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Bishops consecrate United States to Sacred Heart of Jesus

By JEAN GONZALEZ
OSV News

ORLANDO, Fla. (OSV NEWS) — A sea of white robes and zucchetos of pink and magenta in the pews. A statue of Jesus welcoming the faithful with his exposed Sacred Heart upon the foot of the altar.

A setting fit for a June 11 Mass that united U.S. bishops gathered for their spring plenary June 10-12. After concluding the second of two days of public sessions, they left the Omni Resort in Champions Gate for a half-hour drive up Interstate 4 for the spiritual refuge that is the Basilica of the National Shrine of Mary, Queen of the Universe in Orlando.

And the Mass was a momentous one as it served to formally consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as part of the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City incensed the altar after processing in from the thick humidity and cloudy skies of a typical Orlando afternoon outside the shrine. The president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was joined on the altar by bishops and deacons of the Orlando Diocese.

"Clothe us, Lord God, with the virtues of the heart of your son, and set us aflame with his love," the archbishop prayed in opening the Mass.

More than 200 bishops were present, along with about 150 observers, mostly benefactors and staff of the Diocese of Orlando. The monstrance used ahead of Mass for Eucharistic adoration was from the Servants of the Pierced Hearts, a Miami-based religious institute.

The relics of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque — the French Visitation sister who experienced

visions of Jesus revealing his Sacred Heart — were also present at the Mass, on loan for the consecration from the Knights of Columbus.

In his homily, Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore described the Sacred Heart of Jesus not as an "abstract devotion," but as a "visible sign of love."

He explained why the church consecrates. He described it as an act of faith and acknowledgment of the need for God's mercy, wisdom and guidance. It is also an act of hope. It is "a heart that has known joy and sorrow, friendship and betrayal, suffering and sacrifice," he said.

The act of consecration is an act of faith and hope, the archbishop said, but it is also an acknowledgment of God's faithful work and love in the world and how we as people and as a church have not always "clearly reflected that love."

"Indeed, it is sometimes obscured almost beyond recognition," the archbishop added. "To be sure, there have been moments of extraordinary witness and holiness. But there have also

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Diocesan staff celebrates consecration



The Message photo by John Rohlf

During the diocesan staff's June 12, local celebration of the Consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Diocesan Director of the Office of Worship Matt Miller leads the Prayer of Consecration. For more photos from the local celebration, see page 5.

Diocesan parishes hold Corpus Christi processions

Parishes in the Diocese of Evansville held Corpus Christi processions June 7. Corpus Christi is the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. It celebrates the Real Presence of Christ; Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist.



Submitted photo

St. Joseph, Jasper

Father Homero Rodriguez, part-time parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Jasper, uses incense in front of the monstrance. See more photos on page 2.

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Diocese hosts fourth Professional Development Day

The Diocese of Evansville hosted its fourth Professional Development Day June 10 at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center. Father Bernie Etienne, pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Evansville, delivered the keynote on Healthy Parish Office Culture. Speakers for the breakout sessions were Wes and Jeff Wilmes on Parish Finance 101, Beth Folz of Habitat for Humanity of Evansville on Volunteer Management and Engagement and Jackie Divine Lannan of Ascension St. Vincent on Healthy Habits for Everyday Life. The workshops are designed to provide practical, mission-driven tools to strengthen parish staff ministries and leadership.



The Message photos by John Rohlf

Father Bernie Etienne, pastor of Holy Rosary Parish in Evansville, delivers the keynote talk on Healthy Parish Office Culture. See more photos on page 5.

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