



2026-2027 BISHOP'S SERVICES APPEAL

Larger portion of BSA allocated to needs of Priest Retirement

Collections for BSA will begin weekend of Sept. 19-20

In his Bishop's Services Appeal message for 2026-2027, the Most Reverend Glen John Provost reminds us of the importance in supporting our senior and retired priests who have given their lives in ministry to so many. A greater portion of this year's appeal will go directly to help fund priest retirement.

"Just as previous generations provided for the priests who serve us today, we are now called to provide for those who faithfully served us in years past," said Bishop Provost in his annual letter to the people of the Diocese of Lake Charles.

The 46th annual Bishop's Services Appeal kicked off the weekend of September 12-13 in church parishes.

As the Diocese launches its annual appeal, Bishop Provost invites you to prayerfully consider making a gift. Every contribution, no matter the size, directly supports Priest Retirement, Catholic Education, Saint Charles and Camp Karol retreat centers, Seminarian Education, and Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.

This year's Bishop's Services Appeal, which continues until the end of the fiscal year — June 30, 2027, has a goal of \$866,000.

Bishop Provost said, "Stewardship is more than meeting expenses. It is our grateful response to God's many blessings and our commitment to care for those who have cared for us."

Every gift will be gratefully accepted. Donors can choose from the following options to make their contributions:

- By check or cash in your parish's designated BSA collection envelope
- By designating a donation at any time in your parish's collection
- By credit card or electronic check (ACH) through the Diocese of Lake Charles website at <http://www.lcdiocese.org/resources/support-the-diocese>. Select Bishop's Services Appeal 2026-2027.

All donations are credited to the donor's church parish to help meet their quota. The first weekend of collections in church parishes will be at all Masses September 19-20.

Read His Excellency's letter to the faithful about this year's Bishop's Services Appeal efforts:

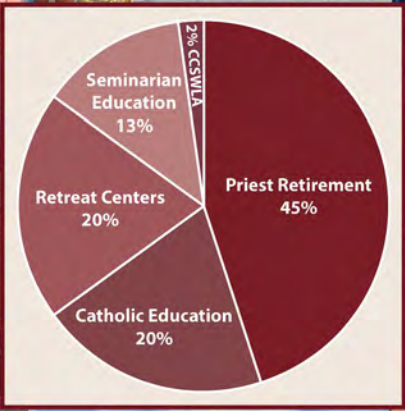
My Dear People of God,

Each year you join me in striving to become better stewards of God's gifts to us in time and treasure. We call this effort the Bishop's Services Appeal.

Allow me to thank you for your continued generosity to the Church in the Diocese of Lake



Diocese of Lake Charles
BISHOP'S SERVICES APPEAL 2026 – 2027



100% of your gift will support vital ministries and apostolates supported by the Bishop's Services Appeal.

BISHOP'S SERVICES APPEAL PRAYER

Divine and Heavenly Father, You have taught by the example of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that gratitude is essential to our living the Christian life. We begin this year's Bishop's Services Appeal with heartfelt appreciation for all the gifts you have bestowed on us personally and on our diocese. Knowing of your generosity has inspired us in the past to be generous ourselves to the apostolates and ministries that sustain our relationship with You and with our brothers and sisters most in need.

Along with the many needs of our diocese, this year our attention turns to the senior priests who for many years have labored in Your vineyard and now rest from the work of administration but continue in prayer and in sacramental ministry for us. Bless and sustain them with Your watchful care and grant us an openness to assisting them where their needs are great.

All this we ask of You, loving Father, through that same Christ our Lord and the Holy Spirit who inspires every receptive heart and Your blessing on this year's important Bishop's Services Appeal.

Amen.



Charles. Through your support of the Bishop's Services Appeal, ministries such as Catholic Charities, seminary education, retreat centers, and priest retirement continue to serve the people of our diocese. Your sacrifices make these ministries possible. This last purpose, priest retirement, is where we need the most help now.

The Diocese of Lake Charles

currently supports 16 priests in retirement, many of whom continue to assist our parishes and ministries despite their retirement. During the last fiscal year, the cost for health insurance and health needs for our retired priests totaled approximately \$400,000. This expenditure does not include diocesan support for retirement pay and

other insurance costs totaling approximately \$600,000.

While the cost of seminary education is largely covered by the generosity to the Seminary Burses and interest from those invested funds, such is not the case with priest retirement. As the number of retired priests grows and healthcare costs continue to rise, the resources

currently available are not sufficient to meet all future needs. Funds set aside and invested to provide for our retired priests contribute only 25% of what is needed to offset the total expense for priest retirement, which is roughly \$1,000,000.

Just as previous generations provided for the priests who serve us today, we are now called to provide for those who faithfully served us in years past. Despite many challenges, we need to support our beloved senior and retired priests who have given their lives in ministry to us. Many of them have celebrated 50 or more years of priesthood, as our dedicated Monsignor Harry Greig did only recently. The following devoted priests come to mind: Father Marshall Boulet leading a retreat at Saint Charles Center; Father Whitney Miller regularly assisting in our parishes and supporting St. Louis Catholic High School; Father Roland Vaughn celebrating funerals, preserving Cajun French culture, and publishing a memoir; and Monsignor James Gaddy continuing to pastor faithfully well into his eighties.

These examples represent only a few among many retired and senior priests whose service continues to bless our Diocese. There are so many others whose service continues to enrich our lives: Father Bert Borel in the Tribunal and our parishes; Father Don Piraro with his wisdom; Father Charles McMillin who frequently substitutes in our parishes; and Monsignor Vincent Sedita, who is seriously ill and suffers for the intentions of the Diocese. They and many others continue to grant us absolution in confession, celebrate our Masses, anoint our loved ones, baptize and marry our children, and comfort us when we mourn.

Stewardship is more than meeting expenses. It is our grateful response to God's many blessings and our commitment to care for those who have cared for us. The priests who now need our support spent decades serving our parishes, schools, hospitals, and families. It is fitting that we now assist them in their time of need. Mindful of this, I have allocated a larger portion of the Bishop's Services Appeal to the needs of priest retirement. I am sure you will agree this is a worthy project.

These needs I place before you for consideration. I personally ask every Catholic family in the Diocese of Lake Charles to prayerfully consider a generous gift to this year's appeal. 100% of your gift will support vital ministries and apostolates supported by the Bishop's Services Appeal. The appeal has need of your support to continue its good works.

God bless all of you and your families!

Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles



NEW BEGINNING FOR YOUNGEST PARISH IN DIOCESE

St. Pius X Parish breaks ground for new church

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

RAGLEY — The little Catholic church on Highway 171 will soon be the big Catholic church on the hill.

The much-anticipated groundbreaking for St. Pius X Catholic Church took place at 6:00 p.m. Friday, August 21, 2026, as several hundred people gathered for a new beginning, despite the triple-digit temperatures. It was the largest single crowd on record at St. Pius and the largest crowd the architect and contractor had ever seen at a groundbreaking.

The historic ceremony was held on the Feast of St. Pius X and the 12th anniversary of the parish's founding.

"Today we gather to turn the first shovels of soil for the greater Glory of God," said Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, Pastor. "We are building the future rooted in faith. As I have said most Sundays for the past six years, we need a bigger church!"

Special guests for the "Building the Future, Rooted in Faith" project were the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles; and Rev. Timothy Goodly, founding pastor of St. Pius X. Members of the Knights of Columbus Council 7033 led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance before the blessing of the site.

The project architect is Hoffpauir Studio, LLC, and general contractor is Arkel Constructors.

Since being established as a parish on August 21, 2014, St. Pius X has outgrown its worship space by more than 135 percent and has been working hard with fundraising for this joyful milestone. The new church will triple the current seating to more than 600 people.

St. Pius X beginnings

In 1957, the William and Agnes Habetz Family donated two acres of land recognizing the need to build a Catholic church in Ragley. The first Mass was celebrated by Father Eugene Veillard in a wooden chapel in December 1957.

Continued growth in the area led to the construction of a new brick chapel in 1980, which still serves as the current church and only seats 200.

The first Mass was celebrated on May 30, 1980, by Father Roland Bernier, MS, and dedicated by Bishop Jude Speyrer, founding bishop for the Diocese of Lake Charles, on November 9, 1980. The parish of St. Pius X has grown in faith and numbers even more in the past decade.

Expressions of gratitude

Bishop Provost expressed his gratitude to Father Starkovich as well as Father Goodly, who was appointed the first pastor 12 years ago.

"The site of the new St. Pius X Catholic Church is a good hill," he remarked, joking that when you see a hill in Louisiana you are never quite sure what it is.



A groundbreaking ceremony took place at the site of the future St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley on Friday, August 21, 2026. The church will be built on a hill just to the south of the parking lot at 16816 U.S. Highway 171. From right, are Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, Pastor; Bishop Glen John Provost; Rev. Timothy Goodly, Founding Pastor; Troy Thibodeaux, Trustee; Marilyn Habetz, Capital Campaign Chairwoman; Ronald Habetz, Trustee; Joshua Hoffpauir, Architect, Hoffpauir Studio, LLC; and Derek Fife, President, Arkel Constructors.

(Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

"This is a hill built to act as a foundation for a church, a house of God."

The bishop continued, "I congratulate you, the parishioners of St. Pius, your pastor and founding pastor, on this remarkable step forward. It is a sign of vitality, life, and growth in the Diocese of Lake Charles that we welcome wholeheartedly."

Father Starkovich conveyed his gratitude for the foundation of faith that began with the generosity of William and Agnes Habetz.

Bishop Provost also prayed for the safety of all those who will work on this project and for the success that it will experience.

Timeless design

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

"The entry of the church will be the focal point on the western side," said Joshua Hoffpauir, principal architect. "Whenever you see the beauty of the interior from the main entry, you will know it is a Catholic church."

Hoffpauir said that some of the beautiful churches in the Lafayette diocese and down the river was some of the initial inspiration for the St. Pius X project.

"We wanted to design something that is timeless and can be viewed as a Cath-

olic church and a beacon by everybody driving down the highway," Hoffpauir remarked. "As we worked on the plans, we envisioned a church that would still be around in a hundred years."

Some of the features include a traditional cruciform layout, tall ceilings, and stained-glass windows. The sanctuary faces East, and the morning light streaming through the windows will remind the congregation of Christ, the rising Son.

Growing church bears fruit

Someone who has experienced firsthand the fruits from the growth of the youngest parish in the Diocese of Lake Charles is Ezekial Richmond, a seminarian in formation for the priesthood. He is in his second year of Discipleship at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans and was able to attend the groundbreaking.

Richmond has good memories of growing up at St. Pius X when it was a mission of St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff and was an altar server at the first Mass when St. Pius X was established as a parish.

"One of the things that made it special back then was the close-knit community," recalls Richmond. "It only strengthened when we became a parish in 2014 under a great priest, Father Goodly. He helped us foster our own identity as Catholics

and from there, the parish continued to thrive."

Richmond said it is a blessing for him to be one of three seminarians from St. Pius X. Others are Justin Fontenot and Owen Bailey.

"It is amazing to have three seminarians from the youngest parish in the diocese," Richmond noted. "It all stems from being encouraged by good, strong Catholic families. That is the foundation of our church community. It is sign of life and hope that our church will continue to grow and do good things."

Richmond said it was this strong foundation, under Father Goodly and now Father Starkovich, that began to foster a great desire in him to enter seminary.

"It is always a great joy when I return home because St. Pius is full of prayer warriors, as my mom calls them. They tell me they have been praying for me by name every day," said Richmond. "I have a great community to rely on knowing that I am not alone on my journey."

Immediately following the groundbreaking and site blessing, parishioners gathered in the church hall for their annual St. Pius X Feast Day dinner hosted by the Knights of Columbus and Ladies Auxiliary.

For more information or to contribute to the St. Pius X Capital Campaign, visit <https://www.spx.church/campaign>.



AT LEFT: Several hundred people attended the much-anticipated groundbreaking for St. Pius X Catholic Church on Friday, August 21, 2026, despite the triple-digit temperatures. It was the largest single crowd on record at St. Pius and the largest crowd the architect and contractor had ever seen at a groundbreaking. AT RIGHT: Bishop Glen John Provost blesses the site on the top of the hill just to the south of the parking lot where the new church will be built at 16816 U.S. Highway 171 in Ragley. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)



SEMINARIES INCLUDE LOUISIANA, NEBRASKA, AND ROME

DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES

2026 SEMINARIANS 2027



Nicholas Poncho



Justin Fontenot



Luka Hagen



Ezekial Richmond



Caden Gaudet



Owen Bailey



Paul Perez



Dylan Dattola



Ethan Vaughn

Nine Seminarians in formation for priesthood to serve Lake Charles diocese

After a full summer of serving in various church parishes, nine seminarians studying for the Diocese of Lake Charles began the 2026-2027 school year at seminaries in Louisiana, Nebraska, and Rome.

Four are in the beginning stages of their seminary formation while five are continuing at different stages of their journeys to the priesthood.

Justin Fontenot will spend the remainder of his formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome as he enters his first year of Configuration Stage. He is a parishioner of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley.

Returning to Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans are **Nicholas Poncho** and **Luka Hagen**, who are beginning their first year of Configuration Stage. Home parishes are Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur for Poncho, and Our Lady of LaSalette Catholic Church in DeQuincy for Hagen.

Also returning to Notre Dame is **Ezekial Richmond** for his second year of Discipleship Stage. He is a parishioner of St. Pius X Catholic Church.

Caden Gaudet of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Catholic Church in Carlyss is a first-year seminarian at Notre Dame beginning the Discipleship Stage.

Four seminarians began their studies at St. Gregory the Great Seminary in Seward, Nebraska.

They are **Owen Bailey** of St. Pius X Catholic Church, **Dylan Dattola** of St. John Bosco Catholic Church in Westlake, **Paul Perez** of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in Lake Charles, and **Ethan Vaughn**, of St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff.

Bailey, Dattola and Perez are all in formation as First-year Discipleship students, while Vaughn begins his formation at the Propaedeutic Stage.

Earlier this summer on June 10, Bishop Glen John Provost accepted Fontenot, Hagen, and Poncho to Candidacy for Holy Orders.

Please pray for these nine men in seminarian formation for the Diocese of Lake Charles as they discern their call to the priesthood.

For more information on the Office of Vocations, visit www.lcvocations.com or call Rev. Michael Caraway, Director of Vocations and Seminarians, at 337-439-7400, ext. 226, or email michael.caraway@lcdiocese.org.

Follow Lake Charles Vocations on Facebook to stay connected, get updates on discernment retreats, and support your local seminarians and priests.

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

by Bishop Glen John Provost

Heavenly Father, the heart of your Son was moved to pity at the sight of the crowd who appeared like sheep without a shepherd. As a further sign of that divine pity, Your Son taught that we must ask You to send workers for the harvest, because the yield is abundant but the workers are few. With confidence, we make our request.

Please send, we beseech You, brave and holy priests who meet the challenges of a world that is often hostile to the message of Your Kingdom. Quickly raise up in our midst prayerful and dedicated priests who can witness to goodness, truth, and beauty through their consistent virtue, authentic teaching, and reverent worship. Kindly fill with Your grace the hearts and minds of many who would courageously answer “yes.” Gently inspire them to accept Your call so that the lonely, the ignorant and the poor may know that Your Love for them exists, that Your Son died for their sins, and that there is hope.

May Mary, the Mother of Your Son, and St. John Vianney, the Patron of Priests, be the holy advocates of our petition. All this we ask through our eternal high Priest, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

2026-2027 ACADEMIC YEAR KICKS OFF FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Bishop Provost begins first of school-year visits at St. Louis Catholic High School

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — On the first of his visits for the 2026-2027 school year, His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost celebrated Mass on Tuesday, August 25, at St. Louis Catholic High School. The annual visit coincided with the Feast Day of Saint Louis IX, King of France, patron of the school.

When asked by a student what message he had for everyone in the room, the bishop answered, without hesitation, “Love God, practice virtue. You cannot go wrong. Everything else is complicated.”

Someone who knew this all too well was Saint Louis IX. Bishop Provost emphasized how the King of France, a devout Catholic, took his Christian responsibility to heart.

In a moving letter that he wrote to his son, Phillip III, he stressed the importance of following the example of Jesus Christ in order to be a moral leader.

“Fix your whole heart upon God and love him with all your strength, for without this, no one can be saved or be of any worth,” the letter conveyed.

His Excellency reminded the students that many are mistaken if they think that religion is reduced to only following rules.

“There are rules, yes, and we call them the Ten Commandments,” he remarked. “They only make sense and stand the test of time when seen as coming from the love of God and our neighbor.”

Noting that St. Louis IX is a fitting patron for a Catholic high school, Bishop Provost said, “If the love of God, first, and love of neighbor, second, are not our goals, then indeed the school has no purpose. It is the love God and love of neighbor that give this school meaning.”

Following the Mass, Bishop Provost interacted in what has become a favorite tradition between himself and students,



Bishop Glen John Provost celebrates Mass at St. Louis Catholic High School on August 25, 2026, the Feast Day of the school’s patron, Saint Louis IX, King of France. The visit kicked off the first of his annual visits to all six Catholic schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles. (Photography credit: Kristine Alcantara)

A student asks a question during the Q&A session with Bishop Provost at St. Louis Catholic High School, while Randall Edwards, teacher, looks on.

(Photography credit: Kristine Alcantara)



opening up the floor for questions.

Before the bishop departed, students learned:

- He values the virtue of humility in his role as our diocesan shepherd.
- Leading the pack of his favorite Saints (besides the Blessed Mother) is St. Thomas Aquinas. Others who are special to him are St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, and St. John Vianney.
- Our Lady of Lourdes tops his list of

favorite Marian apparitions.

• While he has yet to meet Pope Leo XIV, he was ordained by Pope Paul VI and has met several other popes.

Concelebrating the back-to-school Mass were Rev. Michael Caraway, St. Louis Chaplain, and Rev. Whitney Miller. Very Rev. Joseph Caraway, Chancellor, served as Master of Ceremonies, assisted by Deacon Stephen Starr.

The following students assisting at the



Mass were Kolby Brown as lector; and Dean Wyninger, Owen Findley, and Jace Pharis as altar servers.

Leading everyone in song were Emma Foret, Elizabeth Ward, and Emme Hobgood.

A total of 2,248 students are enrolled in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese of Lake Charles. In addition to St. Louis, other schools are 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.

Please remember all our students, teachers, staff and clergy as they come together for a new school year to grow in faith, knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

Contact the Office of Catholic Schools at 337-433-9640, ext. 400, for more information on any of the schools in the Diocese of Lake Charles.



‘LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME’

Family Adoration Night at Camp Karol



Parents spend time with children in presence of Blessed Sacrament

MOSS BLUFF — Jesus was in good company at Camp Karol for Family Adoration Night on Monday, August 31.

Approximately 110 people attended “Let the Children Come to Me” — an evening of Eucharistic Adoration where fidgety children and babbling babies were welcomed with open arms.

Based on the Gospel passage from Matthew 19:14, Deacon Brian Soileau, Director of Camp Karol and Saint Charles Center, offered the event with young families in mind as a way for parents to spend time with their children visiting Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament without the pressure of absolute silence.

Some parents might be intimidated by the idea of bringing their children to a quiet adora-

tion chapel out of concern for others trying to pray. This special evening created the perfect space for families to just be themselves in the presence of Eucharist while introducing their young ones to the gift of Adoration.

It was a beautiful witness of faith from so many parents as they took time out of their busy schedules to bring their children to see Jesus. There were babies, toddlers, and school-age children filled with excitement as they prayed with their parents. They also enjoyed a free meal and spent time coloring pictures before ending the evening with Benediction.

A special thank you to the Camp Karol Youth Ministry Team for assisting with the event to assure it was enjoyable for everyone.

