



Eucharistic Congress ignites yearning for the Lord

Initiative promotes deeper understanding of Blessed Sacrament

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

“Humans yearn for the Lord whether they realize it or not,” Bishop Glen John Provost said in his opening remarks at the inaugural Eucharistic Congress on Nov. 13. Held at the West Cal Events Center in Sulphur, the Day of Recollection included talks from local priests, a Eucharistic procession, adoration, and Mass.

“God reaches out to us in the most intimate way possible through a food that nourishes us for eternal life,” Bishop Provost continued in his keynote address. “Through the Eucharist, God answers our most basic need to experience Him in the here and now as He is in eternity. This Eucharistic Congress is a moment to renew our yearning. It is my prayer that we will rediscover our innermost hunger and thirst for Him.”

The Eucharistic Congress was the first of its kind in the 41-year history of the Diocese of Lake Charles. The goal was to foster a deeper understanding of a core doctrine of the Catholic faith: the belief that the actual body and blood of Christ is present in the Eucharist.

The 10-day event, which culminated on Nov. 21 — the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe — kicked off on the evening of Nov. 12 at the Lake Charles Civic Center Amphitheatre.

As the sun set, hundreds gathered for praise and worship music in English and Spanish, a bilingual Rosary and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by a candlelight procession to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for all-night adoration until 6 a.m. the following morning. “Danza Guadalupana,” a group of dancers from the Hispanic Community at St. Henry Catholic Church, led the joyful procession through the streets of downtown Lake Charles.

Highlights of the main event in Sulphur featured talks by local priests, Father Ruben Buller, Father Edward Richard, Father Ruben Villarreal, and Monsignor Arthur Calkins.

Topics included Tradition of the Father; The Apologists to Aquinas (Father Buller); The Influence of Philosophies Leading to the Protestant Rejection of the Teaching on the Eucharist (Father Villarreal); Theology and Spirituality – The Eucharist and the Saints (Monsignor Calkins); and Morality – The Eucharist and Moral Questions (Father Richard).

The International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles catalogued by Blessed Carlos Acutis was available for viewing during the first part of the Congress.

Deacon Brian Soileau and a group of young musicians performed throughout the day as well as during the closing Mass. All eight seminarians for the Diocese were also in attendance and assisted with adoration and Mass.

Darlene Watson of St. Pius X Catholic Church in Ragley said that she and her daughter really wanted to hear Father Villarreal’s talk. “There has never been a time

in my life when I did not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist,” Watson said. “Attending the Eucharistic Congress has deepened my faith and has encouraged me to pray for more people to have that awareness.”

Alison Fontenot of Our Lady Queen of Heaven Parish teaches catechism classes to eighth graders. She said if she could learn more about the Eucharist and bring that information back to her parish or back to her home, “that’s a good thing. I recognize the lack of devotion to the Real Presence and how that has an impact on people’s desire to continue in their religious faith,” Fontenot said.

Others like Avita Conner and Jeanelle LeLeux, both of Our Lady of Prompt Succor Parish in Sulphur, participated in the Eucharistic Congress to reaffirm what they already believe.

“The Eucharist is very important to me,” said Conner. “I wanted to learn as much as I possibly could from the various talks. I enjoyed listening to Father Richard’s talk on morality.”

“I always enjoy attending events where I can learn a little more about my faith,” said LeLeux. “I wanted to hear things that reaffirm what I believe, in this case, the Real Presence of the Eucharist.”

Schools, Parishes Participate

As the Congress continued into the week, many parishes throughout the Diocese designated special hours of adoration and offered processions.

Father Keith Pellerin, Dean of the East Deanery, was amazed at the turnout of nearly 400 people for the Eucharistic Procession involving three churches in Jennings on Nov. 17.

“The procession began at Immaculate Conception in Jennings, then made its way to Our Lady of Perpetual Help for 5:30 p.m. Mass. There was standing room only with people seated upstairs in the choir loft,” said Father Pellerin. “After Mass, the procession continued to Our Lady Help of Christians for Adoration and Benediction until 7:30 p.m.”

Christ the King Parish was moving into a temporary building one week before Christmas in 2020 after their church was destroyed by Hurricane Laura. This year, the parish was able to offer hours for Eucharistic Adoration during the Congress celebration.

“Because of our situation, Christ the King was not able to coordinate a procession, but we did offer Eucharistic Adoration Nov. 16-19,” said Father Rojo Koonathan, H.G.N., who also serves as Dean of the South Central Deanery. “A special Eucharistic Adoration with praise and worship singing was held on Nov. 17 for the catechism students. We had very good attendance all week.”

Father Joseph Caraway, parochial vicar at St. Henry Catholic Church, was pleased with the crowd of 250 who participated in the procession on Sunday, Nov. 21.

“After COVID-19, there have been fewer parish activities, but the people were happy to gather for this beautiful procession with



Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament took place on Friday, Nov. 12, at the Lake Charles Civic Center Amphitheatre to kick off the inaugural Eucharistic Congress, the first of its kind in the 41-year history of the Diocese of Lake Charles. A candlelight Eucharistic Procession followed, ending at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for all-night adoration. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)



St. Louis Catholic High School students and faculty gave thanks to Our Lord with a Eucharistic Procession on Friday, Nov. 19. The morning began with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by the procession as part of the Eucharistic Congress to foster a deeper appreciation for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Christ our King,” said Father Caraway. “The community had a lot of positive comments about the procession.”

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church in Fenton incorporated their Eucharistic Procession on Sunday, Nov. 7, as part of the celebration for the Feast Day of St. Charles Borromeo (Nov. 4). Father Jom Joseph, pastor, said about 150 people participated around one block of Fenton.

Father Carlos Garcia, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Vinton, said their procession on Nov. 18 was well attended. The

evening also included an hour of Eucharistic Adoration, music, sacred scriptures, praise and Benediction.

The Cathedral celebrated the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Christ the King Sunday) with a Eucharistic Procession in downtown Lake Charles on Nov. 21 to close out the Congress. It was a beautiful evening and witness to all that Christ remains with us until the end of the age.

Schools also set aside time for special Masses and processions.

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Sister Miriam honored for work at Catholic Charities

By Pamela Seal
Diocese of Lake Charles

Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, was honored as the Jack V. Doland Citizen of the Year at the 30th annual Women’s Fall Conference in October at the Lake Charles Civic Center.

Each year, the Women’s Commission of Southwest Louisiana selects a recipient from a slate of candidates nominated for making a difference in the community based on their humanitarian efforts and volunteer services. The award was named in honor of the late senator for his contributions to the causes of women.

Carol Henry, chair of the 2021 fall conference, saw first-hand how much people in the community depend on Catholic Charities when she and other members of the Women’s Commission participated in a volunteer day earlier this year.

“I knew Catholic Charities was a food bank, but I was amazed at some of the other services they provide such as rental and utility assistance, medical transportation, disaster assistance, and help with funeral expenses,” said Henry. “Sister Miriam automatically came to my mind when it was time to nominate someone for the award.”

Roxanne Boxie, who serves on the Women’s Commission and volunteers as a case worker at Catholic Charities, said she is impressed with how much Sister Miriam has accomplished since being named director in 2018. Under her leadership, Catholic Charities expanded its monthly food distribution to include all five civil parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jeff Davis.

“Sister Miriam had the warehouse enlarged so more people could be fed each month,” Boxie said. “It was also her idea to buy ‘Big Joe,’

a 26-foot refrigerated truck used to bring food to the outlying areas.” The truck is affectionately named after St. Joseph, patron saint of the poor.

“Immediately after both hurricanes, Sister Miriam was on site at Catholic Charities,” Boxie continued. “When the pandemic hit, she did not close the doors. She knew she could not turn her back at a time when people were hurting and needed assistance.”

A native of New Hampshire and a graduate of Ave Maria University in Florida, Sister Miriam holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Michigan State University. She is a licensed social worker.

From providing a way for people to wash and dry their laundry after the storms to converting a conference room into a chapel at Catholic Charities, Boxie said Sister Miriam is full of great ideas and always thinking outside the box.

“Sister Miriam reminds me of a disciple of Jesus. Her favorite verse is Psalm 9:18: ‘God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.’ She truly lives this out through her mission at Catholic Charities,” said Boxie.

The announcement of the award is always kept a secret until the day of the conference at the luncheon. The tricky part is making sure the recipient is present to receive the award. That was made a little easier this year as Sister Miriam was on site since Catholic Charities was hosting a booth. Boxie helped coordinate getting several of the Religious Sisters of Mercy to the event.

“Sister Miriam was totally shocked. She had no idea what was happening,” said Boxie. “The Sisters were hiding behind stage and came out just as the award was being announced. It was also special to have Father Whitney Miller there as he was presenting a workshop, and he

led the opening prayer.”

Sister Miriam said she is “extremely grateful” for being honored because the award represents the fact that the people of Southwest Louisiana felt supported by Christ and His Church.

“All of the Religious Sisters of Mercy and Catholic Charities worked very hard after the hurricanes because we wanted the people to know that the Lord had not abandoned them,”

she said. “I feel so privileged that I was able to participate in His work.”

As the 2021 Jack V. Doland Citizen of the Year, Sister Miriam also received \$1,000 to be given to the charity of her choice.

For more information on Catholic Charities of Southwest Louisiana, visit www.catholiccharitiesswla.com.



Sister Miriam MacLean, R.S.M., front row center, received the Jack V. Doland Citizen of the Year Award during the 30th annual Fall Women’s Conference in October. She is joined by Sister Miriam Ruth Ryan, R.S.M., left; Sister Maura Clare Mayock, R.S.M., right; and back row, from left, Sister Mary Benedicta Maier, R.S.M., and Father Whitney Miller following the award presentation on October 21 in the Lake Charles Civic Center.

Calendar



The Most Reverend Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

December 10, 2021

Christmas Mass Schedule for the churches of the Diocese of Lake Charles

Bell City

St. John Vianney
(7120 Highway 14 E.)
11:30 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Big Lake

St. Mary of the Lake
(11054 Highway 384)
4:00 p.m. 5:15 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Carlyss

St. Theresa of the Child Jesus
(4822 Carlyss Drive)
4:00 p.m., 10:00 p.m. (Eve);
8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m. (Day)

Creole

Sacred Heart of Jesus, East Cameron
(11054 Highway 384)
4:00 p.m. at
5250 West Creole Highway in Creole, (Eve.)
8:00 a.m. at 11054 Highway 384 in Big Lake (Day)

DeQuincy

Our Lady of LaSalette
(203 S. Grand Avenue)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

DeRidder

St. Joseph
(1125 Blankenship Drive)
5:00 p.m., (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Elizabeth

St. Frances of Rome Mission
(204 Poplar Street)
8:00 a.m. (Day)

Elton

St. Joseph
(209 Al Woods Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

St. Paul

(1100 St. Mary Street)
7:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Fenton

St. Charles Borromeo
(804 Third Avenue)
6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Hackberry

St. Peter the Apostle
(1210 Main Street)
6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Iowa

St. Raphael
(211 S. Thomson Avenue)
4:00 p.m., (Eve); 9:30 a.m. (Day)

St. Peter Claver Mission

(503 Second Street)
8:00 a.m. (Day)

Jennings

Immaculate Conception
(705 S. Lake Arthur Avenue)
4:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. (Eve); 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady Help of Christians
(710 N. State Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:30 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
(920 S. Broadway)
6:30 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Johnson Bayou

Our Lady of the Assumption Mission
(5556 Highway 82)
11:00 a.m. (Day)

Kinder

St. Philip Neri
(607 Fourth Avenue)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Lacassine

St. John the Evangelist Mission
(306 Ann Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m. (Day)

Lake Arthur

Our Lady of the Lake
(203 Commercial Avenue)
5:00 p.m. (Eve);
8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 4:30 p.m. (Day)

Lake Charles

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
(Corner of Kirby and Bilbo Streets)
4:00 p.m., (Eve);
12:00 Midnight, 8:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m.
(Extraordinary Form) (Day)

Immaculate Heart of Mary
(2031 Opelousas Street)
4:00 p.m. (Eve);
12:00 Midnight, 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Good Counsel
(221 Aqua Drive)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m., 11 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady Queen of Heaven
(3939 Lake Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:30 p.m., (Eve);
12:00 Midnight, 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. (Day)

Sacred Heart of Jesus
(610 Louisiana Avenue)
4:30 p.m. (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Henry

(1021 Eighth Avenue)
4:00 p.m. (Eve);
12:00 Midnight (bilingual), 9:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. (Day)

St. Margaret of Scotland

(2500 Enterprise Blvd.)
(NW Corner of Enterprise Blvd & 17th Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve);
7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Martin de Porres

(5495 Elliott Road)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Christ the King

(7680 Gulf Highway)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve);
8:00 a.m. (Day)

LeBleu Settlement

St. Joseph Mission
(2110 Claude Hebert Road)
6:00 p.m. (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

Moss Bluff

St. Theodore
(785 Sam Houston Jones Parkway)
4:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 11:00 p.m. (Eve);
8:30 a.m. (Day)

Oakdale

Sacred Heart of Jesus
(1208 E. 7th Avenue)
7:00 p.m. (Eve); 10:00 a.m. (Day)

Oberlin

St. Joan of Arc
(110 W. 5th Avenue)
7:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Ragley

St. Pius X
(16816 Highway 171)
4:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Raymond

St. Lawrence
(5505 Pine Island Highway)
5:00 p.m. (Eve); 7:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. (Day)

Sulphur

Immaculate Conception
(2700 Maplewood Drive)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of LaSalette
(602 N. Claiborne Street)
4:00 p.m. (Children's Mass), 8:00 p.m. (Eve);
9:00 a.m. (Day)

Our Lady of Prompt Succor
(1109 Cypress Street)
5:00 p.m., (Eve); 12:00 Midnight, 7:00 a.m.,
9:00 a.m. (Extraordinary Form),
11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m. (Day)

St. Francis de Sales Oratory
(802 South Huntington Street)
Office of Matins, 10:00 p.m. (Eve);
Midnight Mass (First Mass of Christmas);
8:30 a.m. (Second Mass of Christmas),
10:30 a.m. (Third Mass of Christmas) (Day)

Vinton

St. Joseph
(1502 Industrial Street)
4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. (Eve); 9:00 a.m. (Day)

Welsh

Our Lady of Seven Dolors
(209 N. Adams Street)
4:00 p.m., (Eve); 8:00 a.m. (Day)

St. Joseph
(310 N. Sarah Street)
4:30 p.m. (Eve) 11:00 a.m. (Day)

Westlake

St. John Bosco
(1301 Sampson Street)
4:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m. (Eve);
8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m. (Day)

CONGRESS

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St. Louis Catholic High School entered their Thanksgiving break by "giving thanks" to Our Lord with a Eucharistic Procession on Nov. 19. The morning began with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on the soccer field, followed by the procession. Father Nathan Long, rector of the school, and Deacon Stephen Starr, led the group of nearly 600 students, faculty, staff, and parents, with Jesus Christ present among them, through nearby neighborhoods. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on the soccer field, followed by the procession. Father Nathan Long, rector of the school, and Deacon Stephen Starr, led the group of nearly 600 students, faculty, staff, and parents, with Jesus Christ present among them, through nearby neighborhoods.

St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic School celebrated Mass on the feast day of its patron saint on Nov. 16, followed by a Eucharistic Procession with students, teachers, parents, and parishioners throughout three blocks of the neighborhood. Father Long and Father Samuel Orsot led the procession and were joined by Father Trey Ange, Father Joseph Caraway, and Deacon Anthony Pousson.

Immaculate Conception Cathedral School celebrated a special Mass outdoors on Nov. 17, officiated by Father Samuel Bond, on the school grounds followed by a procession. Father Rommel Tolentino assisted with the liturgy.

Spanish Mass at St. Henry

Father Randy Courville from the Diocese of Lafayette was the main celebrant for a Spanish Mass at St. Henry Catholic Church on Nov. 17, with more than 80 in attendance. Immediately following, Father Courville presented a talk on the Eucharist. Assisting at the Mass were Father Joseph Caraway, Father Matthew Cormier, and Deacon Josue Canelo.

Mass for Priests, Deacons, Religious

On the evening of Nov. 19, Bishop Provost celebrated a special Mass in the Cathedral

for priests, deacons and their wives, and those serving in consecrated life.

In his homily, he reminded those in attendance that the Eucharist was to be and is a moment of yearning for the Lord's coming in the here and now, and in the Kingdom of God at its fulfillment.

"God is indeed near to us. We have nothing to fear," the bishop said, "except our own unworthiness. We must not allow this nearness of God to intimidate us, much less become so ordinary as to be taken for granted. We should be so inspired as to put aside those obstacles that impede our joy and our yearning for God."

"Where Do We Go from Here?"

With thousands across the Diocese taking part in processions and adoration throughout the 10 days, the public witness and veneration of the most Holy Eucharist was timely leading up to a three-year National Eucharistic Revival that begins in 2022.

Planned by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis and approved by the bishops during their recent fall general assembly, the revival is scheduled to begin June 19, the Feast of Corpus Christi. The initiative will culminate with a National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21, 2024, in Indianapolis.

Bishop Provost said it is his prayer and sincere hope that the Diocese of Lake Charles expand upon its recent Eucharistic Congress.

"In many ways, what we celebrated with our Congress will flow nicely into the Eucharistic Renewal being proposed by the bishops of the United States," he said. "All of us need to examine how in our spiritual lives, liturgical practice, and catechetical programs we foster a greater knowledge and love for the Eucharist."

"The Eucharist is a priceless gift," Bishop Provost continued. "God does not give gifts to be hidden. He gives them to be known, loved and shared, because in doing so we give glory to Him."



Bishop Glen John Provost blesses the altar with incense at the beginning of Mass on Saturday Nov. 13, at the West Cal Event Center in Sulphur. The Mass was part of the historic Eucharistic Congress that included a gathering of clergy, religious, and laity throughout the 10-day event to bring about a spiritual renewal of the Eucharist. (Morris LeBleu / Diocese of Lake Charles)

Office closures, publication dates

The offices of the Diocese of Lake Charles will close for the Christmas and New Year holidays at the end of business on Wednesday, Dec. 22, and remain closed through Dec. 31, before reopening on Monday Jan. 3, for regular hours – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The next Catholic Calendar will be published on Friday, Dec. 24. On Monday, Jan. 17, in honor of the life and achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the offices will be closed, returning for the remainder of the week - Tuesday through Friday - for normal business hours. The first Catholic Calendar of 2022 will be published on Friday, Jan. 21.