



From A Bishop's Journal (750)

As We Near the International Eucharistic Congress (2)

According to the 49th International Eucharistic Congress preparatory committee, some 15,000 are expected to attend the Québec celebration taking place at the Pepsi Coliseum, where several of the scheduled events will take place June 15 to 22. There is still time to register by accessing the Congress website: <http://www.cei.ca/en>, and contacting Ms. Jeannine Cormier, our diocesan delegate, at 10, rue Denis, Saint-Jacques, N.B., E7B 1G1, phone number: (506) 735-8577.

The Most Perfect Act of Adoration

As we continue our reflection on Eucharistic adoration, I would like to point out how the celebration of the Eucharist is the most perfect act of worship that the disciples of Christ can offer. It is in the celebration of the Eucharist that Christ's act of love on the cross is represented and made present in the midst of the Christian community. It is in the Eucharist that we express our desire to be united to Christ's offering, and to surrender to the Father. "Through him, with him, and in him, all glory and honour are yours, almighty Father..." It is in communing to the body and blood of Christ that we are led by him in worship of the Father.

An Extension

The conciliar document on the liturgy tells us that "Adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies what is carried out during the Eucharistic celebration." In fact, celebration of the Eucharist finds its normal extension in personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, since the Eucharistic celebration is the source and the model of Eucharistic adoration. Our praying before the Blessed Sacrament can be an extension of our celebration of the Mass and follow its movement, as it nourishes us from the same source. Here are a few examples.

A Community Prayer

The celebration of Mass always begins by gathering the people of God. In like manner, in coming before the Blessed Sacrament, in adoration I join with all those I know as well as with those I do not know, and am united to those I love and those I do not love enough. I must not forget, either,

that I am surrounded by all the saints. The Virgin Mary prays with me, and the angels join with me in prayer. I am never alone in the Lord's presence, I belong to the communion of saints. This community dimension of all adoration is seen more clearly when we are several together for a period of adoration. By alternating private adoration with these community forms of worship, we ensure that our adoration is never an individualistic prayer. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us: "The individual relation that the faithful have with Jesus present in the Eucharist always points them to the whole ecclesial community as it strengthens in them the awareness of belonging to the Body of Christ."

A Prayer Rooted in Tradition

The Mass celebration, too, repeats ancient prayers of the early Church, prayers that are part of our rich spiritual heritage where every Christian can draw from. My prayer before the Blessed Sacrament could be nourished by these same liturgical prayers that I can use for meditation and contemplation: Lord, have mercy; Glory to God; Holy is the Lord; Our Father; Lamb of God. Besides, the songs at Mass are often inspired by the Psalms, those ancient hymns of the people of Israel. These psalms could become the basis of my prayer before Christ present in the Eucharist because Jesus himself prayed them fervently during his life.

A Prayer Nourished by Scripture

The celebration of Mass gives a special place to the Word of God and its proclamation. Therefore, our Eucharistic devotions could also give a special place to reading and meditating the Word. I could take up the readings from the Mass of the day and read them slowly and meditatively, trying to understand them better; I would then be inspired by their wisdom, penetrated by their call, and consoled by their promises. It would be a good habit to always have the Bible with us when we come to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. As we read the many narratives of the New Testament, we can be led better to meditation of the mysteries of our faith.

A Prayer That Transforms

The celebration of Mass is meant to transform us, as the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. In our moments of Eucharistic adoration we can ask Christ in what way he wants to transform us. I can open myself more to his Spirit whose desire is to guide me in the way of holiness, generosity, and love. As Pope Benedict reminds us: "If the Eucharistic sacrifice nourishes and develops in us what has already been given at baptism by which we are all called to holiness, it follows that it must appear and show in the situations or states of life of every Christian. We become every day worship that is agreeable to God, as we live our lives as a vocation. Talking about the Eucharistic call, it is the sacrament of the Eucharist itself that sets us firmly in the daily reality, so that everything is done for the glory of God." The image of Christ thus imprinted in me by baptism and confirmation must become more and more visible in me as I place myself in his presence in order to be touched by his Spirit. My prayer before the Blessed Sacrament will incite me in this way to lead a better, holier, more just and more charitable life.

A Deep Wish

Practice of Eucharistic adoration can therefore help us better realise in our lives the mystery we have celebrated at Mass, as it develops in us a desire to experience once again the death and resurrection of Christ the Lord and Saviour. Intimately linked to the Eucharistic celebration, Eucharistic adoration is extended in our daily commitments.

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