

National Eucharistic Revival preacher to speak in Diocese of New Ulm

by Christine Clancy
The Prairie Catholic

Jesuit Father Joe Laramie will speak at three parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm this month to share talks focusing on the National Eucharistic Revival initiative at three locations across the diocese. Fr. Laramie is one of a group of 50 preachers who are being sent to dioceses across the country to enkindle belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

The preachers share witness testimony about God and invite their audience into an encounter with Christ in hopes they will experience a profound conversion to a deeper relationship with God.

Fr. Laramie's presentations will be held on Feb. 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Church of St. Peter in St. Peter; Feb. 24, 10 a.m.-noon at the Church of St. Anastasia in Hutchinson, and from 2-4:00 p.m. at the Church of St. Edward in Minneota. Each of Fr. Laramie's presentations will address "The Eucharist: Leading Us to the Sacred Heart." **For details for any of these opportunities, visit www.dnu.org.*

Fr. Laramie is the national director of the Pope's Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer), a 175-year-old spiritual mission uniting "hearts" to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A native of St. Louis, Mo., he resides in Milwaukee and travels widely for his ministry. He attended Saint Louis University, a Catholic Jesuit school, and was ordained in 2011 after studies at Loyola University in Chicago, earning a theology degree (M.Div. and STL) at Boston College. Fr. Laramie has been featured on the Hallow app, EWTN, Busted Halo, and America.

Prior to his arrival in the diocese, Fr. Laramie agreed to a Question & Answer with Christine Clancy, editor of *The Prairie Catholic*.

Q. *As a priest, what does the Eucharist mean to you?*

Jesus, present in the Eucharist, is the source and summit of my

life. As a priest, I am called and blessed to celebrate Mass daily. Meeting Jesus in the Eucharist, taking quiet time for prayer before him in the Tabernacle, receiving Communion - this is the 'heartbeat' of my vocation. Jesus draws me to himself, renews me, and then sends me out to preach and teach. Then, the next day, he draws me back to himself in the Mass. He is the true lifeblood of my life!

Q. *What do you believe is the main point of misunderstanding or confusion for the faithful regarding the Eucharist?*

Partly, people got out of the habit of attending Mass during the pandemic. It was a crazy time - watching Mass on Zoom or YouTube. We also did this for work and school. I think we are still seeing the effects - isolation, mental illness, the divisions in our culture.

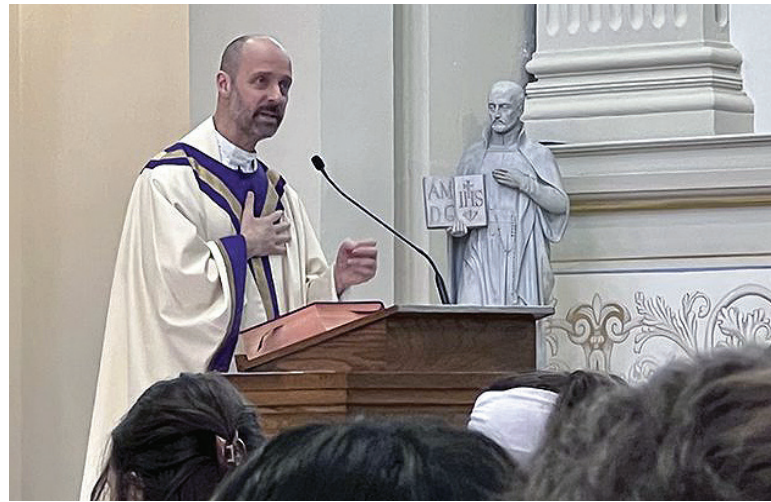
We need the Eucharist! Especially for Catholics, we have an embodied faith. We are the Body of Christ [the Church]. We receive the Body of Christ [the Eucharist] and encounter our embodied God. The eternal Son took on a human body for us. We need to re-learn those Catholic habits with a deeper sense of their importance. The National Eucharistic Revival is an effort to 'rekindle' that fire of faith in us.

Q. *What message would you share with clergy about their role in helping the faithful to understand the True Presence?*

As clergy, we must keep 'leaning in' to nourish and deepen our relationship with Jesus through the sacraments. If we don't do it first, how can we expect the Christian faithful to? Yes, priests are busy. Our people are busy, too. We've got to make time for quiet prayer before the Eucharist, prayer before Mass, and after Mass - thanking the Lord, praising him, asking him for help.

Q. *Do you have any "glory stories" from your time as a Eucharistic Preacher?*

I'm sitting in O'Hare airport



National Eucharistic Preacher Fr. Joe Laramie, S.J. will be presenting in three locations in the Diocese of New Ulm in February.

(Photo courtesy of www.jesuit.org)

outside Chicago, flight delayed, tired, trying to remember where I'm going next. A parish in Ohio? Diocesan leaders in Virginia? I have a little bit of anxiety and nervous energy - will they be friendly? Will they like me? Is my talk any good?

And then I get there. People are warm, welcoming, and excited. They've been preparing and advertising, and there's a good turnout. The Eucharistic Revival has really stirred some good Catholic mojo and energy.

I then take some time in prayer before the Eucharist, and Jesus reminds me, "I led you here. I'm speaking through you. This is my mission - you're serving me and my people. And I prepared their hearts to welcome me in the Eucharist."

Being a Eucharistic Preacher is a lot of fun! I had an evening holy hour for families in Carmel, Ind., outside Indianapolis. Kids were everywhere, and young parents were tired but excited and singing. Advent had just begun. We're adoring Jesus in the Eucharist. And I said, "Every Mass is like a little Christmas! Jesus comes to us; he is 'born' on the altar. So we dress nice, we sing to celebrate, we're so happy he is here!"

Q. *Is there a saint with whom you particularly identify as a Eucharistic Revival Preacher?*

I think about St. Claude

planting season or during harvest - these guys were heading to the fields right after Mass!

As Americans, we have a big, beautiful country. I think rural folks know that better than others: sunset, the bright stars on a chilly night, frozen ponds, waiting for spring. It breeds gratitude to God, trust in God, and living in the liturgical seasons of the Church.

What can you do? Invite someone! You probably know your neighbors, even if they live a half mile away. Call them, write a note, walk over: "We have a nice event at our church this weekend. You're welcome to join my family. We'll have dinner afterward, and you can come too." A friendly invite - it's simple. They may say 'Yes' or 'No,' but you've put it out there. You planted a seed. The Holy Spirit can water it and shine upon it.

Invite a relative who has been away from the Church for a while, such as a parent at your kid's school. You don't need to be pushy; you're just offering and opening a conversation. Let Christ do the rest.

Q. *As we head into the Eucharistic Revival Year of Mission, what advice can you offer parishioners?*

Let's keep praying! Keep leaning into the Eucharist; arrive a few minutes early for Mass to pray, and stay a few minutes after. Go to Eucharistic Adoration if you can. Take a look at some of the great resources the Eucharistic Revival offers - reflections, videos, and prayers. Jesus has good things in store for us.

If you are 'already on board,' already attending Mass and deepening your faith, then trust that Jesus wants to use you to draw someone else [back] to the Eucharist.

If you've been away from the Eucharist or aren't practicing your faith now, this is your chance. Jesus is opening a door for you and inviting you. "Come! It's warm and bright here. I want you here! I want to renew you, strengthen you, and nourish you!"

Colombiere S.J. He was a Jesuit priest in France in the 1600s. He was the spiritual director of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque VHM; she was a great visionary of the Sacred Heart.

Fr. Claude was a faithful pastor at a small parish church. Then, he was sent to be the chaplain to the royal court in England! The Duchess of York was Catholic, and she was later the wife of the King. Just that mix: humble, rural setting, Mass for nuns, and then the biggest possible stage! St. Claude kept a prayerful, joyful spirit. I want to do that, too.

Q. *Understanding the rural nature of the Diocese of New Ulm, what can we do to enkindle a love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the faithful?*

I did my Jesuit novitiate in St. Paul, Minn., and now I live in Milwaukee. I'm also a fan of Garrison Keillor, who's sort of the Mark Twain of Minnesota. I like the cold. Northern weather creates hardy, devoted Catholics with big hearts - we need it to stay warm!

My grandparents had a country house outside St. Louis. I loved going out there when I was a kid - going for a ride with Grandpa on his tractor, petting the horse, and going fishing. I also remember going to their little parish for early Sunday Mass. The older farmers wore faded overalls and had tan cheeks and hairy forearms. In