



# DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

THE MOST REVEREND ERIK T. POHLMEIER

November 3, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

The national effort for a Eucharistic Revival has been underway for over a year. At the heart of every effort is a desire to respond more fully to God's invitation. The same God who gives us life wants to nourish us for our human journey. We live in a world filled with joys and challenges. We must respond, but the path forward is often difficult and uncertain. God does not abandon those who call out to him. He responds to give us strength as we follow the narrow way, as we carry our crosses alongside Jesus.

No part of human existence brings us as near to Jesus as the Eucharist. He tells us in very direct words, "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you." "I am the Bread of Life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst." (John 6)

As powerful a promise as Jesus makes, we can easily remain indifferent. The Eucharistic Revival is meant to awaken our hearts and minds so that we receive the gift of God that gives abundant life. Every time we gather for Mass, we enter a privileged place for intimate contact with our Living God.

For this reason, I am asking every parish to begin a more direct preparation for the encounter with Jesus at Mass. I ask every parish to create a more intentional environment of prayer before Mass begins. The main area of the church, especially around the altar, should preserve silence before Mass. The goal of this silence is not merely a greater quiet. This silence should promote a kind of prayer that turns the heart to God in anticipation. Enter your parish church with expectation for the gifts that God gives. Bring your joys and sorrows to the altar. Take time before Mass to speak with the Lord in your heart. Pray for your intentions. Surrender your burdens. Open your heart and mind to the Word of God in the Scriptures.

I am also asking those who plan the liturgy and those who serve as ushers and greeters to look for ways to promote quiet prayer in the final minutes before Mass begins. While we also value the welcoming nature of our parishes, it is possible to promote both friendly interaction and intentional preparation to meet the Lord in the Eucharist. We can better use the spaces outside of the sanctuary and the time after Mass for strengthening our community.

My hope is that the Eucharistic Revival can teach us a deeper prayer, especially in the privileged location of our churches. With this initiative we are also releasing some materials to guide our prayer. Because we are easily distracted, we need help to turn our minds to God as we prepare for Mass. Please take advantage of the guidance these materials provide and develop a habit of arriving early enough to silence your heart and turn your attention to God.

Our encounter with the Lord in the silence of our hearts takes practice and is well worth the effort. Together, let us Seek First the Kingdom of God, joining in prayer for the many needs of our world and the conversion of our hearts.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Pohlmeier', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Most Reverend Erik T. Pohlmeier  
Bishop of St. Augustine