



## Episode 1: The 635

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The strongest cultures in our world today are those that remember the stories of their people. Catholicism is a constant unfolding of The Story, a remembering of the ones who came before us and the action of God among them. Part of this story is in our own backyard. We'd like to invite you on a Dallas Road Trip, so buckle up because we've got highways, rivers, churches, and restaurants on this tour! The Diocese of Dallas is rich with its own history and our hope is that through exploring the landmarks that make up our corner of North Texas, that you may better find your place in The Story as a Dallas Catholic. How are you going to impact the next chapter of our story?

If you're a Dallas resident with any commuting experience, then you have encountered the joys of metroplex traffic. Perhaps you've even spent some time parked on our first landmark, The 635. When plans for the 635 began in 1958, the area we now know to be so heavily populated consisted of prairie and farmland.<sup>1</sup> The city of Dallas was founded in 1841 by Tennessee native, John Neely Bryan,<sup>2</sup> who named the location after a friend. Before Bryan's claim, the land was populated by a group of native people known as the Caddo Indians.<sup>3</sup> Approximately 50 years later, the Diocese of Dallas was founded in 1890 and at its creation, covered the entire northern half of the state of Texas, spanning from Texarkana in the East to El Paso in the West.<sup>4</sup> Before highways like the 635 and the building of railroads, land travel was SLOW but essential for the Catholic community to have access to the sacraments.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interstate-guide.com/i-635-tx/#history>

<sup>2</sup> [Prologue](#), 8

<sup>3</sup> [Texas State Historical Association. Texas Handbook- Caddo Indians](#)

<sup>4</sup> [History of Dallas PowerPoint](#)

Without physical church buildings and with a shortage of clergy, the Dallas Catholics were dependent on circuit riding French priests from Nacogdoches (which is almost a three hour drive today to the southeast) who would journey to the area only several times a year to celebrate the sacraments. The Diocese of Dallas Coat of Arms commemorates the valiant work of the French priests with the Fleur de Lis, which is an insignia of an Iris that is on the French Coat of Arms as well. One of the priests was named Father Neraz. Upon his return from a journey to Dallas, his brother priest wrote the following: "Neraz is too tired to write and therefore this letter expresses the sentiments of both of us. He has been back from Dallas only three days after a trip of six weeks. He found a few more Catholics and he gave 20 or 25 communions, including several first communions administered with the greatest solemnity."<sup>5</sup> The Eucharist, its celebration, and its reception is integral to Catholicism and you can remember this everytime you travel on the 635. John Chapter 6 is known as the Bread of Life discourse, a foundational Scripture for the Catholic belief in the Eucharist as the True Presence of Christ. John 6:35 states, "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.'" Furthermore, if you were to look at the 635 on a map, you will see its course beginning at I-20 in the southeast and wrapping around the city to end at State Highway 121 near the DFW Airport, forming a semi-circle around the city, resembling the shape of a broken host. Matthew depicts the Last Supper: "While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take it; this is my body.'" The *breaking* of the bread is remembered every time we celebrate Mass, in what is called the "fractio panis", Latin for "breaking of bread". Today, with the ease of access to the celebration of the Eucharist, we must ask ourselves if our reverence of the Sacrament mirrors that of our predecessors and whether or not the Lord has more of himself to reveal to us through this Holy Mystery.

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<sup>5</sup> [Prologue](#), 9