



REFLECTIONS

SUMMER 2022

Recognizing our gifts of time, talent and treasure

National Eucharistic Revival *begins*

On June 19, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops launched the National Eucharistic Revival, a three-year grassroots initiative “to invite every Catholic diocese, parish, school, apostolate and family to be a part of renewing the church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist,” said Bishop Joe S. Vásquez.

“As bishops, we want to remind the faithful of the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of our beloved church,” he told the Catholic Spirit. “The Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life.”

The U.S. bishops decided this was a critical time for the Church in the United States to have a Eucharistic Revival because:

- Geopolitical crises, social unrest, increased polarization and the need for recovery and renewal from the pandemic have created the opportunity to “open wide the doors to Christ.”
- Recent difficulties and challenges have shed light on the Church’s need for healing, unity, formation and conversion.
- More than 30 percent of Catholics have not returned to in-person Mass post-pandemic, and recent data shows that the majority of Mass-going Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

- The past decade has seen the rise of the “nones” among millennials, with more than 40 percent self-identifying as “unaffiliated” with any religion.
- Many young Catholics find the faith to be irrelevant to the meaning of their lives and challenges.

Austin to St. Edward’s University. There, Bishop Vásquez will gather on the hilltop overlooking Austin and conclude with Exposition, Adoration and Benediction of the whole diocese.

Although Bishop Vásquez has walked the city streets in prayer and



Diocese of Austin
Eucharistic Revival

“That they may all be one”
(Jn 17:21)

The Eucharistic Revival is a grassroots call and a challenge for every Catholic across our country to rekindle the fire of love and devotion for the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.”

The revival’s milestone event will be a National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis in July 2024. Each of the three years will have a strategic focus for formation and missionary discipleship, beginning with a year of diocesan revival.

The Diocese of Austin has plans to kick off both the revival and the initial diocesan year on June 18 with Mass at San José Parish in Austin followed by Eucharistic Procession through the streets of downtown

solidarity, the procession will mark the first time he, as bishop, will carry the Eucharist throughout the city of Austin.

“This will be a great witness to show who we are as Catholics,” he said.

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“Every time we receive the Eucharist, we are encouraged to take Christ into our communities, our families, schools, workplaces, hospitals and neighborhoods. That’s what it means to be a Eucharistic people — to bring Christ to all!”

Throughout the first year, especially during preparations to kick off the celebration of the Diocese of Austin’s 75th anniversary on

November 19, “we will incorporate opportunities for catechesis on the Eucharist and how we can be Eucharistic witnesses on a daily basis,” he said.

The second year, from June 2023 to June 2024, will be the year of parish revival, and the USCCB and the diocese will develop materials and resources to help parishioners renew their love for the Eucharist and live

it out. From July 2024 to Pentecost 2025, the focus will be on going out on mission, beginning with the National Eucharistic Congress.

“The Eucharistic Revival is not a step-by-step plan or a series of meetings,” Bishop Vásquez said. “It is a grassroots call and a challenge for every Catholic across our country to rekindle the fire of love and devotion for the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.”

DONOR PROFILE



“I need to give back all of the blessings that have been bestowed upon me.”

~ Kristina Arce

‘Being a Christian drives you to do good deeds’

With more women in leadership in their workplaces and communities, Kristina Arce believes they need to reflect that leadership in their actions, especially in terms of their charitable giving.

In regard to her own career as a financial controller and the advancement opportunities she has received, the member of Santa Rosa de Lima Parish in Andice gives credit where credit is due. “I’ve held to the belief that it’s not me, it’s coming from the Lord,” she said. “I need to give back all of the blessings that have been bestowed upon me.”

Through her will, Kristina has ensured this giving will not end with her lifetime. When she wrote her will, she included her parish, the Diocese of Austin’s Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) and other charities and organizations she feels compelled to support now.

She also wants her son to see the importance of giving back, “to have that charitable mindset.”

Kristina began tithing at age 16 as a waitress and soon realized that what she gave almost always came back to her in some way — at first, with more tips then, later in life, with raises and promotions. She uses these “rewards” to increase her giving to others.

It was during Bible study years ago that she learned the true reward of stewarding God’s blessings in her life. “Doing good deeds doesn’t necessarily make you a Christian,” she said, “but being a Christian drives you to do good deeds.”



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Jesus Walks

By John Garvey, Catholic News Service

Any Christian who goes to Jerusalem will come away inspired by the experience of visiting a city where Jesus walked.

Of course, as with all tourist sites, there is a certain amount of invention. Much of what you see is old, to be sure, but the connection to the Gospels and the life of Our Lord can be, not to put too fine a point on it, attenuated.



Take the cenacle where the apostles were gathered at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on them and the church was born. Tourists can see an upper room of a two-story building south of the Zion Gate.

It is certainly old, and it doesn't require much imagination to picture Peter and the other disciples covering there. But it has Gothic arches, an architectural detail we don't see before the 12th century in other parts of the world.

There is one spot, though, that I hold sacred in my memory.

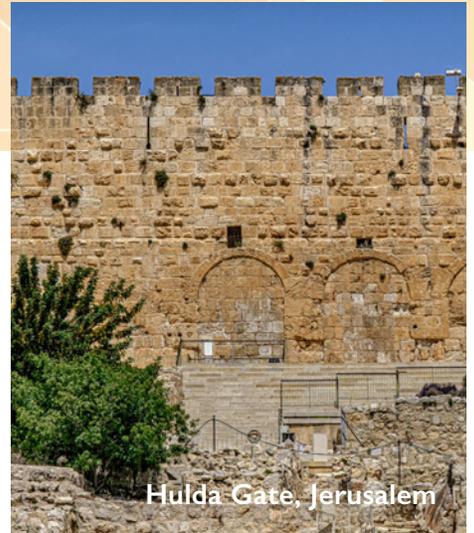
The excavations along the

southern wall of the Temple have exposed the steps that common people would have ascended, the ritual baths where they would have purified themselves, and the doors that Jesus, Mary and Joseph would have entered.

I have a picture of my wife and me standing in one of those doorways. It is excavated down to bedrock.

If we really believed that Jesus was physically present at Mass, the way I imagined him to be at the Hulda Gate, attendance would approach 100%.

We know that Jesus walked over the very stone we are standing on. It's probably worn down a bit from what it was 2,000 years ago, but when the picture was taken, I found myself



Hulda Gate, Jerusalem

wanting to get on my knees and kiss the stone that may have felt the imprint of our Savior's feet.

It required no imagination at all to picture Jesus walking through that door. He actually did. And with a little effort I could see myself standing there as he walked by. He might even have looked my way; he would certainly have known my thoughts.

We sometimes forget that this is exactly what happens in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Jesus is actually there, not in Jerusalem but in St. Vincent's Chapel or St. Matthew's Cathedral or Little Flower Church. The Mass is not an exercise in imaginary



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EVENT

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reconstruction. We receive him, body and blood, soul and divinity.

I found myself thinking about this recently when the Barna Group released a report saying that church attendance was down 30% to 50% from 2019.

When COVID-19 arrived, bishops excused their flocks from their Sunday obligation. People went online instead, and often found better preaching there. Now that most are vaccinated, many still opt to attend Mass on their computers or have gotten out of the habit altogether.

To one who believes what the church professes, this makes no sense. A good sermon is an inspiring thing, even online, but it is not God present in our midst. No believing Catholic would trade the sacrament of the Eucharist for a video. So what explains the drop in attendance?

A Pew Research Center report released in 2019 indicated that 69% of Catholics believe that the bread and wine used at Mass are only "symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ."

If we really believed that Jesus was physically present at Mass, the way I imagined him to be at the Hulda Gate, attendance would approach 100%. Maybe that's a bit high. The apostles who lived with him had their doubts too. But it would be way up there, even at daily Mass.

Garvey is president of The Catholic University of America in Washington. Follow him on Twitter @CatholicPres. Catholic University's website is www.cua.edu.

CHRIST OUR

H O P E



Christo

NUESTRA ESPERANZA

Hosted by: Life, Charity and Justice

Join us for a gathering that will bring together parish leaders and volunteers whose faith inspires them to respond to challenges relating to evangelization in contemporary society, lay leadership, poverty, injustice, and the promotion of human life and dignity.

Saint Catherine of Siena Parish, Oak Hill

Saturday, August 27, 2022 | 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

KEY SPEAKERS



Most Rev. Joe S. Vásquez

Bishop of Austin

Luisa Lamadrid de de Poo

Life, Marriage, and Family

Rev. Everardo Cázares

Saint Mary Parish | Brenham

Dr. Ansel Augustine

Black Ministry | Archdiocese of New Orleans

S. Lucero Espitia

Discipulas de Jesús

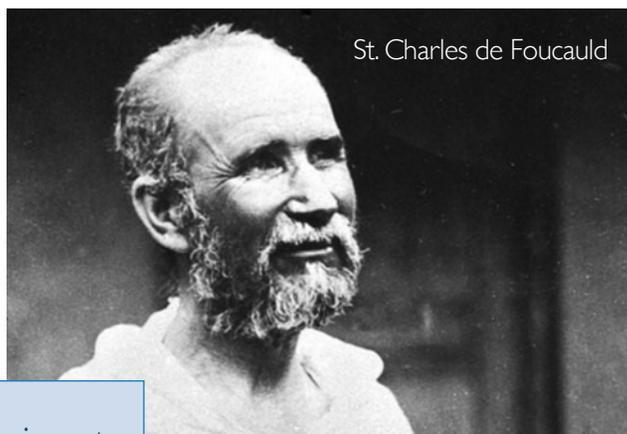
Rev. Joseph Daheim

Saint Anthony Marie de Claret Parish | Kyle

For more information and to register go to:
austindiocese.org/christ-our-hope

Seeking silence in our confused times

by Mary Marrocco Catholic News Service



St. Charles de Foucauld

It's impossible to hold a real conversation when it's peppered with mean, toxic words. The more our attempted conversation becomes thwarted by invective, the more we lose the ability to hear and speak at all. A silence creeps forth, not the sweet silence of life and growth, but the terrible silence of contempt, disdain and denial.

This kind of experience has become so prevalent among us that we're in danger of losing sight of what's happening. When we're screaming at each other or holding one another in contempt, how can we find each other? How can we not become (collectively) anxious, depressed and out of sorts when it's getting harder and harder to encounter one another, in all our glorious similarity and difference — as we were made for and can't live without?

As we get pushed out of real encounters, as conversation gets more difficult and we lose the desire even to sit with each other — there comes a time for a different silence. We might not go looking for it, but it will come looking for us.

A newly canonized saint shows us a place of silence in these confused days. He went there for different reasons, not looking for silence but looking for people. He wanted to make a difference. And he did, though in his own lifetime it did not seem so.

Long before his canonization, St. Charles de Foucauld came unexpectedly into my life. I had been offered to lead a certain ministry, one that would require me to change many aspects of my life and

When we're screaming at each other or holding one another in contempt, how can we find each other?

leave people I loved. I knew in my heart I needed to say yes. But I didn't want to.

A beloved spiritual guide helped me reflect, a person of deep faith whose words were backed up by his way of life, working with the outcast in different countries. As St. Paul VI observed, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" ("Evangelii Nuntiandi," No. 41).

So when this person spoke, it was hard to justify not listening — although his words were leading me where I was frightened to go. Indeed, he said plainly: "Your problem is not that you don't know what to do; it's that you're afraid of suffering." Fear of suffering is nothing to be ashamed of; the danger is to be unaware of our fear and become enslaved by it.

The particular suffering I feared was being alone. Not physically alone, but alone in my faith, alone with Jesus to face human problems, wondering whether he's real. Faith can be difficult even in a crowd of the faithful, each carrying their little candle lit from the big paschal candle. What about with no witnesses around to hold the flame with you, while the flame itself (waving though it may be) exposes you in the night?

My guide picked up on my fear with

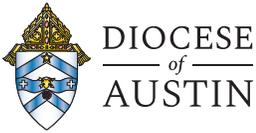
far greater understanding than I had. He didn't respond with soothing words — "That's OK, we're all afraid" — helping me stay stuck. Nor with contempt — "How can you be so cowardly?" — driving me underground. Nor with the (oh so much easier) conclusion that since I was afraid, I'd better say no. He simply said: "Charles de Foucauld died alone in the desert."

Aloneness in the desert might sound like a punishment, but there are times when it is the place we need to go. It might become a divine gift, a place of silence, encounter and strengthening.

Pushed by hurtful conversation and angry silence into a desert of solitude, might we receive as a gift another kind of silence? Charles de Foucauld didn't set out to die alone in the desert, but his radical love and faithfulness led him there. He did not refuse. By his unconditional love, he allowed such a solitude, even unto death, to be transformed.

Pope Francis has received and encouraged the image of Our Lady of Silence emerging into the present cacophony and chaos. He sees that from this silence will come the church's renewal.

When I did take up that new ministry, a fellow worker turned out to be someone inspired by de Foucauld. At the end of each working day, in the silence of a small chapel, the two of us would recite together de Foucauld's Prayer of Abandonment. "Do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all."

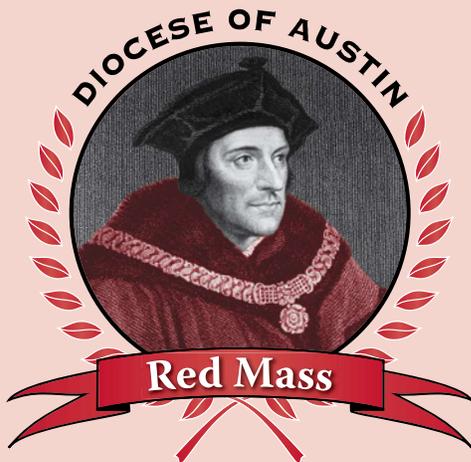


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*A Mass of the Holy Spirit which
is celebrated annually at the
opening of the judicial year.*

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The Diocese of Austin
and St. Thomas More Society

cordially invites the

Legal Community

to the 31st annual

RED MASS

on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, 6 p.m.

at **St. Mary Cathedral**

203 E. 10th Street, Austin, Texas

Reception immediately following at the

Austin Club

110 East 9th Street, Austin, Texas

Guest Speaker: O. Carter Snead

Notre Dame Professor and Author

**For more information, visit
www.austindiocese.org/red-mass**