



Sts. Pontian and Hippolytus
August 13, 2023

Dear Fête-Dieu du Teche Boaters and Participants,

Grace and peace in our Blessed Lord as we embark on our 9th annual Assumption Eucharistic Boat Procession. I want to take the opportunity to personally express my deep gratitude and appreciation for your generosity and support of the Catholic Faith in Acadiana. I know it is a big sacrifice to participate in this all-day holy-day, but I have no doubt that our Blessed Lord will not be outdone in generosity and will bless you and your family abundantly. Thank you!

This year Fête-Dieu du Teche 2023 occurs during the national 3-year Eucharistic Revival. We are offering the procession for a Eucharistic Revival in our own hearts, but also in a special way for an end of violence in our communities. We are all traumatized by such frequent occurrence of gun violence among our youth in our once quiet and peaceful towns along the Teche. Let us join our Eucharistic prayer and praise asking the Prince of Peace to bring His Peace once again to our families and cities.

Boats will be launched in Franklin at the Willow Street landing from about 6 am till 8:30 am and then the landing will be cleared and the Eucharist, Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph boats will be readied for the foot procession. At 9:30 AM we will depart for Baldwin. Once the Eucharist Boat has departed, any remaining boats that need to be put in can continue to do so at the landing. Please bring an Acadian Flag if you have one and affix it to your boat. Also, I ask that you review the instructions and regulations again. Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries will be present to make sure you have enough PFDs for everyone in the boat, a fully charged fire extinguisher, etc. Please make sure you have signed waivers for your travelers, have enough personal flotation devices for everyone, and plenty water. The regulations, event map, and other information can all be found at www.fetedieuduteche.org

We will travel at about 8 mph throughout in order to make our schedule. Stops along the way for Rosary and Benediction will each be for 45 minutes. Please do not fall too far behind in the procession. We normally like to stay about 150 ft distance between the boats. Remember to bring your FM radio and batteries so that you can follow the prayers and songs on FM 87.9. Bring extra batteries and/or a phone charger. If you have a smart phone with internet, you can also access the prayers and activities on the Eucharist Boat and at the landings on Facebook live at www.facebook.com/CommunityofJesusCrucified/

This is a solemn event and we want to remember that we are following our Blessed Lord as we would after Mass in a foot procession. This is not a boat parade but rather a boat Eucharistic procession. Please keep prayer going in your boat and be reverent. Try to avoid waving to persons on the bank. It would be much better to be in prayer and keep looking in the general

direction of Our Eucharistic Lord moving ahead of us, even if we are too far to see him visibly. Also, no shorts or tank tops for the entire day as we are in the Presence of the Lord.

We are aware of the intense heat we have been experiencing in the past weeks in Acadiana and throughout the country. Do not expose yourself or others whose health is compromised for long periods in the heat. Drink plenty of water and wear loose fitting and light clothing. It is also advisable to have hats and/or umbrellas so as not to get too much exposure to the sun. Wet wash cloths in ice chests can also be of help to stay cool. Put up your boat canopy if you have one. Captains of boats are responsible to have enough water for the ship's company.

Portlets will be available at stops between the churches and at the stops. We would prefer boats just pull in tight at the various stops and anchor in the bayou and not get down. We do not have much space for safe disembarking at the various stops. Only server boats and the Blessed Sacrament boat should be disembarking at the various altars along the way until we get to our final destination and foot procession. You can eat in your boat while in motion, but do it discreetly. We would ask the lead boats and server boats to wait and eat at Chitimacha landing where a meal is provided for the servers and the captains of those boats. In New Iberia we will arrive in the City Park at about 4:45 PM. Once everyone has disembarked, we will have a Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament and then begin a foot procession to St. Peter Catholic Church for Solemn Vespers and Final Benediction. Br. Francis Xavier and his assistance masters of ceremony will direct the order and cadence of the procession to St. Peter's Church.

We have an Acadian Ambulance paramedic travelling with us on the LDWF boat which will be at the rear of the boat procession. If you need medical attention call Cpl. Hidalgo at (985) 397-4118. Be careful of heat stroke. If you notice signs of it, pull over to the shade and call the paramedic. Signs of heat stroke may include: Altered mental state. Possible throbbing headache, confusion, nausea and dizziness. High body temperature. Rapid and strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Skin may be hot and dry, or patient may be sweating. In event of engine trouble or a non-medical issue, call the gofer boat, Eric Martin at (337) 277-3960.

Finally, remember the plenary indulgence that Pope Francis has granted to all participants. Make sure you get to confession if you haven't been in a while, you will need to receive Holy Communion, pray for the Pope's intention and end the day or your participation with the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and a prayer to our Lady. You may offer the indulgence either for yourself or for a deceased loved one. If you are following in the procession, the cantor on the Eucharist Boat will be praying these prayers for the intention of the Holy Father on a regular basis.

As we conclude the day let us ask Our Blessed Lord and Our Lady of the Assumption to bring peace into our hearts and to our communities. Let us also pray for the Christian family, the holiness of priests, and for vocations as requested by our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

In Jesus Crucified,

Fr. Michael Champagne, cjc