



From A Bishop's Journal (760)

Gift of God for the Life of the World

The Québec International Eucharistic Congress is barely two months old: may this event long remain present in our hearts and constantly remind us of God's gift to humankind. "The bread of life of every eucharist becomes in our hands a gift of God for the life of the world." The holy Eucharist has been celebrated in our country for over four centuries now. The four hundred birthday celebrations of the founding of the city of Québec also marked the three hundredth anniversary of the arrival to New France of its first bishop, and the forty-ninth international eucharistic congress. For us of the Madawaska-Victoria region, tradition has it that between July 10 and 15, 1651 the first Mass was celebrated on our soil by the Jesuit Father Gabriel Druillettes, "lost in our region," who wanted to get to the Kennebec River with a few of his companions. Today we can sing a song of thanksgiving for this multiplication of loaves that Jesus gave us through the centuries, by repeating the words composed by Father Robert Lebel for the Québec Eucharistic Congress: "Fruits of the earth, of the vine, and of our hands, can there be more beautiful signs than this bread and this wine?"

Countless Benefits

Each day of ours is filled with God's gifts, of His benefits that are beyond counting, so many are they. In the order of nature, we must appreciate the gift of nature: many are they who forget to thank God each morning for this precious gift, and for all those who journey with us – our parents, brothers and sisters, grandparents and neighbours, and colleagues, for the air that we breathe and the creation that surrounds us, especially the wonderful Madawaska-Victoria with their mountains and hills, and their wonderful rivers teeming with life, and for all the beautiful spots and sight-seeing areas that our brothers and sisters have prepared for us to enjoy these beauties. Then there is the supernatural beauty around us: what about our baptism that has made us sharers in the very life of Christ and members of the Church, and what of the other sacraments: forgiveness, the Eucharist, confirmation, marriage, holy orders, and the anointing of the sick? And what about the real and active spiritual communion that joins people to one another? What about all those who are of such service to us, who are at our beck and call throughout the day? "When the hour had come for him to go back to the Father and love to the end, he the Lord and Master took to his knees. And washing the feet of his Apostles, he said to them: 'In your turn, do the same for one another, and serve with love'!"

To Serve with Love

Every time we celebrate the Eucharist we can recall this great gesture of service that Jesus made on behalf of his apostles. We, too, must do deeds of love and of service to one another: getting up each day, putting on one's apron for loving service. Let us consider all these loving actions that take place in our homes, our families, our parishes, our villages and towns, and our country: gestures of friendship and kindness, of exceptional volunteer service that take place throughout the year, and our parish, diocesan and national holidays and celebrations, whether they be liturgical like being in the church choir or the maintenance of our parish buildings and being members of local and regional committees. There is an abundance of life and love, here. "Ever since the unforgettable gesture in our hearts – the Last Supper – we remember at this table the memory of the Lord. And very often... despite the absence, we have recognised the burning heart of a presence and of bread broken and shared. The Father so loved the world that He gave His only Son... that life may overflow with the breath of the Spirit. It is in this Spirit that He transforms us to do Eucharist, when we offer Him our selves through Him and in Him."

Beneficial Gatherings

It is right and just to give thanks for all the Eucharists celebrated, especially in our midst. Every weekend, we gather at over forty eucharistic celebrations. These Sunday get-togethers are so wonderful, beneficial, necessary and even indispensable. If for many long years it was the precept to attend Sunday Mass that allowed the Sunday gatherings and the building up of our parish communities, it is so important that we, as Catholic baptised and confirmed adults, be aware of the indispensable Sunday Eucharistic celebration. Week after week we must experience this fraternal gathering and to carefully listen to the Word of God, give thanks for the week passed, offer the one beginning, and meet with our brothers and sisters. We are not strangers, we are all of the same family of God. "In him, the covenant is much greater than that of old. He is all together the priest, the offering, and the altar of sacrifice. In order to accomplish all justice and overcome death in us, there was no other gift than that of his body."

Invincible Love

Nothing in the world should separate us from the love of Christ in his Eucharist. Neither distress nor anxiety, nor persecution nor famine or nakedness, not danger nor torture. With Saint Paul, let us make an act of faith: Trial or distress, or hunger or nakedness or danger, or the sword, nor present nor future, neither heights nor depth nor any other creature can ever separate us from the love of God manifested in his Eucharist. May these celebrations we are graced to live in our respective milieus help us better discover God's gift, the gift of God for the life of the world. "To contemplate him without grasping everything, without understanding everything, and even without seeing him... and then to wait until we can receive him! Well beyond appearances, we recognise the bread of Life that, along the paths of our hope, comforts and feeds us. The bread and wine of every eucharist become in our hands gift of God for the life of the world.

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