



July 23, 2020

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Sixth Annual Fête-Dieu du Teche 40-mile Eucharistic Boat Procession to be held in petition to God for an end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fête-Dieu du Teche 2020 to take place Saturday August 15. This year's unique 40-mile Eucharistic Procession by boat and foot will be offered in petition for an end of the COVID-19 pandemic. In an abundance of caution, anyone who is ill or has a compromised immune system is asked to remain home and participate in the procession on-line at www.facebook.com/CommunityofJesusCrucified.



All participants 8 years or older (whether on boats or on shore) will be expected to wear face masks and observe social distancing (this includes priests, seminarians, and laity). Persons with health conditions prohibiting them from wearing a face mask are asked not to attend the event. A team of trained marshals will be on hand to assure implementation of safety precautions at all sites. Attendance at the Mass in French with Bishop Douglas Deshotel at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Leonville will be limited to approximately 315 persons. For those who are unable to enter inside the Church for the Mass, a PA system will be provided to hear Mass outside observing social distancing. At the end of Mass there will be a procession with the Blessed Sacrament and a statue of Mary and St. Joseph to the nearby boat landing. A double procession at 6-foot spacing will be enforced.

The sixth annual Eucharistic Procession down Bayou Teche will take place on Saturday, August 15. The date is important for Roman Catholics as it is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patroness of the Acadian people and of Acadiana. It is also a day that marks the 255th anniversary of the



arrival of French-Canadian immigrants who brought the Catholic faith to Acadiana after enduring great trials and suffering. Fr. Michael Champagne, CJC, organizer of the event, notes that "having a Eucharistic Procession by boat on the waters of the Teche rather than by foot in the streets makes a lot of sense. Fête-Dieu du Teche on the Feast of the Assumption recalls our rich Acadian history and, in a way, re-enacts the journey made by the Acadians over 250 years ago." The Acadians were persecuted for their Catholic faith and sent into exile from Nova Scotia. Many ended up settling in

Louisiana. Fr. Champagne explains that having a boat procession with the Blessed Sacrament and a statue of the Assumption involving priests, religious, and laity is basically what happened in 1765. “In order to serve the Acadian settlers in the Attakapas district, Fr. Jean-Louis de Civrey accompanied the Acadians on their journey down the Bayou Teche. Fr. Civrey became the first resident priest. In his records, Fr. Civrey refers to his new home as “la Nouvelle Acadie” and his new parish “l’Église des Attakapas (Attakapas Church)” and later, “l’Église St-Martin de Tours (St. Martin de Tours Church)”. It is believed that St. Martinville is named after the Church. In early baptismal records the church was originally referred to as St. Joseph at the Attakapas. This year’s Fête-Dieu du Teche is special as it will be held on the eve of the opening of the Year of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Lafayette. The Diocese of Lafayette boasts 13 church parishes with the name of St. Joseph – 14 if one counts the original name of the Mother Church of the Acadians prior to the name change to St. Martin de Tours. “Having the Catholic Priest accompany the Acadians on their journey to Acadiana is indicative of our ancestors’ great allegiance to their Catholic Faith, especially the Eucharist and Our Lady. Fête-Dieu du Teche today relives that original experience of the Acadians.”



Hundreds will travel by boat to celebrate this occasion in honoring the Blessed Sacrament and the Acadian heritage. Each year the event is held on the Bayou Teche with the exception that in 2018 the event was held on the Vermilion river to help celebrate the centennial of the Diocese of Lafayette. Thousands travelled from throughout Louisiana and beyond to participate in the event. Many participated in the Eucharistic Procession by boat and others followed by car and gathered along the banks of the bayou at the various stops. Fr. Jeremy Zipple, SJ traveled from New York to do a

documentary on the Fête in 2017. He recounts, “I found the whole thing incredibly moving. It was beautiful to see an entire town coming together for prayer. It’s a sense of communal identity we just don’t see much anymore in the Western world.” Bishop John Douglas Deshotel, D.D., a native son of Acadiana and the current Bishop of the Diocese of Lafayette, will begin this year’s event by celebrating the Mass of the Assumption in French at St. Leo the Great Church in Leonville at 8 am.

The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15) is also the Feast of the Acadians who settled here in 1765. The Acadians originally sailed to Nouvelle-Écosse (Nova Scotia) under the star of Our Lady of the Assumption and again during the Grand Dérangement. The Acadian flag, both Canadian and Louisiana Acadian, highlights the centrality of Our Lady of the Assumption for the Acadian people. The gold star on a white field represents “Our Lady of the Assumption”, Patroness of the



Acadians. When the first settlers departed France for the New World, the Virgin Mary was highly revered. It was a period of great devotion to the Virgin. The King of France, Louis XIII, and Pope Pius XI declared the Virgin Mary the patroness of the kingdom, (Patronne de Royaume) and Patroness Saint of all the Acadians in Canada, Louisiana, and elsewhere. On August 15, 1638, France and her colonies were consecrated to Mary under the title “Our Lady of the Assumption”. Fr. Michael Champagne, CJC, the organizer of the unique event, explains that during Fête-Dieu du Teche “the Blessed Sacrament will be fixed on an altar on the lead boat under a canopy, with a pair of adorers in adoration between the towns visited. Another boat will carry the statue of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This year will feature as well a St. Joseph boat with a statue of the husband of Mary. The Eucharistic Procession will stop and disembark at makeshift altars along the Bayou Teche for recitation of the Rosary



and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. For those who are unable to participate by boat, all are invited to join for Mass at St. Leo the Great in Leonville at 8 am and then to drive and gather at any of the planned stops along the banks behind the various churches along Bayou Teche. The prayers will be broadcast live on radio, so persons with compromised health can listen while remaining in their vehicles. Priests will be available at each stop for Confessions.”

Bishop Douglas Deshotel, notes, “I have been edified by the devotion and participation of so

many priests, deacons, religious and lay faithful. I think such a public Eucharistic celebration is an excellent manifestation of the new evangelization that we so desperately need.” Bishop Glen Provost, a native son of the Diocese of Lafayette and bishop of Lafayette’s daughter diocese, the Diocese of Lake Charles, reflecting on Fête-Dieu du Teche says, “Let us remember that the Acadians and French who first settled in our area were Catholic, and in the case of the Acadians were expelled from Nova Scotia primarily because they were Catholic. It is our history we remember. It is our faith we celebrate. It is our Lord we adore and worship.” Fr. Champagne adds, “We need a day that is a true ‘feast day,’ in the old sense of the word - a *holiday* that’s truly a *Holy Day* ... where we can really, all

day long, have a *feast day*. Such is our celebration Fête-Dieu du Teche!” In his homily at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church for the Fête-Dieu du Vermilion in 2018, Bishop Provost quoted Lafayette’s second bishop, Bishop Maurice Schexnayder who predicted, “The waters of the Teche will be drained to the ground before the people of Acadiana lose their Catholic Faith.” Such a large throng of faithful gathering on the Feast of the Assumption for Fête-Dieu du Teche points to the veracity of the good bishop’s prophecy.



Boat Registration

To register a boat for the procession, send an email to fetedieuduteche@gmail.com, download a registration form at <https://www.jesuscruified.net/fete-dieu-du-teche>, or complete the online form at <https://www.jesuscruified.net/events/fete-dieu-du-teche-2020/form>. Once the registration form is

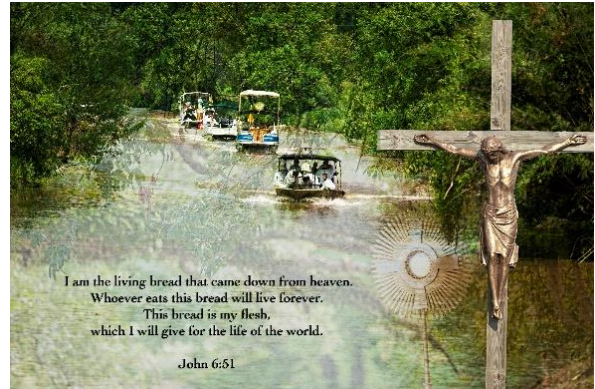
completed and waivers signed, either mail them to 103 Railroad Avenue, St. Martinville, LA 70582 or scan the completed forms and email them to the above email address as an attachment. The boat coordinator will contact you with details. The procession will travel at about 8 mph and thus only motorized vessels are allowed. Catholic schools are encouraged to send their students or a representative group to be present at the opening French Mass in Leonville with Bishop Deshotel, at one or more of the stops along the procession, and especially to participate in the final foot procession in St. Martinville. Church parishes, ecclesial movements, KC and St. Peter



Claver councils, Catholic schools, etc. are encouraged to register a boat and decorate it accordingly. Fifty boats will be allowed to participate which will yield a one-mile procession. Boaters are asked to have an FM radio so that they can participate in the continuous prayers live as they are led by the Eucharist Boat. Additionally, participants in the procession as well as those in their cars or on the banks of the Bayou can follow the prayers and devotions live from the Eucharist boat as they will be videoed and available at www.facebook.com/CommunityofJesusCrucified.

**Itinerary for Centennial Eucharistic Boat Procession on Bayou Teche
Saturday, August 15, 2020
(Feast of the Assumption of Mary)**

- 8:00 a.m.** Holy Mass in French with Bishop John Douglas Deshotel, D.D. at St. Leo the Great Church, Leonville
- 9:00 a.m.** Procession from St. Leo's to Leonville boat landing
- 9:30 a.m.** Boat Procession departs
- 10:20 a.m.** Arrive at Arnaudville and disembark for Rosary and Benediction
- 11:45 a.m.** Arrive at Cecilia and disembark for Rosary and Benediction
- 1:35 p.m.** Arrive at Breaux Bridge and disembark for Rosary and Benediction
- 3:15 p.m.** Arrive at Parks and disembark for Rosary and Benediction
- 4:45 p.m.** Flotilla arrives at St. Martinville; Foot Procession to Notre Dame de Perpetuel Secours for Benediction
- 5:00 p.m.** Procession from Notre Dame to St. Martin de Tours Church for Benediction
- 5:30 p.m.** Procession down Main Street to Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel for Solemn Vespers & Final Benediction
- 6:00 p.m.** Solemn Vespers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at Mater Dolorosa Chapel

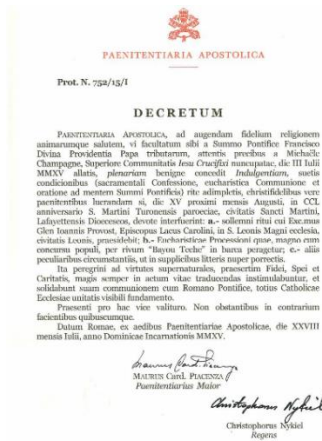


I am the living bread that came down from heaven.
Whoever eats this bread will live forever.
This bread is my flesh,
which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:51

** Confessions will be available at all stops in Mobile Units along the Procession

Pope Francis Grants Fête-Dieu du Teche Participants a Plenary Indulgence



Pope Francis, through his Grand Penitentiary, His Eminence Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, has granted a plenary indulgence to participants of *Fête-Dieu du Teche* on August 15, 2020. The indulgence is granted to the faithful who devoutly participate in the opening Mass at St. Leo the Great in Leonville, to those making the procession by boat down the Teche, and to those who participate at the various stations along the bayou in the recitation of the Marian Rosary and Benediction. This is indeed a sacred privilege! This grant is under the normal conditions which means that the faithful must

have the intention to gain the indulgence, perform one of the indulgenced acts as given above, be in the state of grace

at the time of the event, have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Penance within 20 days, receive Holy Communion, pray for the Holy Father's intention, and be free from all attachment to sin, mortal and venial. The Fête-Dieu du Teche Plenary Indulgence can be offered for oneself or in suffrage for a deceased loved one.





Additional Information

For more information, visit the website www.jesuscrucified.net or Fete-Dieu du Teche on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityofJesusCrucified/> or contact Fr. Michael Champagne, CJC by telephone at (337) 394-6550 or email at fetediuduteche@gmail.com

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