

To: Priests and Deacons
From: Department of Education
Re: Eucharistic Initiative
Date: March 30, 2021

A few weeks ago, Bishop LaValley announced an initiative to heighten awareness of Eucharistic worship and our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We have already begun to view and appreciate the wonderful and thought-provoking presentations from Christopher Carstens.

Besides renewing our own understanding of the liturgy and the Eucharist, we need to help our people rediscover the beauty of the liturgy and our belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As one author has said: “The Mass is the reflection of God’s beauty.”

The pandemic has removed parishioners from regular contact with the Eucharist. Even though people can return to church, we have not seen great numbers. We anticipated greater numbers at Christmas, but that influx did not occur. What does the future hold?

We know that we want our people to come back home to regular worship on the Lord’s Day. We need to reach out to all of our parishioners to strengthen their faith and understanding. We do not doubt that improving the beauty of our celebrations of the Eucharist through enriched preaching, music, and hospitality is always important. Our own study of our Eucharistic and liturgical teachings is necessary so that we are better prepared to instruct our people. We hope that catechetical efforts directed to parishioners will help them rediscover “the source and summit of the Christian life.”

As mentioned in Bishop LaValley’s previous letter, the Department of Education will be holding special instructional sessions for Catholic School principals and teachers, catechetical leaders and catechists and others involved in parish ministries so that they will be better prepared to convey the teaching on the Mass and Eucharist to the children and young people in Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs.

So, we are turning to you, along with the other pastoral leaders in your parishes, to develop a pastoral response for your own parishes. The simple goals are to encourage people to return to regular Lord’s Day worship and to reinforce people’s understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. It is hoped these goals can be merged with the planning your parish is doing related to the Living Stones Planning Committee. Attached to this memo are resources to help you with this process related to the Eucharist.

Printed Materials

There are more than enough books, pamphlets, brochures, and magazines about the Eucharist. This section contains some of the more recent resources. The authors of these resources recognize the decreasing understanding of the Eucharist among our people and so have written to respond to that decreased appreciation. These resources contain links to Amazon along with reader reviews. You may also wish to consult with the publishers’ website for expanded information about the publications. For more classical writings on the Eucharist, you may wish to consult those works cited by Christopher Carstens in *A Devotional Journey into the Mass*.

Video Materials

Thanks to the Internet, video materials are readily available. Again, these resources contain the latest methodology used to reach our people.

Bulletin Inserts and Social Media

Our parish bulletins are a primary means of communicating with parishioners. Bulletin inserts are a quick and easy way to send out our message. Emailing parish bulletins could help spread the message especially to those who have not yet returned to Sunday worship. Perhaps parishes could consider adding those bulletin inserts to social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), Flocknote, and Loop (breezechms.com). We will be posting other possible bulletin inserts on the diocesan website in the near future.

Homilies

The Sunday homily remains our best face-to-face tool to convey a message. The Gospel readings on August 1, 8, and 22 will be from John 6. Some priests of the diocese will write and make available to you suggested homilies for each of these Sundays. You may wish to avail yourselves of these resources especially so that there can be a unified message throughout the diocese.

Public Media

The diocese will be producing public messages promoting Sunday worship and teaching our belief about the Eucharist. These messages will be on tv, cable, and Internet sites. We will provide you with links to these messages so you may include them on your parish websites and social media. Darcy Fargo and her team along with Dr. William Amoriell and some members of the Living Stones Planning Committee will work together to develop and promote these messages.

Updates

We plan on updating the attached resources based on recommendation that you may make in your Pastoral Response.

Your Pastoral Response

This all-out effort will hopefully reach out across the diocese to our people and help them in their faith journey. We want you to help us, and we want to help you. Thus, we are asking each parish to prepare a brief parish response to this effort by answering the attached questions and returning them by May 1, 2021. We will publish your responses on the diocesan website, without identifying you or the parish, so that all of us can profit from the responses that you are proposing for your own parish. In addition, this information will be shared with the diocesan Living Stones Planning Committee who will help with collating the responses as well as using the information that you provide and your comments in their planning efforts.

Pastoral Response

We are asking that you respond to these questions and return them to:

Department of Education
Diocese of Ogdensburg
PO Box 369
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

You may respond in writing using your own paper or online by going to

[Pastoral Response \(rcdony.org\)](http://rcdony.org)

1. Which resource in each of these categories do you think will be most helpful in reaching your people:
 - Print Materials
 - Video Materials
2. Are there other print or video materials that you prefer using? If so, which ones?
3. Could you explain what led you to make these choices?
4. What are your plans for instructional sessions? Which materials and tools will you use? What is your timeline for these sessions?
5. Will these instructional sessions be in person or online or perhaps a hybrid?
6. What are your plans for engaging social media to help people gain a greater appreciation of Sunday worship and our teaching on the Real Presence?
7. Do you have any other suggestions that you believe parishes could benefit from?
8. Would you be willing to do a brief (less than 5 minutes) video on YouTube to share your faith and appreciation of the liturgy and Eucharist? Are there parishioners who might be willing to do such a video? If so, please provide their names and contact information. We would make these videos available on the diocesan website and provide all parishes with links so that they could be incorporated on their social media pages and websites.