

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



“Make this a Eucharistic Lent”

At this time of year, it's not uncommon for Catholics to ask themselves or someone else: *“What should I do for Lent this year?”* And this year in particular, another question has been coming up frequently: *“What is happening in the Diocese of Toledo for the National Eucharistic Revival?”* I want to suggest that the answer to the first question is: *“Make this a Eucharistic Lent;”* and to the second: *“Many wonderful things!”*

Since we're in the midst of a *National Eucharistic Revival*, in this column I want to mention what we're doing and encourage your participation in our exciting events and initiatives. But before that, permit me to offer that the very first thing you can do to make this a Eucharist Lent: pray each of the 40 days the new Diocesan Prayer composed for this Eucharist Revival. I am pleased to share it here, you can find it on our diocesan website, and on prayer cards which will be made available at events and in all our parishes. I invite you then to pray this prayer with me every day thru Lent:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who promises to remain with us always and who is ever present to us in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Reawaken our belief in His presence in the Eucharist and deepen our understanding of, love for and living out of this great Mystery. May this Sacrament of his sacrificial love be for us the sign of unity and the bond of

charity.

Nourish us through our worthy reception of the Body and Blood of your Son, so that we may enjoy communion with you and with one another. Make us living witnesses of your love and mercy throughout our local church.

Send us forth as faithful missionary disciples, strengthened by the grace of the Eucharist to proclaim the Gospel, so all may know that the Living Bread Jesus gives is his Flesh for the life of the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



NATIONAL
**Eucharistic
Revival**

This prayer is just one way you might make this a Eucharistic Lent! I invite you to consider these other possibilities as well: attending daily Mass; spending time with the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration; praying a Litany of the Holy Eucharist; solidifying your knowledge by reflecting on the Catholic Catechism's chapter on the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist; inviting back to Mass someone who has fallen away from the practice of their Catholic faith; inviting someone who is not Catholic to come to Mass with you; holding a book discussion on the Holy Eucharist with family, friends or fellow parishioners; increasing your commitment to the hour Eucharistic Fast before Mass; intentionally exercising the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as the natural outcomes of living the Eucharist, checking the reverence with which you approach receiving the Holy Eucharist and the reverence with which you approach others; reflecting prayerfully on the question *“What does the Eucharist mean to me?”*; and making a

good confession in Lent, to more worthily prepare to receive our Lord during Holy Week and at Easter.

Just imagine if all our lay faithful, families and children, consecrated religious, deacons and priests, would engage in a "Eucharistic Lent" this year! Imagine the grace we could receive as individuals and as a diocese, through the deepening of our understanding of, our love for and our living out of the Holy Eucharist!

Our Diocesan Eucharistic Revival Team, led by Pat Oedy-Murray, includes priests, deacons, consecrated religious and lay men and women from across the Diocese. As representatives they serve as an advisory committee and are key to our planning and executing the Revival here. Many parishes have a designated contact person for the Eucharistic Revival, who receives updates and shares information at the parish level.

As we prepare for and enter into Lent, I look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming Eucharistic Revival Gatherings held at various locations around the Diocese. These events will be worshipful afternoons (3:00pm-4:30pm) of encounter with the Lord, of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration, a perfect opportunity to help you "make a Eucharistic Lent." I sincerely hope you will attend a gathering near you!

- Sunday, February 5, 2023 at St. Michael the Archangel, Gibsonburg
- Sunday, February 12, 2023 at St. Patrick, Bryan
- Sunday, February 19, 2023 at St. Mary, Norwalk
- Sunday, March 12, 2023 at St. Peter, Mansfield
- Sunday, March 19, 2023 at St. Michael, Kalida
- Sunday, April 30, 2023 at St. John XXIII, Perrysburg

Students from K-12 throughout the Diocese have been asked to participate in a contest to express "What the Eucharist Means to Me". They can create pictures, paintings, videos, write essays or compose songs inspired by their love for the Eucharist. All contributions are to be submitted by the end of February 2023. And a Eucharistic Revival Day for Young Adults is being planned and will be held at Lourdes University on Saturday, April 15, 2023, with the presence of one of the national preachers.

In the Easter Season, our diocese will have the honor to host the tour of the Relics of St. Manuel González García and Blessed Carlo Acutis, patrons of the National Eucharistic Revival, which will travel to six locations in our diocese for veneration from April 24-29. We encourage all parishes and schools in the area to attend. Lesson plans will be created and distributed to schools and PSR parish programs concerning saints, canonization, and relics. Relics will be on public display throughout the day with times for a service of veneration, communal & private prayer and meditation.

Additionally, a national Eucharistic Revival preacher will present at the biennial Deacon Convocation, the Fall Diocesan Pastoral Conference and at the annual Fall retreat for all our Diocesan Pastoral Center staff.

We are also providing an opportunity for everyone to share their love for the Eucharist in video form! On social media and our website, you'll soon see question prompts. We're inviting you to answer one (or more!) questions in video form and upload them on social media or send them directly to us. I already answered the questions and invite you to do the same. Visit toledodiocese.org/eucharist for updates on this and more!

So this year, make it a "Eucharistic Lent", the perfect time to catch the vision of this *National Eucharistic Revival*: "A movement of Catholics across the United States, healed, converted, formed and unified by an encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist – and sent out in mission 'for the life of the world'." This Lent, and beyond, let's embrace the Mission of the *National Eucharist Revival*: "To renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist."

You can find information on this nationwide initiative here: www.eucharisticrevival.org and on our diocesan engagement here: toledodiocese.org/eucharist



Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
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