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EMMAUS -- A CONFERENCE LIKE NO OTHER

VALPARAISO – The Diocese of Gary has big plans for the first annual Emmaus Conference taking place at the Porter County Expo Center in Valparaiso on August 9. The conference will be offered in both English and Spanish – essentially, two conferences combined in one space with keynote speakers and breakout sessions available in both languages.

Father Declan McNicholas, director of missionary discipleship and evangelization, promised that the Emmaus Conference will be “unlike any other that we’ve had in Northwest Indiana,” adding that the experience is going to be akin to the National Eucharistic Congress.

The newly appointed associate pastor at St. Mary in Crown Point shared that he loves the lessons behind the story in the Gospel of Luke, “The Road to Emmaus.” In the story, two disciples encountered Jesus and didn’t recognize him, “just like so often we don’t recognize him,” noted Father McNicholas.

While encountering Jesus will be an important part of the Emmaus Conference, the Bible story also provides a lesson in missionary discipleship, another key conference theme.

“The Emmaus Conference will be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on God’s mission for us here in the Diocese of Gary,” said Bishop McClory. “The speakers are excellent, and it’ll be an informative, enjoyable and inspiring day.”

One of the speakers providing a keynote address will be Dr. Edward Sri. Sri, a native of Munster, is a theologian, author and well-known Catholic speaker who presents to tens of thousands of people from around the world each year. According to Sean Martin, coordinator of catechesis and faith formation for the diocese, Dr. Sri is “passionate and knowledgeable about the faith and Scriptures, and his personable presentation style makes his message effective.”

Another keynote speaker, Dr. Mary Healy, a professor of Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, is a best-selling author and international speaker who will be speaking on healing.

When Healy thinks about the Diocese of Gary, she admits she first thinks of “your wonderful bishop, Bishop Robert McClory, who was ‘stolen’ from us in Detroit to shepherd the church in Gary. But I’m very glad that you have him.” She believes an event like the Emmaus Conference is what can change a person from indifferent to fervent, from “hanging in there” to joyful, from lukewarm to on fire.

Other speakers for the event include Adam Antone, who will be presenting on mental health, and three Spanish track presenters, Dr. Dora E. Tobar, Dr. Alejandro Aguilera Titus, and Meg Hunter-Kilmer.

Claudia Sadowski, Ph.D., coordinator of intercultural ministry for the Diocese of Gary, pointed out that the Spanish-speaking Catholic community is vibrant and growing; therefore, the conference is offering unique, powerful speakers for the robust Spanish track.

“Each presenter was selected not only for their credentials, but also because they genuinely understand and serve Hispanic communities,” Sadowski noted. “They bring compassion, practical tools and inspiration for everyday life and ministry. I truly believe the Lord is going to do something beautiful through this gathering.”

Father McNicholas believes this is an ideal time to hold the event.

“I see it as a time to reset as many students start going back to school,” said Father McNicholas, describing how the timing of the conference was chosen. “I think we all need moments in our lives to be filled up, to be sent back out.

“I’m most looking forward to experiencing the buzz that takes place when you get a thousand people together...worshiping Jesus,” he added... when you feel the Holy Spirit, so that’s what I can’t wait to experience.”

The diocese is offering a 24-day prayer challenge that is open to everyone and will debut the same day as the conference through the Hallow prayer and meditation app (<https://tinyurl.com/HallowWayBack>). To join a local community group through the Hallow app, visit <https://hallow.com/parish/>.

Details for the conference will be continually updated on the [Emmaus Conference website page](#), which includes speaker photos and biographies, an event map and an opportunity to share prayer requests. Event photographs and videos will be added as they become available.

The media are welcome to attend the conference. For more information, or to arrange to attend the event, contact Colleen McGinty-Rabine.

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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 57 parishes, two missions and one Catholic student center, three diocesan high schools, one private high school and 17 parish elementary schools serving 6,259 students. An additional 5,271 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. More than two million are served by Catholic affiliated agencies including seven Catholic hospitals, residential and day care facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services. Learn more at dcgary.org.