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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Pastoral Letter from Bishop Joseph E. Strickland
Concluding the Year of the Eucharist

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Tyler,

Our 2020 liturgical year has been more challenging than most in recent history. Recall that, in our diocese, we began the year with my decree establishing the Year of the Eucharist which includes a robust challenge of fostering reverence for the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Little did we know just how important His real presence would become a few short months after promulgating my decree.

As we approach the conclusion of the Year of the Eucharist, I want our focus to remain on deepening our personal faith and understanding of the tremendous gift of the Real Presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, but I want to challenge all of us to intentionally and daily invite His spiritual presence in the Holy Spirit into our lives as we face the challenges of voting with a well-formed Catholic conscience in the upcoming national, state and local elections, of facing the coronavirus pandemic without fear and of making special reparation for the sins we have committed as individuals, as a society, and as a Church.

For many centuries, the Church has dedicated October as the Month of the Rosary and November as the Month of the Souls in Purgatory, and it is during these two months that I ask the diocese to embrace an attitude of prayer. The Diocese of Tyler will offer a Diocesan Rosary Congress, Friday, October 2, 2020 through Friday, October 9, 2020. This will be a week of Eucharistic Adoration and Praying the Rosary throughout the diocese with each of our seven deaneries sponsoring one day of the week inviting all of God's people of East Texas to prayer.

Additionally, I encourage everyone in the diocese to participate in a *40 Day Devotion to conclude the Year of the Eucharist* beginning on October 13, 2020, the anniversary of the final apparition of the Virgin Mary, and ending on November 22, 2020, the Feast of Christ the King. Throughout this *40 Day Devotion* I ask all in the diocese to make an effort to pray the Rosary, attend a Holy Hour with their local parish, pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3:00 PM each day or offer a *40 Days'* fast from a favorite food or beverage. Local parishes will be encouraged to provide prayer opportunities to the faithful, as they are able to, with due regard to social distancing and other guidelines and protocols for mitigating the spread of Covid-19.

The St. Philip Institute of Catechesis and Evangelization will assist me with this call to prayer by sponsoring livestreamed prayer which will provide opportunities for everyone to join in prayer from their homes in the event they cannot or choose not to participate in person.

As your bishop, it is my hope that these efforts will help us all focus on our life in Jesus Christ in the Catholic Tradition and the joy which He brings. We can all become disheartened as we witness public blasphemy against God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, against the Immaculate Virgin Mary and against the Holy Catholic Church, the Bride of Christ, but let us never forget that Jesus Christ is our sure hope and in Him we should place our trust.

Most Reverend Joseph E. Strickland
Bishop of Tyler

Given this August 15, 2020
Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary