



Diocese of Gary

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Historic walking pilgrimage to visit Northwest Indiana

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, a historic walking journey with Jesus in the Eucharist, passes through Northwest Indiana July 1 to 5, 2024. On each of the five days, there are activities planned during the day and evening. Everyone is invited to encounter Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and experience God's presence in our troubled world.

"The last time there was a Eucharistic Congress was in 1976," said Sister Petra Nielsen, OSF, of Franciscan Health in Michigan City. "This is the first time that we have had a Eucharistic Procession, Christ in the Eucharist, processing from all four borders of our country, converging in Indianapolis. And they're stopping here."

The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage began in May on Pentecost Sunday from four different routes at the four extremes of the United States – the north, south, east, and west. Priests and a small group of young adults, called "perpetual pilgrims," are accompanying Jesus in the Eucharist on this extensive procession to Indianapolis for the opening of the National Eucharistic Congress July 17.

The route that will be passing through the Diocese of Gary is called the Marian Route, which began at the headwaters of the Mississippi River in Northern Minnesota. When the pilgrims converge with pilgrims walking the other routes to the National Eucharistic Congress, they will be met by an anticipated crowd of over 50,000 faithful from around the country.

When traveling short distances, the Eucharist is exposed in a gold stand called a monstrance so it can be seen and adored. When traveling longer distances on the pilgrimage, the Eucharist is reserved in a gold box called a tabernacle in a van specially designed for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Catholics believe that the Eucharist, consecrated during Mass, is no longer bread, nor merely symbolic, but is really the Body of Christ.

Father Declan McNicholas, director of missionary discipleship and evangelization for the Diocese of Gary, invites everyone in the Region to participate in the pilgrimage. "At a time when our hearts are burdened by reports of polarization and division, this is a great opportunity to come together as Christians and worship our Lord."

Events around the Region include a procession ending with a party on the beach in Whiting on Monday, July 1, a 20-mile procession with the Eucharist from Schererville to Portage on July 2, a procession through downtown Valparaiso on July 3, a visit to Franciscan Health in Michigan City on July 4, as well as fireworks in St. John on the evening of Independence Day. A full schedule of events can be found at dcgary.org/2024Pilgrimage.

Most Reverend Robert J. McClory, Bishop of Gary, has a word of encouragement for those who are considering participating: “As we anticipate this pilgrimage, I encourage you to join with open hearts and minds, ready to deepen your understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist as we honor the presence of Jesus in our midst.”

Details of the daily events, as well as some promotional images can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/NWIPilgrimage>. This folder will also be updated daily with images from that day's events.

Interviews with the pilgrims and others can be arranged through the Diocese of Gary (communications@dcgary.org).

To learn more about the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage, visit <https://www.eucharisticpilgrimage.org/>

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About the Diocese of Gary

The Diocese of Gary serves an estimated 170,000 Catholics in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties through 58 parishes, two missions and one Catholic student center. The diocese has 17 parish elementary schools and three diocesan high schools, serving 5,982 students. An additional 5,342 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. The diocese is home to two post-secondary institutions. More than two million are served by Catholic-affiliated agencies, including seven Catholic hospitals, residential and daycare facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services. Learn more at dcgary.org.