

# **Detroit Archdiocese, Hallow app launch campaign to share power of Eucharist**

DETROIT (CNS) – It was 3 a.m. during a parish-sponsored retreat, and Marie Wilkie of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Farmington Hills, Michigan, was in her pajamas, drowsily sitting before the exposed Blessed Sacrament in the chapel.

Wilkie wasn't very familiar with eucharistic adoration, but she was drawn to the presence of the Lord before her.

While chaperoning students on a trip to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Karen Ervin of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Plymouth, Michigan, stumbled into an adoration chapel.

Following the example of the nuns praying before the Blessed Sacrament, she sank to her knees. Overwhelmed with emotion, Ervin got up to leave, and Christ clearly spoke to her, saying, "Stay with me."

Over and over again, Christ calls out from his exposed place in the adoration chapel and invites his beloved children to stay with him, to sit in silence and be present with him: "I am here," he says.

These stories are at the heart of the new I AM HERE campaign, a partnership between the Archdiocese of Detroit and the Hallow app created to support the U.S. bishops' three-year National Eucharistic Revival and to inspire people to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist and experience his transformative power.

U.S. archdioceses and dioceses will launch the revival with eucharistic processions June 19, the feast of Corpus Christi.

In the Detroit Archdiocese, Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron will

lead a two-mile eucharistic procession from the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament to Sacred Heart Major Seminary.

The I AM HERE campaign is a way to respond to the call from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a “uniquely Detroit way,” said Emily Mentock, associate director of strategy for the archdiocesan Department of Communications.

“Dioceses across the country are going to emphasize adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist through things like eucharistic processions, holy hours and eucharistic congresses,” Mentock said. “But we know, here in the Archdiocese of Detroit, the power of testimony and witness in unleashing the Gospel.”

The I AM HERE campaign includes a website – [iamhere.org](http://iamhere.org) – and social media channels featuring stories of individuals whose lives have been impacted by eucharistic adoration, as well as a series of free audio meditations on the Hallow app to help people pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

The campaign also aims to partner with parishes to expand adoration opportunities and encourage parishioners to submit their own stories.

The campaign include stories of people from all walks of life and from different backgrounds and experiences, Mentock said. The website will feature written testimonials, and one featured story will be shared each week with a photo essay and an in-depth, first-person account.

“Hopefully, people will be able to connect with some of the stories,” Mentock told Detroit Catholic, the archdiocese’s online news outlet. “They might see similarities in a person’s life, but also be opened to the possibilities of all the different ways that Jesus can transform people. Hopefully, we’ll be able to help people encounter Jesus’ real presence in the Eucharist, and inspire them to go and meet him there.”

The campaign will feature one story every week until the

National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024, said Edmundo Reyes, director of communications for the Archdiocese of Detroit.

Over two years, more than 100 individual stories will be shared.

“In addition to these featured stories, people are invited to submit their own stories to be published on the website,” Reyes said. “So we hope to have hundreds, if not thousands, of stories as witnesses to this transformative power of the Eucharist.”

The archdiocese has partnered with Hallow, a Catholic app featuring reflections and prayer guides, to offer free audio meditations to help people pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

“We believe meditations can help people,” Reyes said. “It doesn’t matter if you have never been to adoration or haven’t been a while, these meditations will help you get started.”

There are six meditations, written and voiced by Julianne Stanz, a nationally known speaker and writer who is director of discipleship and parish life for the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin. She’s also a consultant to the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Catechesis and Evangelization and a member of the executive team for the National Eucharistic Revival.

There is an additional meditation by Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of Crookston, Minnesota, chairman of the National Eucharistic Revival. He chairs the USCCB’s Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, which is spearheading the revival and congress.

“Our mission at Hallow is to help people pray, so this was a natural partnership for us to provide these wonderful meditations to help people as they pray before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament,” said Kevin Cotter, head of content at Hallow. “Our first six meditations take the listener on a

journey of encountering Christ in the Eucharist, each centering on a truth about the nature of God: I am with you; I am love; I am the way.”

The silence of adoration can be intimidating, Mentock said, so the meditations are a resource to help people encounter Jesus in the Eucharist.

“Even for people who are experienced adorers, the meditations are really great journeys and reflections of the ‘I Am’ statements of Jesus throughout Scripture,” Mentock said. “That brings (people) into the presence of mind and heart that Jesus is there with them in the Eucharist and meets them wherever they are in their brokenness, in their sorrow, in their joy.”

The final component is a partnership with parishes to help them increase awareness and participation in eucharistic adoration, Reyes said. The hope is to see more opportunities for adoration and to multiply the number of people participating.

The I AM HERE campaign will provide parishes with promotional materials to encourage adoration, but also to share their own stories, Reyes added.

“We want stories to be very, very local and we want parishes that participate to collect stories from their own parish to share back with their own communities,” Reyes said. “We want to invite others to be inspired.”

Stories don’t need to be miraculous or dramatic, Reyes said; rather, most come from everyday encounters in which Christ makes clear that he is present in the Eucharist.

“‘I Am’ is God’s name revealed to us: ‘I am who I am,’” Reyes said. “The name (of the campaign) comes from God’s name being ‘I Am.’ ‘Here’ refers to the Eucharist, but it also refers to God being with us in our circumstances, in our brokenness, in our failures, in our hurts. God wants to be with us, and one

of the ways he's with us is through the Eucharist."

*Patti is a news reporter on the staff of Detroit Catholic, the online news outlet of the Archdiocese of Detroit.*