
PROVISIONS FOR THE JOURNEY



On Sunday, May 29, this year, the Church invites us to celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of Christ or Corpus Christi Sunday, as it used to be called. This celebration can be a special opportunity for us to evaluate together what we have done, so far, for the 'Year of the Eucharist' inaugurated by Pope John Paul II, and which goes on until the end of October, 2005.

VARIOUS INITIATIVES

Very quietly, several religious communities and Christian parish communities have taken the Pope's invitation to heart. There has been preaching on the subject, tridiums have been held in honour of the Eucharist, small weekly meditations have been published in parish bulletins, a family "rally" was recommended by the diocesan Commission on Liturgy and Culture, and picked up by several families, a diocesan study session was held in February, holy hours have taken place in a number of places, and youth and family masses have been celebrated. In some parishes, first communion preparation took on a special meaning, and "profession of faith" celebrations focussed on the great mystery of the Eucharist. Does this imply that all of these activities have drawn the most benefit from this Year of the Eucharist? Thinking this would give us a good conscience rather quickly! Rather, we can question ourselves whether we could do more, to fully experience this year of grace.

"FORTY HOURS"

In some dioceses initiatives are taken to bring back the tradition of the "Forty Hours", which used to be one of the jewels of our religious tradition. It is perhaps more difficult today to organise such an activity, but we can refer to the tradition, to set aside a full day of adoration – or even two days, if possible – if it is difficult to find a sufficient number of adorers to continue through the night. In those places where a pastoral team ministers to two, three, and even four parishes, each community could perhaps share in this pastoral activity.

MISSION OR NOVENA

The novena [French] being preached from July 17 to 26 at the diocesan shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska will be on the theme of "The Eucharist, Gift of God." The preacher of the novena will be Father Jean-Pierre Kumpel of the Diocese of Idiofa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This novena will be for us a special opportunity to discover – or rediscover – this "gift of God," this "Body given up for us" and "Blood poured out for us and for all." I wholeheartedly urge all those parishes that can to have a mission on the same theme, all the more so since during all of October, the World Synod in Rome will host more than three hundred bishops from across the world, to deepen this great mystery of the Eucharist which builds up our Church. "The Eucharist, source and summit of the life and the mission of the Church" will be the Synod theme. Through the internet, the Zenit website will keep us posted on the main interventions of the Synod participants. The Canadian delegation is already hard at work, preparing for this great event.

PASSOVER OF THE LORD

Here is how Auxiliary Bishop Louis Dicaire of the Diocese of Saint-Jean-Longueuil expressed himself to the Canadian bishops, last October: "The Eucharistic celebration commemorates in a permanent way Christ's sacrifice on the cross. We should never minimise or neglect its dimension of thanksgiving, which is the original meaning of 'Eucharist.' It has to do with the entire mystery of the Redemption which is ever a source of marvel to the Church. By focussing one's attention too much on the sacrificial dimension right up to the death on the cross, we risk losing sight of the second half of the diptych of the paschal mystery that is Christ's entry into his new life, his Resurrection from the dead, and his glorious Ascension. The institution of the Eucharist took

place at the Last Supper, the words of Jesus are an anticipation of his death, but it, too, would be empty of meaning if his love had not been greater than death, which led to the Resurrection. In fact, what the Eucharist does is express the everlastingness of the sacrifice of Christ who does not cease passing from this world to his Father, drawing us after himself, Jesus, in the movement of death-resurrection.”

A TREASURE TO REDISCOVER

Novalis Publishers has put out a booklet entitled *L'Eucharistie un trésor à redécouvrir* ["The Eucharist: A Treasure to Rediscover"]. In as few as fifty pages and in very simple terms, Father Jean-Yves Garneau, S.S.S., gives us a serious reflection on the Eucharist as the mystery of a presence, of an active and paschal presence, the mystery of a wonderful exchange, a mystery of communion, of thanksgiving, and of commitment. In his small book, Father Garneau talks about the death of martyrs of the Eucharist, of the 40 "Sunday Martyrs" of Carthage, in the year 304. "The day a disciple can say as his own the words of one of these martyrs – 'I cannot live without celebrating the Eucharist'– he has discovered or rediscovered the treasure passed on to him at the Last Supper, to guide him through life and bring him always back to the essential. This 'essential' is the Word that enlightens, warms, comforts, and constantly rekindles hope. The 'essential' is the bread and wine given to those who hunger and thirst for kindness, forgiveness, justice, fraternity, peace, happiness, and truth... This 'essential' is the Passover, the mysterious passage which leads through Christ to light, freedom, and life.”

ALONG OUR PATHS

Communion given to the dying is justly called 'viaticum,' divine nourishment along the path to eternity. However, this expression could also apply to every communion we take, because the Eucharist is our food for each moment of our lives. "Lord, help us find in the Eucharist we celebrate a teaching to enlighten us and provisions to sustain our strength, that we may open our hearts to the riches of your Spirit" (Mass for May 12, 2005).

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