



**CATHOLIC  
HOME  
MISSIONS**

## Eucharistic Revival Takes Root in Home Mission Dioceses

*Left:* Clergy, religious, and lay faithful join the 2022 diocesan Eucharistic procession as it departs the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary in Duluth, making its way through residential neighborhoods to St. Mary Star of the Sea downtown.



*Right:* Duluth Bishop Daniel Felton takes up the monstrance holding the Blessed Sacrament at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Rosary to begin a diocesan Eucharistic procession.



By Rhina Guidos

They may be few in number, and they may not make national headlines, but do not underestimate home mission dioceses' fervor for the upcoming 2024 National Eucharistic Congress.

Around the United States, dioceses have been participating in the National Eucharistic Revival since 2022. The revival is a three-year period seeking to bring Catholics around the country closer to the Eucharist—and to one another—through processions, adoration, Holy Hours, and added instruction on Church teaching regarding the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Some larger dioceses have been planning significant events, such as Eucharistic processions at iconic landmarks, like the Golden Gate Bridge. Catholics

in home mission dioceses, however, are spread across sparsely populated landscapes where it is difficult for them to come together in large numbers. Even so, officials in mission dioceses say they have accepted the challenge with much enthusiasm. And they have reaped great rewards by teaching their faithful about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

“What we had always hoped for is that we not just receive the Eucharist, and that it is something that we share . . . but maybe change their attitude and their engagement with one another, and that we really do we see the Body of Christ in each other,” said Fr. John-Michael Lavelle, vicar for missionary discipleship at the Diocese of Youngstown in Ohio, a Catholic Home Mission-funded diocese.

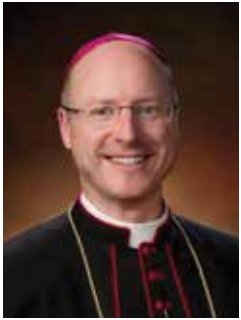
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# Neighbors

ISSUE 3 2023

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA

# FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In November 2021, my brother bishops and I approved a document titled *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*, about the centrality of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist in our lives as individuals and in the life of the Church. Christ, present in the Eucharist, draws us closer to him and to one another. He gives us the graces to grow in virtues of faith, hope, and charity during

our journey as disciples of Jesus.

This document serves to teach, but it also initiated the National Eucharistic Revival: a three-year project that engages dioceses, parishes, and individuals to rededicate themselves to Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith. As part of the National Eucharistic Revival, dioceses across the country are promoting educational and catechetical efforts to deepen the faithful's understanding of the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Charity, the importance of the Sunday Mass, and devotions such as Eucharistic adoration and processions. In addition, the revival will include a pilgrimage for local communities to come together in July 2024 for the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana.

This exciting and faith-renewing effort is happening not only in large dioceses but also in the mission dioceses with financial support from the Catholic Home Missions Appeal. In this issue, you get to see how special grants from the Catholic Home Missions Appeal are helping two dioceses to ignite a deeper understanding, love, and devotion to Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist.

I am filled with gratitude for your ongoing support of the Catholic Home Missions Appeal. Your assistance is "*Strengthening the Church at Home*," and it is already bearing fruit, as people rediscover and more deeply encounter Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shawn McKnight".

Most Reverend W. Shawn McKnight

Bishop of Jefferson City

Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions

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"We don't see Christ in our groups or other individuals," he explained. "I think that's what we want to see, because that's what's had people diminish their belief that Christ is even present in the Eucharist, because they're really not willing to see him or anyone else. If you can't see [Christ] in anyone else, how do you see him in a piece of bread?"

In 2021, when the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops announced the revival process and a subsequent National Eucharistic Congress in 2024, the development followed prelates' concern over a 2019 Pew Research Center survey that stated that about only a third of Catholics in the United States believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. According to this core Catholic teaching, the bread and wine become Christ's real Body and Blood when they are consecrated at Mass.

Besides seeking to cement teaching and belief regarding the Real Presence, those preparing for the revival and the subsequent congress—such as Fr. John-Michael and Fr. Seth Gogolin, from the Diocese of Duluth in Minnesota—are also looking to revive past Catholic customs when it comes to the Eucharist.

Spreading the message is a challenging task in dioceses like theirs, which cover vast geographical areas and have few resources. But Catholic Home Missions has stepped in to help. With \$10,000 grants to fund Eucharistic Revival efforts, mission dioceses have been able to get the word out, plan and conduct their own local activities, and organize their participation in the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana, to be held July 17-21, 2024.

In Duluth, pastors have been busy sharing the message, said Fr. Seth, who is leading the revival efforts in his role as vicar general of the diocese. The diocesan newspaper, *The Northern Cross*, and its associated social media outlets have put out news about it.

"Our diocese is vast," said Fr. Seth. To spread the word, he said, "We also placed information on our internal communication pieces such as our clergy newsletter, presbyteral council meetings, and staff meetings as well as our daily huddles with staff. Additionally, we are asking all pastors to include the information in their parish bulletins."

The outreach has generated not only interest but also participation in processions, Masses, and other events intended to prepare the faithful.

Like Fr. Seth, Fr. John-Michael in Youngstown has high hopes for what this period could bring. He expects that the processions, Masses, and other events that are part of the National Eucharistic Revival will yield a stronger devotion to the Eucharist during the three-year initiative.



Fr. John-Michael says the Youngstown diocese, like other US dioceses, launched its efforts on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ last year. But because it serves six counties across a sparse geographic area in eastern Ohio, where some parishes are closer to Cleveland and others closer to Pittsburgh, he said that it is sometimes hard to feel like one diocesan family.

“In a way, we’re disconnected,” Fr. John-Michael said, describing the long distances between the counties. But the revival events have been uniform from one county to the next: namely, they begin with a Mass, followed by a Eucharistic procession, informed by a shared goal to draw closer to God in the process.

People have brought not only their bodies to the Masses and processions but also their stories of faith, said Fr. John-Michael.

“These stories have helped in trying to bring people together and understand that we’re all part of one Church here,” he said.

**“I think that’s reflective of society. We’re not good with silence. We’re about conversation. When a person stops talking, we start talking right away. The challenge is to sit in silence and listen to God speak to us.”**

The Youngstown diocese will also use some of the grant funds to update a book written by its first bishop, titled *The March of the Eucharist*, about the state of the spiritual territory’s parish churches and schools in the 1950s, when the diocese came into being. The updated edition will describe what was going on at that time, while adding information about current communities. The title of the revised edition will be *The March of the Eucharist Continues*, said Fr. John-Michael.

“Like many dioceses around the country, we’ve seen a little expansion, but we’ve also seen some mergers, new names, or parishes,” he said.

The diocese also has used the money to buy tickets for 125 participants to attend the 2024 event, he said.

Back in the Duluth diocese, Fr. Seth said the funding from Catholic Home Missions is similarly allowing diocesan members to attend the national congress.

“We would not have had the funding to allow this holistic invitation to be possible to the entire diocese without the funding,” Fr. Seth said. “Additionally, if the funding had not arrived earlier than the event, we would have been unable to secure transportation and other items for attending the event. Having to fundraise for a wonderful event like this can be difficult with the other needs in our mission diocese, so this allowed us to get a plan earlier than later.”

Both dioceses said they already have seen results they are happy with.

“We have seen a variety of those interested, which is wonderful,” Fr. Seth said. “As our diocese embraces Bishop Daniel Felton’s pastoral letter emphasizing ‘Healing, Hope and Joy in Jesus,’ we are also focusing more on the mission of our church. We are finalizing a plan to be inclusive of attendance from all corners of our diocese, making it a bigger part of our focus on mission within our diocese.”

In the Youngstown diocese, the revival has also brought together different generations and different communities, including Spanish-speaking Catholics from a remote part of the diocese, said Fr. John-Michael.

“A lot of people have been very excited to see a re-engagement in some of these devotions that, for whatever reason, they feel were lost or were no longer actively practiced in the Church,” Fr. John-Michael said. “We have some people who have never experienced them [and] didn’t know what this was about.”

Among them were a lot of young people, he said, but also others.

“It wasn’t just an old population saying, ‘I remember when,’ but it was some younger people saying, ‘I like this,’” he added.

Even Fr. John-Michael, at 55, did not grow up with some popular traditions the revival is trying to bring back to the life of the Church.

“I would say that I had never, growing up in my parish, had a Eucharistic procession,”

he said. “We did have adoration at one of the Masses in grade school. So if you served, you were aware, but I would say in my parish, a wonderful, vibrant parish, any type of procession was reserved to Holy Thursday or the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, but it was not the usual. Even for me, it’s been a great thing to get the communities to reengage.”

But some of the biggest challenges, he said, are more related to a modern culture than anything else.

“It’s been a challenge getting people to understand periods of silence in our Holy Hours,” he said. “I think that’s reflective of society. We’re not good with silence. We’re about conversation. When a person stops talking, we start talking right away. The challenge is to sit in silence and listen to God speak to us.”

In a polarized, fast-moving world, inviting the silence brings the voice of God to a person, and that can be healing balm for a lot of the world’s problems, Fr. John-Michael said.

“This should be part of their daily life. Their life has gotten a little hectic, and they’re always running and they’re always doing; and they need to really stop and quiet themselves and reflect [on] not just how they’re going to learn about their faith but how they’re going to adapt it to other parts of their lives,” he said. “This has made possible the opportunity for us to engage with each other and help provide the tools necessary to do that.”

What he most hopes will come out of the effort is for people in the diocese to form a community that sees its members the way Christ sees them, despite the divisions that have become prevalent even among Church members, he said. ■





Strengthening the Church at Home

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**ISSUE 3 2023**

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### DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 100,000 Catholics from across the United States will participate in a Eucharistic pilgrimage along four routes, which will converge in Indianapolis. The routes start at San Francisco in the US West; Brownsville, Texas, in the South; New Haven, Connecticut, in the East; and the headwaters of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, in the North.
- Catholic Home Missions Appeal has allocated nearly \$700,000 in special grants to home mission dioceses, intended to fund local efforts and help them join and contribute to this once-in-a-lifetime nationwide celebration of faith.
- For more information, updates, and opportunities to participate in the National Eucharistic Revival, please visit [www.eucharisticrevival.org](http://www.eucharisticrevival.org).

Our work is supported by the annual collection taken up in U.S. parishes. If you missed your parish collection, you may send your donation to: USCCB Office of National Collections | P. O. Box 96278 | Washington, DC 20090-6278. Please make checks payable to USCCB-Catholic Home Missions Appeal. iGiveCatholicTogether also accepts contributions to support the Catholic Home Missions program: <https://usccb.givecatholicttogether.org/organizations/usccb-catholic-home-missions>

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