

The Goal of the Eucharistic Revival

Cardinal Blase J. Cupich

June 13, 2024 - Chicago Catholic

In preparation for the National Eucharistic Congress this coming July, thousands of pilgrims are making their way to Indianapolis from various parts of the United States. Happily, the pilgrimage will include stops in the Archdiocese of Chicago, culminating with the celebration of the Eucharist at Holy Name Cathedral on June 30 at 12:30 p.m.

Of course, the point of reference for understanding any eucharistic pilgrimage and in fact all such processions is the actual celebration of the Mass. For as the teaching of the church clearly reminds us, "taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice (is) the source and summit of the Christian life." It is in the celebration of the Eucharist that the Christian faithful "offer the Divine Victim to God, and offer themselves along with It. Thus, both by reason of the offering and through Holy Communion all take part in this liturgical service, not indeed, all in the same way but each in that way which is proper to himself. Strengthened in Holy Communion by the Body of Christ, they then manifest in a concrete way that unity of the people of God which is suitably signified and wondrously brought about by this most august sacrament" ("Lumen Gentium," "The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," 11).

This teaching is quite profound and helps us remember that our processions and pilgrimages should always aim at leading us to a deeper conversion, freeing us to offer our lives in union with Christ for the salvation of the world, and specifically as we take up the work of bringing about the unity of the human family.

We express this core belief at two moments in the Mass. The first is when the gifts of bread and wine and the offerings from the collection are brought forward in procession by representatives of the community. After these gifts, which represent us, are prepared on the altar, the presider makes clear the meaning of what is taking place as he invites the community in these words: "Pray my brothers and sisters that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father almighty."

The second procession comes at the time of the reception of Communion, when the Christian faithful move forward to receive the very gifts they have offered, and which have become the Body and Blood of Christ. In this action, Christ unites the faithful to himself and to one another, transforming us into the Body of Christ.

In other words, the Communion procession is a profoundly religious action of the community, rather than that of an individual's faith or piety. This is why the norm of the church is that Holy Communion is to be received standing and that all the faithful should be encouraged to participate in singing the hymn as they join the procession. This expression of unity is nothing less than an answer to the prayer of Christ at the Last Supper, when he pleaded: "Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are ... as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us" (John 17:11, 21).

Our National Eucharistic Revival and our gathering in Indianapolis will be successful to the degree that we root all our efforts in the actual celebration of the Eucharist, which, as the source and summit of Christian life, should always be the point of reference for all that we do in this moment of renewal. The goal of our revival should not be limited to bringing the Christian faithful simply to believe that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist. As the late Cardinal Avery Dulles once observed, Christ does not reveal himself to "mystify" us, but to draw us into the mystery of participating in his work of salvation.

And so, the aim of our revival should be to bring all the faithful to a deeper faith that in the celebration of the Eucharist, Christ makes himself present to give us a share in his victory and triumph over death, which he won for us on the Cross, thus making us more fully the Body of Christ to continue his work of saving the world as we join our sacrifices and our lives to his. This empowers us to join in the final procession as we walk out of the doors of the church carrying our eucharistic experience into a world that is so much in need of salvation.