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About 1,800 faithful gather for Diocesan Eucharistic Congress

BY MEGAN ERBACHER
The Message editor

After about 1,800 Catholic faithful prayed the rosary together in the auditorium of the Old National Events Plaza, Father Tyler Tenbarge said the most important part of the day was about to happen: the Eucharistic Procession.

Bishop Joseph M. Siegel led the Eucharistic Procession into the auditorium of the Old National Events Plaza in downtown Evansville Jan. 13 during the Diocese of Evansville Eucharistic Congress. The goal of the Congress, "A Revival for Your Heart; Life for Your Soul," was to provide an opportunity to grow deeper in our love, knowledge and appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ and share in His life with us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a what, but a who: the true body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus.

During his welcome, Bishop Siegel expressed his gratitude to the diocesan priests and the Catholic faithful present, as well as to those who made the Congress possible. To quote St. Peter on the mountain of transfiguration, Bishop Siegel said it is good for us to be here, Lord. It is indeed good for us to worship and adore our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, he continued. It's good for us to listen, bishop said, to come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of this most precious gift of the Lord in the Eucharist. It's good for us to spend time together, Bishop Siegel said, to share our faith, and it's good for us to end this day with the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Bishop Siegel also served as the

main celebrant and homilist of the closing Mass.

Father Tyler was Master of Ceremonies for the Eucharistic Congress. He serves as Director of Vocations for the diocese, Director of the Propaedeutic Program, and Chaplain and Director of the Father Deydier House in Evansville. In 2019, Father Tyler said the Pew Research Center found that less than one-third of Catholics in the U.S. believe the Eucharist truly is the body and blood of Jesus, and that's a major problem.

Father Alex Zenthoefer, diocesan Vicar General and rector of St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville,

served as a featured speaker, as well as Monsignor James Shea, Dr. Edward Sri, Dr. Andrew and Sarah Swafford,

as well as musicians John Michael Talbot and PJ Anderson.

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The Message photo by Megan Erbacher
Bishop Joseph M. Siegel led a Eucharistic Procession before placing the monstrance on the altar on the stage during the Jan. 13 Diocesan Eucharistic Congress at the Old National Events Plaza. Seminarians of the diocese assisted Bishop Siegel.

National School Choice Week is Jan. 21-27



Special to The Message

National School Choice Week 2024 begins Jan. 21 and ends Jan. 27 and will kick off with celebrations across all 50 states. Traditionally, this observance occurs the week before National Catholic Schools Week, which will begin Jan. 28 in the Diocese of Evansville and across the country.

The week-long celebration, which dates back to January 2011, aims to raise awareness of the different types of K-12 schools and educational options available to families in communities across the country, including private, traditional public, public charter, online and homeschooling options.

Schools also use the week to spotlight their achievements and accomplishments. The week is filled with fun and informative events, including school fairs, movie nights, capitol rallies, field trips, parades, talent shows and more.

Diocese of Evansville Superintendent Michelle Priar said, "National School Choice Week gives schools in our diocese an opportunity to celebrate the choice that families have to pursue an educational path that best suits their children's needs."

"Embracing this week means advocating for expanded educational options, ensuring that every child has access to a learning environment that will help them develop into the individuals that God created them to be."

The focus of the annual observance, according to National School Choice Week organizers, is empowering parents to choose schools for their children during the best time of year to start the process of selecting a school.

In the Diocese of Evansville, Catholic schools will welcome families to "Come and See" open house events set for Feb. 1, during National Catholic Schools Week.

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ICC brings
voice of
Church to
legislature,
calls on Catholics to
engage on issues



BY VICTORIA ARTHUR
Statehouse Correspondent for
Indiana's Catholic Newspapers

The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is once again adding its voice to important issues under consideration at the state legislature while calling on the Catholic faithful to join its efforts.

The 2024 Indiana General Assembly opened for business Jan. 8 for a short, non-budget-year session that is expected to conclude by mid-March. As state lawmakers introduce and debate a flurry of bills on a wide range of topics, the ICC is discerning which issues and legislation are the most significant through the lens of 2,000 years of Catholic social teaching.

"While this is a short session that does not include big budget items, it is still important to stay engaged," said Angela Espada, executive director of the ICC, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "We hope that the faithful will continue to make themselves aware of important legislative issues and act as faithful citizens."

Promoting the common good and protecting the most vulnerable members of society form the basis for the Church's engagement in the public arena, Espada said. As it has for more than half a century, the ICC advocates either for

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