
INDISPENSABLE CONTEMPLATION



On the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration marking the contemplative presence of the Blessed Sacrament Sisters in our diocese, I wanted to call to mind the greatness and need of this mission in the midst of the world today.

A THOUGHT OF MOTHER TERESA'S

A few days after the anniversary of Mother Teresa's death, it is good for us to recall what she wrote on her calling cards, those little yellow scraps of paper that she enjoyed passing out: *"Prayer is the fruit of silence; faith is the fruit of prayer; service is the fruit of love; peace is the fruit of service."* And she once wrote, *"Before all else we must make time for silence and contemplation, especially if we live in large cities where there is so much agitation. It is the large cities that are most in need of silence and contemplation. I always begin prayer with a period of silence; God speaks in the silence of the heart. God is the friend of silence, and we must listen to Him because it is not our words that matter but what He tells us, and what He says through us. What blood is to the body, prayer is to the soul; it leads the soul closer to God and purifies our hearts. So, with purified hearts we can see God, speak to Him and discover His love in each brother and sister. If your heart is pure, you are then transparent to God, you hide nothing from Him, and it is only then that you freely offer Him what He expects from you."*

TESTIMONY OF HER SISTERS

Mother Teresa's sisters continue along the same lines as their Mother: *"Each morning upon rising the sisters know what very painful trials often await them, during the day. Prayer gives them strength, supports and assists them; it also gives us all the joy needed to carry out our duties. To always act and always give is impossible without the grace of God; without it we could not live."* Another adds: *"Our work is totally dedicated to God and we are happy to carry out our tasks."* Another testimony: *"The most important thing a human being can do is to pray, because we were created by God and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. And it is in prayer that we get in touch with God."* Saint John Mary Vianney wrote something similar: *"Man has a beautiful task, that of praying and loving... You pray, you love: this is man's happiness on earth."* And I believe that these words apply to both women and men.

Saint Peter Julien Eymard, the founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers and Sisters, a man aflame with the love of Christ in his Eucharist, desired to reveal him to the people of his time. His life which was nourished on the celebration and contemplation of the Eucharist, was rich in all kinds of ministries. The Holy Spirit led him to discover the power for renewal for Church and society, that could be discovered in the Eucharist. He said: *"We take all of the Blessed Sacrament. We don't want just to adore, serve and love the eucharistic Jesus, but to lead others to know, adore, serve, and love him. Until now the sun of the Eucharist has not yet risen, but the great eucharistic riches now rise up before our eyes. This is quite astounding. All we can see now is a ray. What will it be like, later?"*

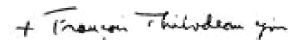
EUCCHARISTIC MYSTERY

I hope that not only in our own diocese but throughout the Church we discover more and more how all the Church ministries and apostolic work are tied to the Eucharist and subordinated to it, as the Vatican Council decree on priestly life and ministry [December 7, 1965] reminds us so well. It behooves us to become prophetic communities that witness to the Eucharist, proclaim the Passover of the Lord which is power and a requirement for liberation and communion, the source and summit of all evangelisation. The eucharistic bread and wine must constantly remind us of the Last Supper, the Church's thanksgiving, and humankind's sacrifice of praise. These communities must show us in a distinctive way the presence of Christ whose life is poured into us through the gift of his Holy Spirit. May all the eucharists celebrated in our Church, may all those prayers offered before the Blessed Sacrament, may all our eucharistic congresses, and the entire contemplative experience of the Christ-Roi Cenacle in Edmundston help us get to know how far the love of the Lord extends.

A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION

"Faced with the challenges of our day," Pope John Paul II said to the members of the Blessed Sacrament Societies, "your specific contribution to the new evangelisation shall comprise a deepening of the eucharistic mystery, as well as a concern for proclaiming the Gospel to the men and women of our day, especially the poor in their many different situations and according to their particular cultures. This mission assumes that you do not stop deepening your own spirituality." It therefore behooves us to bear witness to both Christ and the Eucharist. May each eucharistic celebration joyfully proclaim the marvels which God has worked, in the course of our history.

Have a good week!



+ François Thibodeau
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