
WHAT WE ARE IS WONDERFUL



The recent Diocesan Eucharistic Congress in the Grand Falls was a resounding success. A large number of the local population took part in the different congress activities: eucharistic celebrations, Mass and anointing of the sick, reconciliation services, conferences, Gospel Night happenings, holy hours, marian hour, storytelling workshop, community supper. Hundreds of volunteers worked hard to make these festivities a success. To discover what we are - the Body of Christ - was truly the high point of the Congress. The following are a few comments I made at the opening and closing festivities.

REALITIES TO ACCEPT

A Christian community is built on the Word of God, and one works at building it up by hearing the Word and being attentive to it; it is also a community that lives an ever growing fellowship and fraternal communion, a community that celebrates, prays, and transforms its surroundings. Thanks to Christ Jesus, we have become a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, the people of God that proclaims the mighty wonders of the God who has called us from darkness into His own wonderful light. Jesus is a good shepherd; he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. Jesus is the shepherd who leads his flock to the Father, he is the shepherd who gives his life for all humankind. What great realities to accept, reflect on and share with one's brothers and sisters! I hope that we shall discover more and more the depth of God's love for His People and for each of us in particular. This light of the Lord brightens our paths and our lives, and gives meaning to our daily living.

HEART OF LIFE

Before leaving this world to return to his Father, Jesus gave the Church the sacrament of his body and blood as the base of the Church's foundation and development, and the centre of its life. All the baptised are responsible for constructing this Church. It is in the assembly of believers that the Lord is present to his people in a special way because, according to his Word, wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in their midst. By uniting its prayer with that of Jesus, the Church offers itself to the Father and receives in turn the source of life, and becomes in this way the Body of Christ. The ministers of God must ensure that the faithful are formed in prayer and that they share actively and consciously in the common celebration of the living God. Through eucharistic service they contribute to the development and unity of the Church by allowing the greatest number of people to receive the bread which has been broken and given to the multitude.

ONE BODY

Let us always remember that we who share in the one bread form one body with our brothers and sisters. Let us show true love for the Body of Christ that is the people of God, especially the poor and the sick. Let us fulfil the commandment Jesus gave his apostles, when he gave them his body and blood: "Love one another as I have loved you." To discover the body of Christ in the Eucharist is to discover Jesus who desires to be with us at all times and everywhere, to be Emmanuel, God-with-us in the day-to-day; it means to acknowledge this mystery of God's love in our lives, and to discover the loving presence of Jesus for the benefit of all: "Make, Lord, that we manifest more and more what we are: the Body of Christ..." This is an important prayer to say, with consequences

in our whole lives. May our lives be a prayer and our prayer, the expression of our living. Prayer contributes to the building up of the Body of Christ which is the Christian community. What could be greater than the Eucharist? What could be greater than the Body of Christ, the Body of Christ broken and given to us, the Body of Christ which we form?

PROCLAIMING OUR FAITH

The Fourth Eucharistic Congress proclaimed Jesus, dead and raised from the dead. We must proclaim the living, risen Jesus by all that we are, in our words and actions, our prayers and gatherings. "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, he is our salvation, our everlasting glory." All these eucharistic congresses we have been having are in memory of Jesus Christ the Saviour. It has been 2000 years since the Son of God became man for us. From all eternity God's design has been to make of our little bit of country a holy land, one where he is pleased to live. Jesus willed to live among us: he is the true Emmanuel, God-with-us. And he does not tire of reminding us that he is with us always, even to the end of time.

WELCOMING THE WORD

After having been welcomed as members of the Body of Christ, we are now ready to welcome the Word of God. For us disciples of Jesus, this Word is important, because it is light for our lives and a source of hope. That is why we listen to it as to the words of our beloved. It is so important to listen to the Word of God! You remember the walk Jesus took with the disciples on the road to Emmaus? To these sad, discouraged disciples Jesus takes the time to explain the Scriptures and everything that concerned them. Was it not written that he had to suffer and so enter into glory? And Jesus explained the scriptures so well to them that their hearts burned within. How I wish that such would be the case with each of our celebrations, that the Word of Jesus would touch our hearts in that way, that he would warm them and make them beat according to the heart of Jesus. When we share in a liturgy of the Word, may we truly welcome Jesus, the Word of God, the Word made flesh; he still comes to warm our hearts.

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