

recently confirmed Congress that Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, will be amongst a star-studded line up of speakers at the 2024 National Eucharistic Congress (NEC), the five-day event to be held in Indianapolis July 17 to 21, 2024.

The format for this summer's National

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## MINISTRY

# Kashmere Gardens community, churches protest another polluting company

BY JO ANN ZUÑIGA

Texas Catholic Herald

HOUSTON — With a dozen industrial companies already surrounding Kashmere Gardens, residents and medical staff of nearby Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital say they have enough air pollution and are protesting a proposed concrete crusher.

The historically African-American neighborhood inside Houston's northern 610 Loop has held townhall meetings and protests since last year to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). But its Director approved a permit this past January for Texas Coastal Materials to build a concrete and

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## EMBRACING LENT

Auxiliary Bishop Italo Dell'Oro, CRS, reads the names in a Book of the Elect during the Rite of Election at Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Houston Feb. 18. At least 2,364 people from 108 parishes set to join or enter into full communion with the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese. SEE RELATED STORY ON PAGE 4.

PHOTO BY JAMES RAMOS/HERALD

# Looking towards Holy Week

BY DANIEL CARDINAL DINARDO  
Archbishop of Galveston-Houston

The days of Lent and Holy Week tend to arrive and beckon to us while we are in the midst of many other preoccupations, duties and amusements — from matters of work, business and family — to diversions and entertainments in sports or music. In fact, these very days of focus and concentration may appear as distractions and intrusions on our daily life. Holy Week, in particular, does intrude on our ordinary existence. It is meant to do that. It wants to interrupt us. Business as usual ceases.

The days of Holy Week cause us to step back, think and contemplate, celebrate liturgically and in moments of personal devotion, sing and pray

in unison with the whole Church and realize that CHRIST IS THE CENTER.

We celebrate the life-giving days of His Passion, death, burial and Resurrection. But these days — these events — are not in the past tense, even though certain historical circumstances surrounding them are past.

Christ is risen now, and the yearly observance of His final earthly days, His entrance into Jerusalem, final conflict with His known and unknown enemies, His contest with Satan in the Garden of Gethsemane, His arrest, death and burial, and His Resurrection on the third day, all point to something contemporaneous with each of us: His mysterious loving presence and His guiding us to the Father.

In Holy Week, we do not deal with a series of memorial services for a "nice"

## A SHEPHERD'S MESSAGE

**CHRISM MASS**  
Annual celebration set for March 26 at the Co-Cathedral  
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dead man but an encounter with the Living God. None of this is trifling!

On Passion (Palm) Sunday this year, after the initial blessing and procession with palms, we listen to the Passion narrative according to St. Mark. This Passion story is truly stark and dark. St. Mark is perhaps the most uncompromising in showing Jesus gradual abandonment by all, especially the loss of His Apostles who fled.

St. Mark also remembers that immediately at Jesus' death, the veil

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LOCAL

TEXAS CATHOLIC HERALD †

# The 'people of God' should live, thrive in environment 'that promotes the common good,' leaders say

KASHMERE, from page 1

rock crusher across the street mere yards away from the busy public hospital.

Now residents, state representatives and Church leaders hope a letter-writing campaign gathering thousands of signatures to Gov. Greg Abbott will help him to overturn the Standard Air Quality Permit 173296 given to the company.

Father Martin Eke, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in that neighborhood, said, "The company tells us it will not be a problem. But my parishioners and I live here in the community. The crushed gravel with its particulates will only add to the air pollution here."

Sister Maureen O'Connell, OP, Archdiocesan director of Social Concerns, who has joined the community protests, said, "I think the letter writing is important not because the governor may or may not read them, but because it provides citizens the data regarding the lack of investment of our state leadership in local issues."

She added, "The letters reflect the commitment of the people of God and their desire to live and thrive in an environment that promotes the common good."

O'Connell said the TCEQ admitted to not reviewing that neighborhood's air quality standards since 2008.

The Metropolitan Organization (TMO),



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE METROPOLITAN ORGANIZATION

Archdiocesan director of Social Concerns, Sister Maureen O'Connell, OP, speaks during a podium protests at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Houston with other Church and community leaders, including Auxiliary Bishop Italo Dell'Oro, CRS, as the TCEQ in January permitted Texas Coastal Materials to build a proposed concrete crusher mere yards from the busy Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital public hospital and Kashmere Gardens. The leaders joined in urging the public to join in a letter-writing campaign to the governor to reverse the decision to allow yet another polluting development in the neighborhood already besieged by a dozen industries.

a nonprofit that works with communities and churches, is spearheading the call to action for the letter-writing campaign at [www.tmohouston.org](http://www.tmohouston.org).

"TMO will collect all letters by April 1," its website stated. "We only have until April 8 to change the decision" because of the appeals process.

Pastor Charles Turner of New Pleasant Grove Baptist and Pastor Tracy Philips

of New Hope Baptist Church, along with State Senator Borris Miles and State Representative Harold Dutton, have also spoken publicly against the concrete and rock crusher to be developed next to the hospital.

After voters overwhelmingly approved a \$2.5 billion long-term bond issue last year, there were plans to expand the Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital to a needed

Level I trauma center, the third in the county and its first outside of the Texas Medical Center, according to Harris Health System.

Currently, Lyndon B. Johnson Hospital is the state's busiest Level I trauma center, serving more than 80,000 emergency patients annually. State law also prohibits a crusher from being located within 440 yards of a school or place of worship.

The hospital, which contains both a school and a working chapel that hold regular services, is within 440 yards of the proposed crusher. The TCEQ director in approving the permit, did not address how the development would violate the issue of the nearby school and church inside the hospital.

St. Francis parishioner and TMO member Sherry Dunlap said, "I think this is a horrible decision by the TCEQ, and it needs to be reversed. This is a low socio-economic minority neighborhood and companies feel like they can dump on the poor people, putting their lives even more at risk with noise and air pollution."

"I love St. Francis," said the retired principal from Spring Independent School District. "The state would not allow this plant in River Oaks."

Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee has stated his office would take legal action after the state agency approved the permit. †

SERIOUSLY DIFFERENT