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**2009 Eucharistic Congress Press Conference
On Saturday, June 13 at 11:15 a.m.
At the Georgia International Convention Center**

ATLANTA— Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory welcomes the public to the 14th annual Eucharistic Congress. This year's event, entitled "As Grain Once Scattered," will take place on Friday and Saturday, June 12-13, at the Georgia International Convention Center, adjacent to Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Admission is free.

Selected by Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, this year's theme comes from a passage in the Didache, a manuscript of the early church fathers that is often referred to as "the earliest catechism in the church," according to Deacon Dennis Dorner. The passage alludes to the gathering of the church worldwide into one body in God's kingdom through the saving power of Jesus Christ.

"What's amazing about the congress is that it never feels routine," said Deacon Dorner, who is this year's chairman. "Every year there is so much energy and freshness. It clearly comes from Christ himself and people's love and devotion to the Eucharist."

Evidence of the fruit of previous congresses is the presence of Greg and Jennifer Willits among the list of this year's speakers. In 2002, the couple from Conyers launched their ministry, Rosary Army, a nonprofit organization dedicated to making rosaries and promoting and praying the rosary. From Rosary Army podcasts, they moved to creating a video series, "That Catholic Show." Today they have their own satellite radio show, "The Catholics Next Door," that airs on The Catholic Channel on Sirius XM.

"To me, the Eucharistic Congress gives us an opportunity each year to experience what I consider to be a rarity, especially in the South: to be gathered with tens of thousands of Catholics for the sole purpose of growing closer to Jesus in the Eucharist. Each year the congress seems to be "better than the last," said Greg Willits, the father of five. "We are continually amazed at the ways God continues to feed us ... each year."

Also on the list of speakers is Cardinal John Foley, a Philadelphia priest who served Pope John Paul II in communications and now is grand master of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher, serving Christians in the Holy Land; Archbishop José Octavio Ruiz Arenas of Villavicencio, Colombia, the vice-president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America; and Frederick Berretta, a passenger on U.S. Airways flight 1549 that safely landed in New York's Hudson River in January.

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Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. on June 12 for the Friday night Mass, which will be celebrated at 6:30 p.m. by Msgr. Richard Lopez followed by a healing service with Father Tim Hepburn at 7:45 p.m. Parallel to the healing service, young adults, single or married, from the ages of 18 to 40, are invited to attend a special young adult track called "Revive!" This evening of inspirational music and speakers includes Jesse Manibusan, Batiste, Maria Clara Naranjo and Chris and Michelle Benzinger.

On Saturday, June 13, doors open at 7:30 a.m. The day begins with an opening procession of representatives from parishes, schools and ministries at 8:30 a.m., followed by adoration and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at 10 a.m. Archbishop Gregory will welcome participants and introduce Bishop Leonard P. Blair of Toledo, Ohio, to address the audience. Bishop Blair serves on the Committee of Doctrine as well as the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Young and old will find a place to be inspired in the various tracks that begin at 11 a.m., including tracks in Vietnamese and in Spanish, a deaf track, and tracks for teens and for children.

In the general track, in addition to Cardinal Foley, the Willits and Berretta, speakers include EWTN's Teresa Tomeo, host of "Catholic Connection," EWTN producer Father Andrew Apostoli of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and Lino Rulli, also a Catholic host on Sirius XM.

Joining Archbishop Ruiz Arenas in the Hispanic track will be speakers such as Father Domingo Rodriguez-Zambrana, ST, an award-winning writer and lecturer, as well as Dr. Oscar Henao, founder and director of the international Bible school Yeshu'a, and Father Pedro Poloche Rodriguez.

The Vietnamese community will welcome Bishop Michael Hoang Duc Oanh of Kontum, Vietnam, who chairs a Vietnamese bishops' evangelization committee, and Father Thomas Nguyen Van Thuong, who directs a seminary there.

Father Thomas Coughlin, the first deaf priest ordained in North America and now part of a religious institute in formation known as the Dominican Missionaries for the Deaf Apostolate, will lead the deaf track. Children from five to 11 years old will be entertained by Christ Music Kids in the track for kids. This year's teen track for sixth- through 12th-graders will feature Catholic singer-songwriter Jesse Manibusan, Curtis Stephan and Band, Lisa Epperson and Oscar Rivera. After the conclusion of the tracks, the community will come together for the Corpus Christi vigil Mass, which will be celebrated at 5 p.m. Cardinal Foley will be the homilist.

Deacon Dorner commented on the overwhelming response to the congress that has drawn up to 30,000 people in past years. "The Eucharistic Congress is the most wonderful opportunity for the community to come together—especially a community with all the diversity of Atlanta—and see the Spirit alive in the church."

To view the Eucharistic Congress Press Kit and biographical information on all speakers visit the official Web site at www.archatl.com/congress

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