

Encouragement Encouragement

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The Lord's Presence – a Present

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The Feast of Candlemas, Purification, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple 'Traditionally' brings the Christmas season to a close. Candles are blessed and retained as a reminder of Jesus being the 'Light of the World', a light that we should bring to others. His light shines in the darkness. The blessing of the candles is also a reminder that 'God with us', Emmanuel, is present with us in three distinct ways. He is present in the Word of God, in the Gospel and Scripture, which has sacramental power when it falls on fertile soil. He is present in the Eucharist – the life-giving food that sustains and nourishes us on our journey, and finally He is present in the Grace that is bestowed on us, a Grace we received at our Baptism and exemplified by the Baptismal Candle.

In these days when much symbolism seems to be lost it would be good to take that candle offered and put it in a pride of place, especially as the season of Lent comes upon us so quickly, with Ash Wednesday being the week after.



But it is also a time to truly ponder what all three of these gifts mean to us, but especially the Eucharist – the Real and Abiding Presence of God in our midst. The following is a daily homily on just this topic by a special 'Pastor'.

'In today's Gospel (Mk 3:7-12) we find the people who are afflicted in any way crowding around Jesus to touch Him. We today also crowd around the Eucharist to touch and be touched by the same Jesus so that we can grow into a loving and caring community. Mass is the Church at its best, but do we really know each other as brothers/sisters in Christ?

At Mass, Jesus calls us to 'get up', up out of our

self-centred living; up out of our indifference and reach out to those in our Communities who are hurting. At Mass Jesus gives us the Grace, the strength and the courage to reach out to people, especially the sick, the lonely – those who need our help in any way. The Mass and the Sacraments were given to us so that we can become the hands and the heart of Jesus to others, not just for personal sanctification.

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But is important to realise the depth of love the Lord has for us, and realise the abiding presence of God within our churches, hearts and homes. It is for this reason that the Church encourages Exposition, an extension of the 'Mass' and a time of quiet prayer and surrender to the Lord that leaves us His Presence, not just symbolically but actually, and whom we must reverence and adore.

It is safe to say that the International Eucharistic Congresses have little or no impact on the majority of Catholic Christians except in the countries where they are held or on those who attend them (a definition of a Eucharistic Congress is 'a gathering of Lay, Religious and Clergy to bear Witness to Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist'). There is always a contingent from each country and unless nearby, many cannot attend. We were blessed to have the last Eucharistic Congress (I.E.C.) in Ireland and many thousands of people from this country participated. The previous IEC was in Cebu in the Philippines and attended by nearly 6 million people. And as is customary it was attended by the Pope. The next, the 52nd, is to be held in Budapest in Hungary in 2020. Rather like the football 'World Cup' its location is highly sought. They are usually held every three or four years. Each has a specific theme which has often reflected specific concerns of the time. After all there have been 51 to date over a period of 139 year.

They were the brain child of Emilie Tamisier, a young French woman, to combat the growing secularization and anti-clericalism in France in 1881. The first, held in Lyon, reflected the need for an outpouring of visible faith and centered around prayer and liturgy. Over the years while this has been a continuous theme they have also been a source of teaching, catechesis, witness and a growing together of the people of God. . Firm friendships are made, ideas shared and encouragement given.

However in-between, and in preparation for each one, a National Congress can be held, or merely to encourage more reflection on Jesus' Eucharistic Presence. The Congress in Liverpool in September 7th-9th is just such an event. It will be held over a weekend unlike the three-week larger congresses. Its title is 'Adoremus' – 'Let us Adore'... The last national one was in 1908. Clearly that was quite a while back, it is therefore appropriate that we revisit our understanding of Jesus' Presence.

Many great saints and inspirational people find their solace and consolation in front of Jesus in the Monstrance. Saint Mother Teresa began and ended her day in this manner.

The aim, therefore is to rejuvenate Eucharistic Adoration as a source and strength for our lives and our mission that of making present the love and compassion of Jesus in our Society.



As Christmas ends and Lent requiring metanoia , a change of heart, begins, some people make it a practise to attend Mass more often, always a blessing. Some are reconciled with the Lord in Confession, but sadly spending time with the Lord in church is not often part of the Lenten agenda. Maybe this Lent this could be something to practise. Most, if not all our churches have periods set aside for prayer of this kind. 'Could you not spend one hour' in this way, with the Lord? You will be greatly blessed and graced. **Try it..!!!** Halina Holman

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We would be delighted to hear from you if you have a
topic that you feel we should cover or wish to contribute

Pope Francis

Moreover I want to encourage, everyone to visit, if possible, every day, amid life's difficulties the Blessed Sacrament of infinite love of Christ His mercy, preserved in our churches and often abandoned. Speak filially to Him. Listen in silence and peacefully entrust yourself to Him. I cannot count the amount of conversion/reversion stories I have heard that revolve around people's experience of Adoration. Many of these stories recount how they had fallen away from the faith for years, and then "somehow" found their way to Adoration. Virtually all of these stories speak of moving into an ALL-IN "devout" relationship with God from that point on ... no matter where their faith was at prior to this experience.

Very simply ... We have lost a sense of the supernatural, and Adoration restores this!!

Rome 2016

A Touch Divine

A touch, one moment in time

A Touch Divine

No healing potion or wordy flow

No special magic or unearthly glow

One man to another goes, in silence,

Silence the deaf man already knows

Silently grace flows on the lips and ear

Sound penetrates and speech grows.

'Ears of the deaf unsealed'

All is healed

Blessed moment may we it know

May we hear the command

Go, Love and heal all.

H.H. 9.2015 ©

Feasts in February

1st St. Brigid

2nd The Presentation of the Lord, Candlemas

3rd St. Blaise

5th St. Agatha

6th Ss. Paul Miki and Comp.

8th St. Jerome 10th St. Scholastica

11th Sunday; World Day of Prayer for the Sick

14th Ash Wednesday (Fast and Abstinence)

17th Seven Servite Founders

18th First Sunday of Lent

21st St. Peter Damien 22nd Chair of St. Peter

25th Second Sunday of Lent

28th St. Oswald

