



ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC STUDENTS DONATE TO BISHOP’S SERVICES APPEAL



St. Louis Catholic High School Transitions SAINTS with Father Whitney Miller are, from left, Hunter, Max, Simon, and Sebastian, donating funds they collected around campus to help with the Bishop’s Services Appeal.

Transitions SAINTS show appreciation for retired priests

Students at St. Louis Catholic High School did not waste any time doing their part to contribute to the 2026-2027 Bishop’s Services Appeal when the annual diocesan effort kicked off in September.

On Monday, September 21, the Transitions SAINTS hosted a \$2 Jeans Day benefiting the BSA and turned the experience into learning. While collecting donations throughout campus, SAINTS practiced knocking on doors, greeting and interacting with teachers and peers, and handling money. While back in the classroom, they sorted, organized, and counted the donations.

Kristine Alcantara, Transitions Faculty, said, “Experiences like these build communication and encourage functional math skills that prepare our students for greater confidence and success.”

A total of \$272.00 was collected for the Bishop’s Services Appeal, which has added meaning for the students this school year.

The 2026-2027 appeal has placed special emphasis on caring for the senior and retired priests who have faithfully served the Diocese of Lake Charles for decades. A total of 45 percent of the appeal is dedicated to help fund Priest Retirement.

“One of those priests is our own beloved Father Whitney Miller, who continues to serve the Church and is a treasured presence here on the St. Louis Catholic campus,” said Kristine.

The students were excited to donate \$2 each, wear jeans for a day, and show Father Whitney and all our retired priests how much their faithful service means to the SAINTS family.



Sebastian, a St. Louis Catholic High School Transitions SAINTS student, counts money collected from a fundraiser allowing any student who donated \$2.00 to the Bishop’s Services Appeal a chance to wear jeans for a day to school. The fundraiser collected \$272.00.



AT LEFT: Students at St. Louis Catholic High School participate in a fundraiser hosted by the Transitions SAINTS to raise money for the 2026-2027 Bishop’s Services Appeal. Transitions SAINTS collected \$2.00 per student wearing jeans on Monday, September 21. AT RIGHT: After collecting donations, Simon adds money to the envelope to be tallied later in the classroom. This year’s appeal is allocating a larger portion to help fund Priest Retirement. Donations are accepted year round. Any amount is appreciated for vital ministries in the Diocese of Lake Charles, including Saint Charles Center and Camp Karol, Seminarian Education, Catholic Education, and Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana.



Bishop offers guidance for Catholic voters

SPECIAL NOTE: His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, is in the practice of issuing a guidance for Catholics before elections. The Catholic Church has always spoken out on matters of ethical and moral judgment, in imitation of our Lord and the admonitions of the Sacred Scriptures.

October 1, 2026

Dear Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Lake Charles,

Greetings in the Lord, who is our hope!

An important midterm election is fast approaching. As I have done in the past, I wish to offer a brief word of guidance, particularly concerning the importance of conscience for the Catholic voter.

The integrity of one’s conscience requires that a Catholic form his or her judgment according to the authentic moral teaching of the Church and carefully consider the positions and intentions of those seeking public office. This responsibility is especially serious when fundamental human goods are at stake. The protection of innocent human life, particularly from abortion, remains a “preeminent priority” for Catholics (cf. USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2023).

The more fundamental the issue—such as the protection of human life, marriage and the family, or religious freedom—the greater its importance in forming a correct moral judgment. Catholics therefore should give serious consideration to how the candidates’ positions and stated intentions correspond to these fundamental principles of the Church’s moral teaching. Catholics recognize both the legitimate right of nations to regulate their borders and the fundamental human rights of every person, including immigrants who enter or remain without lawful authorization. Catholics should therefore uphold legitimate immigration laws while also treating immigrants with justice and charity (cf. CCC 2241).

A useful question for the Catholic voter is this: **In voting for a particular candidate, to what end am I contributing? What good am I seeking to accomplish?** Voting is a serious exercise of our responsibility as citizens, since our choices contribute to the direction of our society and to the policies enacted by those whom we elect.

This guidance is offered without prejudice toward any candidate or political party. Rather, it is intended to remind the Catholics of this Diocese that voting is a serious moral responsibility. We are called to form our consciences carefully, to act according to truth, and to recognize that our decisions and actions ultimately take place under the judgment of God: “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).

With prayers for your intentions and the assurance of our Lord’s constant care for us, I remain

Sincerely yours in our Lord,



✱ Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles



2026 VERITAS FAITH FORMATION CONFERENCE

Fr. Champagne: Suffering can serve as path to holiness if we learn to love, embrace it

By Pamela Seal

Diocese of Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Father Michael Champagne, Religious Superior for the Community of Jesus Crucified, still recalls two words spoken to him by Pope John Paul II in Rome four decades ago that he said saved his life from darkness and remain with him to this day.

“Take courage!” the Holy Father exclaimed to then-seminarian Brother Michael.

“Something happened in me upon hearing those words,” said Father Champagne, keynote speaker for the 2026 *Veritas* Conference on Saturday, September 19. *Veritas* is Latin for Truth.

“Pope John Paul II was a man of hope. He saw something in me, and he came forward,” recalled Champagne, who was ordained a priest in 1994. “We are all men and women of hope. If we can rejoice in suffering, then you can tell a kid, hey, tomorrow is a better day.”

The 15th annual *Veritas*, hosted by the Office of Religious Education for the Diocese of Lake Charles, took place in Our Lady Queen of Heaven Family Life Community Center.

Father Champagne serves as retreat master at Our Lady of Sorrows Retreat Center in the Diocese of Lafayette. His talks focused on the “Christian Meaning of Suffering,” and the “Joy and Hope of Suffering.”

Champagne reminded the nearly 300 attendees gathered of Jesus’ words: “Unless you take up your cross daily, deny yourself and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.”

For those who ask why there is suffering in the world, Father Champagne explained that it is necessary and transformative.

“Suffering in our lives is an essential element of a means to holiness. It is not just something that we have to tolerate or something that we just have to get through, and it is certainly not something to avoid,” he remarked. “Suffering is something we have to embrace because it is the means that Jesus chose to redeem us.”

Father Champagne said that suffering in this life is essential, and we need to enter into it and participate in it because the cross is our only hope.

“What is your greatest suffering right now in your life?” he asked. “You want it to be redemptive. You want to love it, to embrace it.”

Champagne emphasized that *how* we suffer determines our sanctity.

“Jesus wants us to be co-redeemers with him,” he said. “If we don’t participate in suffering, we can lose our soul.”

Father Champagne also spoke on the importance of suffering with charity in our hearts.

“When we suffer with love, it brings joy. The first fruit of charity is joy,” he said. “Joy is a magnet. People are attracted to joy.”

Summarizing Saint John Paul II, Champagne said that joy is possible in suffering, but for the mature.



“We must exercise faith again and again. We have to live by faith, not by sight,” he remarked, “asking ourselves: Where is God in this? What is God saying? What is God asking of me?”

Conference Reaction

It was Layni Carlucci’s first time attending *Veritas*. She and her husband Pedro are parishioners of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Layni was fully received into the Catholic Church earlier this year at Easter. She was excited to be a part of the conference and hear Father Champagne’s message on suffering.

“He makes it sound so easy, but I hope to take what he shared and put it into practice in my life,” said Layni. “We should not dwell on our sufferings but instead find the joy in them.”

Layni said that she enjoyed the opportunity to hear a variety of speakers during the breakout sessions.

“My husband and I have only been married eight months. I never grew up in a Catholic family, so it was interesting to hear the Wyningers explain the importance of daily prayer together,” she said. “That is new for me, but how special is that to pray as a family. It really hit me that hopefully one day we will have our own children and be able to pray together.”

Marlie Martin was one of 11 vendors who displayed her business, Beyond Blessed. A parishioner of St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church in Big Lake, Marlie is married to Adam and the mother of four children.

This year was her first time as a vendor at *Veritas* and said it was a “gift and a joy” to see so many people show up to the diocesan event. She recognized that there was a message the Holy Spirit wanted her to hear.

“Everything that Father Champagne said about loving and sacrifice is brutally beautiful,” said Marlie. “It is brutal to hurt and have the crucifixion, but the beauty is in the love you unite to it and the sacrifice that comes with it. The more kids I have, the deeper I push into the daily sacrifices of washing the dishes as if Christ is going to eat on them or sweeping the floors as if he is going to enter the house.”

Marlie realizes the importance of taking the mindset of sacrifice and turning it into stewardship and caretaker. “Someone intentionally doing these acts makes the difference,” she remarked.

Elaine Abshire and Tebble Robertson both decided to attend *Veritas* for the first time since before Hurricane Laura (2020). They are parishioners of St. Theodore Catholic Church in Moss Bluff.

Elaine, who has been a catechist for 20 years teaching third graders, said she heard that Father Champagne is a fantastic speaker.

“From what I heard today, he is very relatable. His talk reminded me that I need to put myself aside, and everything is not about me,” she remarked. “He told us to love, even with the suffering, but love for the right reasons and don’t complain.”

It caught Tebble’s attention when Father Champagne spoke about original sin.

“His talk impressed upon me that our tendency to do things we are not supposed to do is because of original sin,” she shared. “We are always going to have that struggle within ourselves.”

Other breakout sessions were:

- “Called to Holiness: Using Virtue to Combat Vice” by Father Levi Thompson
- “The family name of Christian: Building a Culture of Support for Priestly and Religious Vocations” by Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM
- “Why Unity in Marriage Matters: How to See your Family as a Domestic Church” by Drs. Clifford and Caroline Courville and Matthew and Addie Johnson
- “Lord, Can You Write That Down?” by Ann Vincent

Veritas Extras

A delicious jambalaya lunch was cooked by the St. Joseph Catholic Church (Vinton) Knights of Columbus Council 6103, and cookies were provided by Pronia’s Deli and Bakery.

Listen to Father Champagne’s talks at <https://www.youtube.com/LCDioocese>

Vendors included: Nichole Lanthier Art, Little Flower Gift Shop, Peace of Mind, LaFamille Tallow, Cowboy Catholics, Lake Charles Vocations, Charli’s Candle Company, Swampy Hollow Candle Co., Southwest Louisiana Pro-Life Billboards, Beyond Blessed, and St. Louis FBLA Coffee.



Father Michael Champagne, CJC, presented the keynote talks for the annual *Veritas* Conference in the Diocese of Lake Charles on Saturday, September 19. He accepts a gift of appreciation from Sister Mary Kathleen Ronan, RSM, Director of Religious Education. (Photography: Matthew R. Johnson)

Blaine and Denise Wyninger spoke on “Living in the World but Not of the World: Helping Kids Embrace a Culture of Life in a Culture of Death.”

Tiffany Thomas and Cheryl Lantron traveled from Kinder to attend the conference. They are both parishioners of St. Philp Neri Catholic Church and catechists for second graders.

It was Tiffany’s first time at *Veritas* and said it was worth the 40-minute drive.

“I will definitely come again,” she said. “The talks offered good information that I can share with friends who are going through some trials.”

Tiffany said Father Champagne put suffering into perspective for her.

“A lot of times I think of big things when it comes to suffering, but after hearing Father Champagne speak, it made me think about the suffering that goes on with day-to-day living and offering it up to God,” she said.

Cheryl said that she enjoyed the breakout session with Father Jeffrey Starkovich who spoke on “Love bears all things.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)

“It was good for me to be reminded that it is important for us to embrace suffering and participate in it,” she said. “Father Starkovich said that our suffering is a gift to God and from God.”



From left: Father Jeffrey Starkovich, Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, and Father Levi Thompson, were among several breakout session speakers during the 2026 *Veritas* conference. (Photography credit: Matthew R. Johnson)



Layni Carlucci, left, enjoys visiting with one of the vendors at the Cowboy Catholics table during the 2026 *Veritas* Conference. There were several vendors for people to browse, shop, or learn more information. (Photography credit: Matthew R. Johnson)





910 YEARS OF COMBINED SERVICE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



The annual Clergy and Religious Recognition Mass and Luncheon took place on Thursday, September 3, 2026, in Sulphur. Several of those being honored for milestone anniversaries gathered for a group photo in the Father Vecchio Hall following Mass in Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

Clergy and Religious honored for milestone anniversaries

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

His Excellency, the Most Reverend Glen John Provost, Bishop of Lake Charles, was the celebrant and homilist for the 19th annual Clergy and Religious Recognition Mass on Thursday, September 3, 2026, at Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. The Mass coincided with the Feast of Pope St. Gregory the Great (540-604 A.D.)

“To all of you, I wish my sincere and heartfelt congratulations,” said Bishop Provost.

For a combined 910 years of service to the Catholic Church, this year’s honorees included a total of 13 Priests, 8 Deacons, and 5 Religious Sisters.

“Today, we remember St. Gregory the Great. The readings chosen by the Church to be read on this Feast, in my opinion, could not be more appropriate for this occasion — the celebration of almost a thousand years of service by clergy and religious who have given their lives to Christ and his Church,” Bishop Provost remarked.

“The honorees this morning are faithful sons and daughters of the Church. When God’s call to vocation came to all of us, we remained, sometimes painfully, aware of our inadequacy,” he said. “However, we turned to God’s mercy, and he showed us the way to Him.”

Speaking to the honorees, Bishop Provost noted that those who are ordained clergy and consecrated religious should rejoice that they have been given a share in Christ in every experience that He had — “the joys, the sufferings, the problems, the consolations. These are all part of the service rendered and you are sharers in the mystery. For this, you should be humbled and sincerely grateful.”

The following were recognized for significant anniversaries:



Among those being honored for milestone anniversaries in 2026 are, from left, Rev. Roland Vaughn (55 years), Sister Mary Kathleen Ronan, RSM (65 years), and Deacon Fred Reed (50 years).

(Photography credit: Victoria Watson)

PRIESTS

- 55 years — Reverend Marshall Boulet and Reverend Roland Vaughn, both ordained on December 21, 1971
- 50 years — Reverend Monsignor Harry D. Greig, ordained on May 28, 1976
- 45 years — Reverend Albert Borel, ordained on June 6, 1981

- 35 years — Very Reverend Edward Richard, MS, VF, ordained on January 12, 1991; and Reverend William Miller, ordained on May 18, 1991
- 30 years — Reverend Monsignor Daniel Torres, ordained on May 25, 1996; and Reverend Romuald “Mémé” Rakotondraibe, MS, ordained on August 18, 1996

- 25 years — Reverend Anthony Fontenot, ordained on June 2, 2002
- 20 years — Reverend Shiju Churakal, CMI, ordained on December 28, 2006
- 15 years — Reverend Jeffrey Starovich, ordained on June 11, 2011; and Reverend Jom Joseph, HGN, ordained on May 2, 2011
- 5 years — Reverend Michael Beverung, ordained on May 22, 2021

DEACONS

- 50 years — Deacon Freed Reed, ordained on February 1, 1976
- 25 years — Deacon Joseph Bushnell, Deacon Wayne Chapman, Deacon Dale Deshotel, Deacon Patrick LaPoint, Deacon Ray Menard, and Deacon Michael Tramel, all ordained on December 1, 2001
- 15 years — Deacon Paul Gregory, ordained on January 15, 2011

RELIGIOUS SISTERS

- 65 years — Sister Mary Kathleen Ronan, R.S.M. (Religious Sisters of Mercy of Alma, Michigan), December 29, 1961
- 60 years — Sister Gerard Earls, CCVI (Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word), August 15, 1966; and Sister Claire Pellerin, S.E., (Sisters of Emmanuel), August 15, 1966
- 50 years — Sister Mary Charles Chidolue, D.M.M.M. (Daughters of Mary Mother of God), May 6, 1976
- 45 years — Sister Maria Regina Osundu, D.M.M.M. (Daughters of Mary Mother of God), January 4, 1981

The annual Mass and luncheon is coordinated by the Serra Club of Lake Charles. To date, a total of 412 priests, deacons, and religious brothers and sisters have been honored over the past 20 years with contributing organizations donating a total of \$111,650 to the honorees.



Priests from the Diocese of Lake Charles concelebrate Mass with Bishop Glen John Provost during the 19th annual Clergy and Religious Recognition Mass on September 3, 2026, in Our Lady of Prompt Succor Catholic Church in Sulphur. (Photography credit: Victoria Watson)



PEOPLE OF HOPE MUSEUM: STORIES OF NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

**OCTOBER
19-20**
AT LAKE CHARLES EVENT CENTER



**Catholic
Charities**
of Southwest Louisiana
Diocese of Lake Charles

Providing Help. Creating Hope.



Catholic Charities bringing community service storytelling initiative to Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES — Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana is joining Catholic Charities agencies across the United States to host **People of Hope: Faith-Filled Stories of Neighbors Helping Neighbors**, a nationwide storytelling museum designed to amplify the profound impact of Christian service.

Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana will host the People of Hope Museum Monday, October 19, and Tuesday, October 20.

The museum will be located at the Lake Charles Event Center parking lot (Gill Street area) and will be free of charge. It will be open to the public between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 19, and between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 20.

The People of Hope Museum is an initiative of Catholic Charities USA, the national membership organization for 168 independent Catholic Charities agencies around the country. Collectively, last year, the Catholic Charities network of agencies served more than 16 million people, regardless of faith, addressing needs ranging from food insecurity and housing to disaster assistance, health care and family support.

Housed in a retrofitted tractor-trailer, the People of Hope Museum is an immersive experience that brings to life more than 40 professionally produced

“The stories and interactive exhibits remind us that each of us has this ability to make a difference in the life of another. Acts of love are always powerful, even when they are small.”

—**Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM**
Executive Director
Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana

video stories featuring staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities agencies across the country sharing their meaningful, memorable encounters with families and individuals in need.

The museum also includes a recording studio where visitors can share their own stories of hope and service. Visitors can experience an interactive poverty simulator, gain a greater understanding of poverty in Louisiana and across the United States and listen to recordings of book excerpts about poverty, social isolation, bridgebuilding and community action.

“I hope people from throughout Southwest Louisiana will come and enjoy the People of Hope Museum,” said Sister Marie Josepha Kluczny, RSM, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana. “I think all of us could recall a moment in our own lives when a few words of encouragement, a hug, or a resource — just when we needed it —

gave us courage and hope. The stories and interactive exhibits remind us that each of us has this ability to make a difference in the life of another. Acts of love are always powerful, even when they seem small.”

Because some of the content addresses sensitive themes of poverty and stories of past trauma, the museum experience is intended for people 14 years of age or older.

For many years, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana has supported individuals and families in need throughout Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis Parishes offering guidance, resources and compassionate care during difficult times.

In 2025-2026, Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana dispersed over 749,016 pounds of food throughout the region, assisting 3,050 households facing food insecurity. Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana also ministered to over 450 unsheltered individuals and fam-

IF YOU GO ...

• **WHEN:** Monday, October 19, noon to 6:00 p.m.; and Tuesday, October 20, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

• **WHERE:** Lake Charles Event Center, 900 Lakeshore Drive. Museum will be parked in the parking lot of the Gill Street area.

• **WHO:** People of Hope Museum experience is intended for people 14 years of age and older

ilies struggling with homelessness.

The People of Hope Museum launched its tour of the United States in March and will travel the U.S. for two-and-a-half years. The initiative is made possible thanks to a 2024 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through an invitational round of its National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life.

To learn more about the People of Hope Museum, visit www.peopleofhope.us. To explore volunteer opportunities or to learn more about Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana programs and its impact in the region, visit www.catholic-charitiesswla.org, or call (337) 439-7436.



Diocese of Lake Charles
Office of Vocations

NATIONAL VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

NOVEMBER 1-7, 2026

The faithful are encouraged to join us in praying a rosary for an Increase in Vocations to the Priesthood and Consecrated Life in the Diocese of Lake Charles.

If you would like for your rosary to be added to the official rosary tally that will be announced on the Lake Charles Vocations Facebook Page, scan the QR code or visit the link to indicate the number of rosaries you will pray!
Link: <https://lvocations.com/nvaw>



All Souls Day Mass

LAKE CHARLES — His Excellency, Bishop Glen John Provost, will be the celebrant for the annual Mass for the Dead at 6:00 p.m. on All Souls Day, Monday, November 2, at Consolata Cemetery, 2300 Country Club Road. The Mass is hosted by Our Lady Queen of Heaven Catholic Church in the main mausoleum. The Blessing of the Graves will immediately follow the liturgy.

During the month of November, the Church prays in a special way for the souls of the faithful departed. Since the Holy Souls in Purgatory cannot pray for themselves, they rely entirely on living souls to pray and make sacrifices on their behalf.

OCTOBER IS RESPECT LIFE MONTH



Stop the spread of abortion pills.

Learn more and take action:
respectlife.org/abortion-pills



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

