,” said Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. “I think it will be a very meaningful learning experience — great for families, field trips and club outings, volunteer and youth groups, government and community service organizations — really anyone who wants to better understand the realities of poverty.”

As some content addresses

PEOPLE OF HOPE MUSEUM



Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana Diocese of Lake Charles

Providing Help. Creating Hope.

sensitive themes of poverty and stories of past trauma, the museum experience is intended for those 14 years of age and older.

The Catholic Charities network, with 169 agencies across the United States, invites you to discover the transformative power of Christian service. Visitors to

the museum will experience:

- An interactive poverty simulator of making difficult choices and experiencing the realities of living on the margins.
- A recording booth to share their own stories of hope and service.
- An audio library featuring

seminal works on poverty, social isolation, bridgebuilding and community action.

- National and state-level poverty data illustrating the need and the vital role of Catholic Charities agencies across the United States.

“The point is not to leave people discouraged about poverty. Above all, the museum is about hope,” Sister Marie Josepha added. “Through short videos, it tells the inspiring stories of dozens of staff and volunteers from Catholic Charities agencies across our country — true People of Hope — who have found joy in lightening the burdens of others.”

The People of Hope Museum invites visitors to:

- Grow in empathy for those served in their community.
- Get involved through volunteering.
- Gain awareness and understanding of the many good works of Catholic Charities.
- See Christianity as a vibrant, living, healing faith.

“I think the museum will also challenge visitors to make an examination of conscience,” said Sister Marie Josepha. “Am I a person of hope? Do I notice those who are suffering around me? Does what I say, what I do, generate hope in others? How can I more faithfully imitate Jesus as the Source of all our hope?”

The mobile exhibit will be parked on Gill Street near the Lake Charles Event Center Amphitheater. Learn more at PeopleofHope.US



ANNUAL FAITH FORMATION CONFERENCE PLANNED SEPTEMBER 19

Veritas 2026 will feature Father Michael Champagne, CJC

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Everyone is invited to fuel their faith at *Veritas* 2026 on Saturday, September 19.

- Are you new to the Catholic faith? You are invited.
- Are you a cradle Catholic? You are invited.
- Do you help teach the faith? You are invited.
- Do you want to re-ignite your faith? You are invited.

The conference is an event for *ALL* adult Catholics — OCIA instructors, catechumens and catechists, catechists who form youth; and any adult desiring to grow in their relationship with Christ.

Veritas, which is Latin for Truth, will take place in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Community Center, 3939 Kingston Street, with doors opening at 8:30 a.m.

Father Michael Champagne, CJC, Religious Superior for the Community of Jesus Crucified in St. Martinville, will be the keynote speaker for the 15th annual conference hosted by the Office of Religious Education in the Diocese of Lake Charles. This year's theme is "In this is love ..." (1 John 4:10)

If you have ever been to confession in an ambulance, heard the Word of God proclaimed from a fire truck, or adored the Blessed Sacrament along the banks of the Mighty Mississippi or the Bayou Teche, chances are you have been in the presence of Father Champagne.

If you have never heard of this "think-out-of-the-box" priest from the Diocese of Lafayette, now's your chance to see and hear him in person.

Widely known for his ministry of bringing Jesus to communities in creative ways, Father Champagne became famous in 2018 for converting an ambulance into a "Spiritual Care Unit" used for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

He also captured national attention in 2024 when he moved the annual Assumption boat procession, "Fete Dieu du Teche" (Feast of God on the Bayou), to the Mighty Mississippi for a two-day river procession as part of the National Eucharistic Revival. The 14-foot monstrance (with a 14-inch Host) was prominently displayed for adorers along the banks of the river.

Ordained a priest in 1994 for the Community of Jesus Crucified, Father Champagne serves as retreat master at Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center and is involved with preaching parish missions, conducting on-going spiritual formation programs for laity and priests, and adult catechesis workshops and classes.

The *Veritas* Conference will begin at 8:30 a.m. with check-in, late registrations, Confessions and Eucharistic Adoration, followed by the Welcome and Keynote at 9:30 a.m.

Breakout session presenters include:

- **Father Jeffrey Starkovich** — Pastor of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley. A 2003 graduate of St. Louis Catholic High School, Father Starkovich completed seminary formation at St.

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

BREAKOUT SESSION SPEAKERS



FATHER JEFFREY STARKOVICH



MRS. ANN VINCENT



FATHER LEVI THOMPSON



SISTER MARIE JOSEPHA KLUCZNY, RSM



BLAINE & DENISE WYNINGER



Joseph Seminary in Covington and the Pontifical North American College in Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2011.

- **Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM** — Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. Born and raised in Minnesota, at the age of 9, Sister Marie Josepha made a promise to God to become a religious sister. She obtained a B.A. in Biology from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota in 2006, a B.S.N. from Creighton University in Omaha, NE in 2007, and a Master's Degree in



ADDIE & MATTHEW JOHNSON

Nursing from Frontier Nursing University to become a Certified Nurse Midwife in 2019. In 2020, she professed her perpetual vows with the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan.

- **Father Levi Thompson** — Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in DeRidder. Father Thompson completed his seminary studies at St. Joseph Seminary in Covington and the Pontifical North American College in Rome. He was ordained to the priesthood in 2020 and has previously served at the church parishes of Our Lady Queen of



DRS. CLIFFORD & CAROLINE COURVILLE

Heaven and St. Henry. While at St. Henry, he also served as chaplain to the Hispanic Community.

- **Blaine and Denise Wyninger** — Parishioners of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church. The Wyningers have been married for 23 years and have nine children. They serve as co-directors for the Office of Marriage and Family Life in the Diocese of Lake Charles and are both educators at St. Louis Catholic High School. They are involved in the Domestic Church movement and have presented

many retreats and talks on the beauty of family life.

- **Ann Vincent** — Member of St. Francis de Sales Oratory in Sulphur. Ann has been married to Charles Vincent for 28 years. They have a family of five — three sons and two daughters — ranging in age from 26 to 19.

- **Drs. Clifford and Caroline Courville** — Parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church. The Courvilles are the parents of six children and are members of Domestic Church. Dr. Clifford practices Pulmonary/ Critical Care while Dr. Caroline practices Pediatrics.

- **Matthew and Addie Johnson** — Parishioners of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Johnsons have been married for 11 years and have five children. Matthew is an Area Inspector at Citgo Petroleum, and Addie is a Dental Hygienist at the periodontal practice of Dr. Raymond Steiner and Dr. Shreena Bhakta. They have been involved in Domestic Church for nine years leading many family and couple retreats. They are currently serving in the role of Diocesan Couple for Domestic Church.

Online registration is \$40 per person through noon September 18. Parish groups of six or more receive an additional \$5 discount. For the discount code, please contact your church parish.

To register online, visit <http://www.lcdiocese.org/resources/event-registration> and click on *Veritas* Conference. Registration forms are also available in the parishes of the Diocese of Lake Charles and at the Office of Religious Education, 1201 Ryan Street, Lake Charles.

Cash (when paying in person) and check payments are accepted with paper registration. Lunch is included with registration cost. Please note that registration is non-refundable.

Call 337-439-7400, Ext. 309 or email veritas@lcdiocese.org for more information. On-site registration will be available at the door on the day of the event.

Follow the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page at facebook.com/lcdiocese/events for updates.

The conference schedule is as follows:

- **8:30 a.m.** — Check-in begins, late registration, visit exhibits, Confessions, Eucharistic Adoration
- **9:30 a.m.** — Welcome, Orientation, Introduction to Keynote by Sister Mary Kathleen Ronan, RSM
- **9:45 a.m.** — Keynote by Father Michael Champagne, CJC: The Christian Meaning of Suffering
- **10:45 a.m.** — Break and exhibits
- **11:15 a.m.** — Morning Breakout Sessions
- **12:00 p.m.** — Lunch, Confession, Exhibits, and Adoration
- **1:00 p.m.** — Keynote by Father Michael Champagne, CJC: Hope and Joy in Suffering
- **2:30 p.m.** — Afternoon Breakout Sessions
- **3:30 p.m.** — Dismissal
- **4:00 p.m.** — Optional Vigil Mass at Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, 3939 Lake Street



Tolton Prayer Breakfast honors several from Diocese of Lake Charles

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Several clergy and parishioners from the dioceses of Lake Charles and Lafayette were among those honored during the Venerable Father Augustus Tolton Prayer Breakfast on Saturday, July 11, 2026, at Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church Founders Hall. The special event was sponsored by the Tolton Ambassadors & Associates – Louisiana.

The Most Reverend Joseph N. Perry, J.C.L., D.D., Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Chicago, was guest speaker for the program, beginning with Mass in the church. Bishop Perry is Postulator for the Canonization of the Cause of Venerable Tolton (1854-1897).

The purpose of the prayer breakfast was to support the canonization of Venerable Tolton, the first recognized Black Roman Catholic Priest in the United States, whose cause for sainthood was introduced in 2011. On June 11, 2019, Pope Francis advanced Father Tolton to the title “Venerable.”

A documentary on the “Life and Letters of Father Augustus Tolton” premiered, and several Tolton Awards were presented during the prayer breakfast.

Tolton persevered against all odds to become a priest, and his life of devotion and service to Catholics of all races during challenging times in America is exemplary.

“Being canonized a saint is not the Oscars, it is not the BET Awards, the Global Awards, or Life Achievement Awards. It is a specific kind of acknowledgment, perhaps the highest that there is, an endorsement of someone who lived the Lord’s Gospel with heroic seriousness,” Bishop Perry said in his remarks. “The Church is willing to present that person’s life as something we can imitate, a model for the Christian life.”

Bishop Perry continued, “I ask you to add Tolton’s cause to your list of prayers, things that you pray for every day, as we wait for God to answer them.”

Tolton Awards

Awards at the gala were presented in six categories:

- Postulator’s Award
- Anne Tolton Pettis Award
- Peter Paul and Martha Jane Award
- Father Peter McGirr Award
- Tolton Award
- Tolton Pioneer Award

Deacon Harold Nixon, who serves Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church in Lake Charles, was honored with the Postulator’s Award for a life given to liturgical ministry as a servant leader.

The Anne Tolton Pettis Award was presented to **Paula Jordan**, a parishioner of Christ the King Catholic Church in Opelousas. This honor recognizes a life devoted to the Eucharist as a servant leader. The award is named after Father Augustus Tolton’s sister, Anne, who was a dedicated supporter of her brother’s priestly ministry.

Mr. and Mrs. Sam and Denise Hebert, parishioners of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Lake Charles, were recognized with the Peter Paul and Martha Jane Award, named for Father Tolton’s parents,



honoring the bond of marriage lived out as servant leaders.

The Father Peter McGirr Award was presented to **Rev. Joby Mathew, HGN**, Pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church in Lake Charles. The award honors a life example of pastoral care as a servant leader.

Rev. Donald Bernard, Pastor of St. Edward Catholic Church in New Iberia, was honored with the Tolton Award for a life of priestly ministry as a servant leader.

A sixth and unprecedented award — The Tolton Pioneer Award — was presented as a surprise to **Altha M. Jordan-Green** who serves as the Convener of the Tolton Ambassadors & Associates – Louisiana, working tirelessly for the Tolton Cause. She began her journey with her brother, Rev. Canon A. Gerard Jordan, in 2019. Nationally, Altha serves as The Major Tolton Ambassador General. She is also serving on the Board of Directors for the Tolton Spirituality Center, based in Chicago, Illinois. Altha is a parishioner of Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Lake Charles, where Rev. Rommel Tolentino serves as Pastor.

Tolton Scholarship

Also presented at the prayer breakfast was the **Reverend Canon A. Gerard Jordan Scholarship** in the amount of \$500 given to **Tela Philpott** of Lake Charles. She attends the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The scholarship was established by the

Jordan Family and Tolton Ambassadors of Louisiana in October 2023.

Canon Jordan, who died in 2022, was an advocate for young mothers who sought to further their education for a better life. He was educated by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament while attending Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School and graduated from St. Louis Catholic High School in 1985. Canon Jordan was founder of the Tolton Spirituality Center.

Tolton Essay Winners

Tolton Ambassadors & Associates – Louisiana recently held the fourth annual Venerable Father Augustus Tolton Essay Contest. A total of 44 students participated from various schools in Louisiana.

The contest offered young writers in three divisions — Elementary, Middle, and High School — an opportunity to explore the inspiring life of Venerable Tolton and reflect on his enduring legacy.

- The Elementary Division: Grades 4-5 reflected on Father Tolton’s Christian journey and described in great detail how his devotion to Christ enabled him to live a spiritual life in spite of the adversities he faced.

The first-place winner is **Luke Kennedy**, a fifth-grade student at Immaculate Conception Cathedral School in Lake Charles. He was awarded a \$100 scholarship.

- The Middle School Division: Grades 6-8 reflected on Father Tolton’s spiritual life

and how his love for the Church inspired him to see Christ in others, rather than their race.

The first-place winner is **Ross Olivier**, a sixth-grade student at Daspit Elementary School in New Iberia. He was awarded a \$150 scholarship.

- The High School Division: Grades 9-12 reflected on the Christian values exhibited by Father Tolton’s life of Virtue and how these related to personal struggles to overcome the challenges one faces in living a devoted Christian life.

The first-place winner is **Kamryn Carter**, a junior at Westgate High School in New Iberia. She was awarded a \$250 scholarship.

All 44 entries received a \$10.00 Chic-Fil-A gift card. All essays were anonymously read by the following judges: Mrs. Sharon Samuel, Mrs. Willa Bushnell, Sister Maria Howell, Ms. Jacque Mathews, Ms. Patricia King, Ms. Roslyn Simien, Mrs. Cameo Green, Mrs. Karen Reynolds, Mrs. Patricia England, Mrs. Mellissa Allison, and Ms. Christine Collins.

Special guests for the Mass and prayer breakfast were **The Most Reverend Glen John Provost**, Bishop for the Diocese of Lake Charles; **The Honorable Marshall Simien**, Mayor for the City of Lake Charles; and **Reverend Monsignor Daniel A. Torres**, Vicar General for the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The chairman for the Tolton Prayer Breakfast was **Alberto Maxwell**, and **David Bellow** served as co-chairman.

TO BENEFIT VOCATIONS FOR THE DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

Seminarians four-year Wiffle Ball champions



A team of Seminarians held on to their championship title for the fourth year in a row claiming a 23-12 victory over a team of Priests during the 2026 Bishop’s Invitational Wiffle Ball Classic. The annual fundraiser for the Serra Club that supports the Office of Vocations took place on Saturday, August 1, in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Community Center in Lake Charles. As Wiffle Ball Champions, the Team of Seminarians received a \$2,000 check for the Seminary Burse Fund, while the Priests received a \$1,000 check for the Priests Retirement Fund. Seminarian champions, back row from left, are Nicholas Poncho, Dylan Dattola, Owen Bailey, Paul Perez, Caden Gaudet, Luka Hagen, and Justin Fontenot. Kneeling are Ethan Vaughn and Ezekial Richmond. For game highlights, visit lcdiocese.org. For photo highlights, visit the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lake Charles Facebook page. For more information on the Office of Vocations, visit www.lcvocations.com or email michael.caraway@lcdiocese.org.

(Photography credit: Matthew R. Johnson)