

Blessing Of The Fleet Continues To Be Sacred Event For Boaters

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 23 2022 1:29 PM



PORTAGE DES SIOUX, MO. - Last Sunday, and for the past 50 years, The Blessing of the Fleet has been held in Portage Des Sioux, Mo., in front of the Shrine Of Our Lady of the Rivers.

Alton Marina General Manager Karen Baker-Brncic, her staff, and other area boaters, always participate in the event. She said the Blessing of the Fleet each year keeps all 14 Marinas in Pool 26 connected.

“We are one big family!” she said. “We raised a lot of money on the river Sunday to take care of our lady on the river. It was a great day as usual.”

Baker-Brncic is retiring soon as GM of the Alton Marina. A large-scale party in her honor is set for Saturday, Aug. 27, at the Marina.

The Blessing of the Fleet is a tradition that began centuries ago in Mediterranean fishing communities. The practice began predominantly Catholic but is now practiced by all Christians as a blessing from the local priest and pastors that are meant to ensure a safe and bountiful season.

In most ports, the event was brought by immigrants who held strongly to their Christian religious beliefs. The events that are part of the ritual vary by community and range from a simple ceremony to a multi-day festival including a church service, parades, pageantry, dancing, feasting, and contests.

These images are from the Blessing of the Fleet Benefit held annually at Alton Marina. More photos can be found on the [Blessing of the Fleet STL](#) Facebook page.