

USCCB appointment signals preparation for National Eucharistic Revival

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Ahead of the bishops’ spring assembly, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington has appointed Father Jorge Torres, a priest of the Diocese of Orlando, Florida, to help implement a planned multiyear National Eucharistic Revival.

Msgr. Jeffrey D. Burrill, USCCB general secretary, announced the appointment of Father Torres as a specialist for the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis June 7 and thanked Orlando Bishop John G. Noonan for releasing the priest for service to the USCCB.

In his new role, effective July 12, Father Torres “joins the conference as the Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis begins the promotion of a National Eucharistic Revival to renew the Church by enkindling a living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist,” the news release said.

This eucharistic initiative is part of the USCCB’s 2021-2024 strategic plan, “Created Anew by the Body and Blood of Christ: Source of Our Healing and Hope.” Planning for the National Eucharistic Revival has been taking place for over a year.

According to a background document distributed to bishops in advance of their June meeting, Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis, chairman of the evangelization committee, leads a bishops’ advisory group on the National Eucharistic Revival made up of chairmen of other committees or representatives of those committees, including doctrine, vocations, divine worship, Hispanic affairs, pro-life, Catholic education, and marriage, family life and youth.

Bishop Cozzens and the staff of the secretariat have held five joint sessions and several individual consultations with leaders of evangelistic movements, renewal communities, religious communities and apostolic movements, as well as parish and diocesan catechetical leaders.

“These meetings, which continue to occur, are helping to develop ideas for the revival and form partnerships for carrying them out,” the document said.

Father Torres currently is pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Melbourne, Florida. He has been chaplain for campus ministry at the University of Central Florida, vocation director of the Orlando Diocese and secretary of the National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors.

During the U.S. bishops’ spring assembly June 16-18, Bishop Cozzens is scheduled to outline a plan for the National Eucharistic Revival, which will begin in the summer of 2022 and focus on dioceses and then parishes.

The document also outlines a proposal, subject to the approval of the bishops in November, of a possible National Eucharistic Congress in 2024.

“At every level of the three-year process, we will engage partnerships with ministries, apostolates and catechetical organizations to animate events at the local level and provide formation and resources for all ages and stages of faith.”

Plans call for diocesan revivals to be held from July 2022 to June 2023, the first year of the three-year effort. There will be formation events for priests, as well as parish and young adult leaders.

National catechetical organizations will provide online training to form lay eucharistic missionaries for parishes. A national corps of eucharistic preachers, both ordained and lay, will be formed to lead diocesan and parish events.

Other events during this first year will include diocesan days of adoration and reconciliation in Catholic schools and parishes; Corpus Christi celebrations; diocesan eucharistic congresses – with both in-person and virtual dimensions; and diocesan-wide days of eucharistic evangelization and service.

The second year is for parish revivals, from July 2023 to June 2024, with online training for small group leaders in every parish; catechetical resources available in video and print for small group formation sessions for all ages “and stages of faith”; continued collaboration with renewal movements and apostolates “to animate” parish eucharistic activities; and “teaching Masses,” adoration initiatives, sacramental confession and Corpus Christi celebrations in parishes.

Eucharistic missionaries will be trained and sent out to evangelize and serve those in need.

The document said organizations and apostolates partnering or collaborating on the three-year plan for the National Eucharistic Revival include the Knights of Columbus; McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame; the Augustine Institute; Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio; Our Sunday Visitor; the Hispanic Catholic Charismatic Renewal; the U.S. leadership of CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service); the Fellowship of Catholic University Students; Word on Fire; and the National Catholic Youth Conference.