



## *Fête-Dieu du Vermilion*

May 13, 2018  
Our Lady of Fatima

Dear Principal,

Grace and peace in Our Blessed Lord!

August 15, The Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is a special day in the Diocese of Lafayette and throughout Acadiana as it is the Feast of the Acadians. The Acadians originally sailed to Nouvelle-Écosse under the star of Our Lady of the Assumption and again during the Grand Derangement. The Acadian flag, both Canadian and Louisiana Acadian, highlights the centrality of Our Lady of the Assumption for the Acadian people. The gold star on a white field represents “Our Lady of the Assumption”, Patroness of the Acadians. When the first settlers departed France for the New World, the Virgin Mary was highly revered. It was a period of great devotion to the Virgin. The King of France, Louis XIII, and Pope Pius XI declared the Virgin Mary the patroness of the kingdom, (Patronne de Royaume) and Patroness Saint of all the Acadians in Canada, Louisiana and elsewhere. On August 15, 1638, France and her colonies were consecrated to Mary under the title “Our Lady of the Assumption”.

In order to serve the Acadian settlers in the Attakapas district, in 1765 Fr. Jean-Louis de Civrey accompanied the Acadians from New Orleans in their journey down the Bayou Teche. Fr. Civrey became the first resident priest. In his records, Fr. Civrey refers to his new home as "la Nouvelle Acadie" and his new parish "l'Église des Attakapas (Attakapas Church)" and later, "l'Église St-Martin de Tours (St. Martin de Tours Church)". It is believed that St. Martinville is named after the Church. Having the Catholic Priest accompany the Acadians is indicative of our ancestors' great allegiance to their Catholic Faith, especially the Eucharist and Our Lady.

Since 2015 we have been hosting an all-day “Holy Day” on Bayou Teche for the Feast of the Assumption. This year has great significance as it is the Centennial of the Diocese of Lafayette. In order to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Diocese of Lafayette, this year’s Assumption Eucharistic Boat Procession will be held for one year only on Bayou Vermilion. **Fête-Dieu du Vermilion** will begin with Holy Mass in French at 8:00 AM at St. Mary Magdalen Church in Abbeville. The celebrant will be His Excellency Glen J. Provost, D. D., Bishop of Lake Charles.

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Bishop Provost is a native son of the Diocese of Lafayette and served for several years as an associate at St. Mary Magdalen as an associate. Lake Charles is the Diocese of Lafayette's only daughter diocese, being taken from the territory of Lafayette Diocese in 1980.

At the end of Mass there will be a procession from Church with the Blessed Sacrament and a statue of Mary across the draw bridge to the old River Side Restaurant. At 10:00 am 121 boats will embark in procession (one for each of the 121 parishes of the Diocese) and make their way up Bayou Vermilion to Lafayette. The boat procession will stop near the bridge in Milton at 11:35 am for recitation of the rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The flotilla will re-commence at 12:35 pm and continue upstream, arriving at Ruffino's in River Ranch at 1:40 pm for Rosary and Benediction. The boat procession will embark once again at 2:40 pm and arrive at Beaver Park at about 3:20 pm. At 3:45 pm a foot procession with the Blessed Sacrament and a statue of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary will leave the landing and process up University Avenue in Lafayette all the way to the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. Solemn Vespers will be prayed at 5:00 pm and Holy Mass will follow at 5:30 pm with Bishop Douglas Deshotel to conclude the historic day. Confessions will be heard in mobile units at each of the stops along the way. Don't miss this "once in a hundred years' event!"

I am writing you to invite and encourage you to send all or at least a representation of your student body to attend one of the day's events along Bayou Vermilion and specially to join in the foot procession at 3:45 pm from Beaver Park to the Cathedral.

Please let me know if you will be able to have a delegation of students from your school in attendance and what stop(s) they will be present at so that we might look out for them and gather them close to the Blessed Sacrament. I can be reached at (337) 394-6550 or by email at [fetedieuduteche@gmail.org](mailto:fetedieuduteche@gmail.org)

More information can be obtained by visiting our website at [www.fetedieuduteche.org](http://www.fetedieuduteche.org) or by checking our Facebook page Fete-Dieu du Teche. The website has links to some videos from last year's procession which may be of interest to you and the students. I include here an event map and a promo flyer for the event.

Please keep the spiritual success of this event in your good prayers. Let us pray and work to keep the faith alive and well among our youth in our beloved Acadiana as we celebrate the Centennial of the Diocese of Lafayette!

Sincerely in the Lord,

Rev. Michael Champagne, CJC