

Encouragement Encouragement

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Focus on... The Eucharist

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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October greets us with the celebration of the lives of many great Saints, St Thérèse of Lisieux, St Francis of Assisi, St Faustyna Kowalska, St John Henry Newman, St Paul of the Cross, St Margaret Mary Alacoque and the great St Teresa of Avila. It is also known as the month of the Rosary. We only have to look a little deeper to discover that here we have a representation of the Church from many countries. The Rosary itself is universally prayed and treasured. There are also saints from beyond the European boundaries and from everywhere in the world, often canonised as Martyrs, for example the Korean Martyrs. The Church has no limits and the call of Jesus to proclaim the Good News can be exemplified and has to be heeded.

Last month 'The International Eucharistic Congress' was held in Budapest, Hungary and attended by Pope Francis, delayed because of the 'pandemic'. The word 'Congress' can be misleading



here, as it is more than just a meeting to discuss issues but more a gathering of the faithful to pray, especially centred on the Mass and Eucharistic Celebrations of various types. It is a gathering of lay people, clergy, and bishops from all over the world and attended by many thousands of people. Unlike the Synods, which are essentially a gathering of Bishops, very important to the life of the church, inviting us to pray for their success, the IEC as it is referred to, is a gathering of all types of people and of various Christian rites to focus of the 'Eucharist as a source and summit of Christian life.'

The congresses have an interesting history as they were a lay led movement begun at the turn of 19th century the first one being held in France in 1881. Interestingly it was founded by a lay woman **Emilie Tamasier**, a young French woman. Supported and encouraged by the then Fr. Peter Julian Eymard, now canonised Saint, at the start of the Second Vatican

Council. He had set up houses of adoration and hoped to encourage more Eucharistic Adoration. The anti-clericalism and secularisation of her time had led to a falling away from the church as well as less reverence paid to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. She wanted to redress that and call lay people to gather to pray together.

Each congress has a theme centred around the Eucharist and they are held every four years. At first they were centred on France and a few countries nearby. The first was held in Lille but soon they spread to other countries bordering France. It then was also held in Non-Catholic countries such as Switzerland and Germany. In 1908 it was held in England. By 1910 the first Non-European congress was held in Canada. They also followed or preceded changes in the Church regarding liturgy and worship and participation grew massively as people were able to travel more easily. In more recent years they have been held in various continents and countries such as the Philippines, Ireland, Poland, Mexico, and further back in time, Seoul, Korea. A few countries have played host more than once.

After the Second Vatican Council it was more fully integrated into the life of the church with a concluding mass 'Statio Orbis', i.e. "as a station, where a community invites the universal Church to pray and to renew its commitment". In the past thirty years this has been attended by the Pope and is a huge public witness. In some countries it is attended by up to six million people.

At a time when there are such difficulties in the Church, on many levels, and in different ways such as persecution, shortages of vocations, poverty and scandals that have rocked believers the Congress brings needed hope and encouragement.

"The Eucharist is the supreme proof of the love of Jesus. After this, there is nothing more but Heaven itself"

St. Peter Julian Eymard

Apart from the central focus of prayer and adoration there is also an emphasis on collective responsibility and service. Good works and Faith, as St James says, go hand in glove (James 14:17) The Congresses have always focused on both, and it is truly inspiration to learn from others and witnesses to what can be achieved even in the most desperate of circumstances. Speaking personally, I attended the Congress in Seoul and learned of so many initiatives to unite, rather than to divide people, and of vibrant alive churches. The congresses give people a chance to share experiences and therefore pray more sincerely for the needs of the church in other areas of the world. It is also 'great fun' to meet people of diverse cultures who fill the many venues in each country and at the final Mass after a week of gatherings. Lifelong friendships are made in this way.

Jesus' Presence in the Eucharist is integral part of our faith and without the Word and the Sacrament we cannot hope to grow in either understanding or more crucially in service and holiness. We also are greatly inspired when we pray as one living body and learn to seek Him not only as individuals but also as communities of believers. The congresses give us an opportunity to do both and to glorify the continued presence of Jesus in the Church leading us all in spite of the difficulties. This year the Congress in Budapest was a huge uplift after the cancelation of it last year due to the Covid infection. The joy was palpable as people met together to pray and worship reflect and exchange ideas,



The logo for this congress shows us that living spring of water flow from the Eucharist and the cross.

Each Congress has a different theme and rightly, the aspects of a Eucharistic life are inexhaustible.

There is no Saint that has not been wholly Eucharistic and many teachings and insights have been passed down to us through the centuries.

St. John Paul II's inclusion of the Institution of the Eucharist in the 'Mysteries of Light' in the Rosary, have also reminded us of this great gift to us in Holy Communion. Pope Francis reminds us that we must not only *admire* Jesus but also *follow* Him and be prepared to be broken.

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Do we make the Eucharist an essential part of our lives and are we Eucharistic people willing to take Jesus to others by our love and kindness, charity and faith. Maybe we can start in October? Halina Holman

Pope Francis:

52nd International Eucharistic Congress Budapest

What does it mean to get behind Jesus? It is to advance through life with Jesus' own confident trust, knowing that we are beloved children of God. It is to follow in the footsteps of the Master who came to serve and not be served. It is to step out each day to an encounter with our brothers and sisters. The Eucharist impels us to this encounter, to the realization that we are one Body, to the willingness to let ourselves be broken for others. Dear brothers and sisters, let us allow our encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist to transform us, just as it transformed the great and courageous saints you venerate. I am thinking in particular of Saint Stephen and Saint Elizabeth. Like them, may we never be satisfied with little; may we never resign ourselves to a faith based on ritual and repetition, but be ever more open to the scandalous newness of the crucified and risen God, the Bread broken to give life to the world. In this way, we will be joyful ourselves and bring joy to others. Sept. 2021

Newly Beatified... Two 20th Century Cardinals who suffered persecution and led their people Cardinal Mindszenty (Hungary) and Cardinal Wyszyński (Poland) Sept. 2021.

Feast Days in October

1st St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus

2nd The Holy Guardian Angels

3rd Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

4th St. Francis of Assisi

5th St. Maria Faustyna Kowalska

7th Our Lady of the Rosary

9th St. John Henry Newman

10th Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

11th St. John XXIII

12th St. Wilfrid

15th St. Teresa of Avila

16th St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

17th Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

18th St. Luke, Evangelist 19th St. Paul of the Cross

22nd St. John Paul II

24th Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

28th Sts. Simon & Jude, Apostles

31st Sunday All Saint's Day (Eng. & Wales)

New Book on St. Joseph –Silent Hero
now available from thehostapostolate@gmail.com

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