

## Report on Adoremus: The Eucharistic Congress at Liverpool

7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Delegates from St Margaret's Parish, Carshalton Beeches were Yumna Joubaily (Y) and Gerald Soane (G) Pauline Soane was able to join them, making use of a ticket passed on by a friend who could not attend.

### **DAY 1**

There was a short Welcome and Opening prayer, conducted by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and the Papal nuncio.

There were three talks in the morning; then there were three sets of Presentations in the afternoon, whereby you could attend three out of nine symposia on different subjects.

There were special prayers offered for the repose of the soul of Fr John Mulligan, whose death the previous day dismayed all who knew him; especially the Southwark contingent. (We will be informed of this funeral.)

The three talks in the morning were:

1. The Scriptural Context – Canon Mervyn Tower
2. The Eucharist in the Life of the Church – Canon David Oakley
3. Teaching the Eucharist – Sr Margaret Atkins CRSA.

The Presentation Sets were:

#### Set 1

- a) Preparing Children for the Sacraments of Initiation – Dora Nash (**Yumna attended - Pauline also**)
- b) The Ministry of the Eucharist in hospitals and prisons – Bishop Paul Mason and Fr Paul Douthwaite
- c) Eucharistic Liturgical Rites outside Mass – Fr Paul Gunter (**Gerald Attended**)

#### Set 2

- a) The Eucharist as a sign of the Church's Unity: 'One Bread, One Body' revisited: Dr Dominic Robson SJ and National Ecumenical Officers – Presbyterians, Salvation Army, C of E and RC. (**G and Y attended – P also**)
- b) A Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace: The Eucharist and Social Justice: DR Phil McCarthy CSAN
- c) Teaching Children to Pray before the Eucharist – Julie Rourke.

#### Set 3

- a) John Henry Newman and Blessed Dominic Barberi: An Historical moment in Eucharistic Adoration – Fr Ian Ker (**G and Y attended**)
- b) Musical Resources for Adoration - Dr Christopher McElroy
- c) Extraordinary Ministers and Holy Communion: Ministry and Practice – Fr Chris Thomas and Sr Moira Meeghan

## TALKS

### **First Keynote Talk: The Scriptural Context – Canon Mervyn Tower**

The transcript of this excellent talk runs to fourteen pages. Here are the published Introduction and the Conclusion. It was a talk that needs to be re-studied, bible in hand.

The full talk may be accessed at the CBCEW Adoremus page:

<http://catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Special-Events/Adoremus-National-Eucharistic-Pilgrimage/Symposium-Day/Scriptural-Context>

#### INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist brings together some of the most important and significant elements of our humanity and shared Christian faith: gathering together in the presence of the Lord, worshipping him in the Holy Spirit, proclaiming and responding to the Scriptures, remembering the life, teaching, death, Resurrection and glorification of Jesus, thanksgiving, sacrifice, petition, eating and drinking the life-giving force of God himself, strengthening resolve and purpose in life, outreach to the poor and vulnerable and awaiting the glorious end of time. It is all embracing.

The Scriptures along with the Tradition of the Church are the Revelation of God to which we respond in faith (Dei Verbum 1-10). But the Scriptures – written by real human beings – are a mirror of our human nature and needs and also a source of insight into every aspect of our personal and community existence. I would like first to draw out some of these fundamental aspects to demonstrate how the Scriptures give us insights into our human nature, including central aspects intertwined with the Eucharist (Section A). Then I intend to examine the Biblical historical (Section B), linguistic (Section C) and specific Jewish contexts and backgrounds (Section D) to the Eucharist. After this I will discuss some conclusions. Overall, it is good to remember that if we are going to deepen our understanding of the Scriptural background to the Eucharist and Adoration, then we need to read and re-read the texts in question and try to put them in their wider context, rather than just note the Scripture references.

#### CONCLUSION

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament give us clear insights into the background context and major elements of the Eucharist in se and in its structural and liturgical developments. The weight which is given to these elements is linked with the specific hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures as elaborated in the tradition of each separate Church community. For Catholic Christianity the Biblical (Old Testament and New Testament) bases of the Eucharist are essential for its understanding, along with the on-going Tradition of the Church. At the same time, the Eucharist forcibly encourages us to focus on the Scriptures. There has not been enough recognition of this in much of contemporary liturgical approaches to the Eucharist nor in many of our Parishes of the crucial intrinsic synergy between the Eucharist and the Scriptures, especially with regards to the Old Testament.

2. The Eucharist, with its human and biblical backgrounds, is a specifically important reflection for the relationship of the Catholic Church with Judaism. Such reflection is not merely

necessary for the understanding of the background of the Passover and other historical developments of Judaism and Jewish Liturgy. It is also necessary to understand the Church in relationship with Judaism today and the intertwining of the Old and New Testaments for Christians. In the Synagogue in Mainz in 1980, St. John Paul II proclaimed: "The meeting of the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God (cf. Romans 11:29) with those of the New is at the same time a dialogue within our Church, that is to say, between the first and the second part of her Bible." Catholics and Jews are united in a deep veneration of the presence of God in our midst, for the Jews especially in the Torah and for Catholics in the Eucharist.

3. Different Churches have different approaches to the nature and frequency of their celebration of the Eucharist. For the Catholic Church the Eucharist is the source and summit of the theology and liturgical life of the Church (LG 11; CCC 1324). As such it is all embracing and includes all biblical/theological themes and their elaboration, not merely the ones mentioned above. The Scriptures and the Eucharist are like a reflection of one another: "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the Sacred Liturgy, to partake of the Bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ" (Dei Verbum, 21). It is as though the Host and Chalice have imprinted upon them the Readings of the Lectionary at each Mass.

## **Second Keynote Talk: The Eucharist in the Life of the Church – Canon David Oakley**

This was another very good talk, rather shorter than Canon Tower's, being only seven pages in transcript, and was pitched at a less academically minded audience. We show here only the introductory and closing remarks, although these were not formally an Introduction or a Conclusion. The full talk may be downloaded from:

<http://catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Special-Events/Adoremus-National-Eucharistic-Pilgrimage/Symposium-Day/Eucharist-and-the-Church>

### **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, quoting the words of the Council Fathers in the Second Vatican Council<sup>1</sup>, 'the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life'<sup>2</sup>. Living our faith in this present moment belongs to a rich and developing tradition. This is certainly true when we consider the Eucharist within the life of the Church. And what is the catalyst for this developing tradition into which we are immersed today? In his Principles of Catholic Theology, Joseph Ratzinger suggests, the seat of all faith is the "memoria Ecclesiae"<sup>3</sup>. This is because the notion of memory brings together being and time. Memory is at the heart of the Eucharist. Christian faith is certainly about remembering, the continual calling to mind what the Lord has done for us. This may surprise you, for Joseph Ratzinger, the theologian who became Pope, this remembering in faith is best expressed within the ministry of catechesis. He tells us this, 'the Church's creed has been developed, above all, from the existential context of the catechumenate, and it was in this context that it was promulgated.'<sup>4</sup> Catechesis then, is not about the transmission of intellectual statements of faith, constantly needing to be updated<sup>5</sup>. Catechesis is about bringing others into our faith experience of the saving events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. As Ratzinger puts it, the Church 'came into existence because someone lived and suffered his word; by reason of his death, his word is understood as word

par excellence, as the meaning of all being, as logos.<sup>6</sup> So being a Christian means, 'the life embraced the word, and the word formed the life.'<sup>7</sup> In this sense, terms such as progressive or traditionalist really have little meaning. Again, in the words of Ratzinger, 'What we Christians must learn from Christ is, therefore, neither revolution nor traditionalism but something quite different: that we are to read Scripture from the Father's perspective, that is, from the perspective of a concrete relationship to God.'<sup>8</sup>

1 Lumen Gentium 11; 2 CCC1324; 3 Ratzinger J, Principles of Catholic Theology, 23 ;4 ibid, 26; 5 cf ibid, 26; 6 ibid, 26; 7 ibid, 26; 8 ibid, 98

#### CLOSING REMARKS

Offering up our sufferings, fasting and prayer, are the three most powerful forms of joining ourselves to Jesus in his Eucharistic presence. We can use these means: to strengthen ourselves against temptation, to grow in holiness, to find perspective in our lives, to win others to Christ, to achieve what we seek for the communities we live in, to become the ecclesial sacrament of Christ presented to us in the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

#### **Third Keynote Talk: Teaching the Eucharist - Sister Margaret Atkins**

There will be a transcript of her talk in due course. Meanwhile, we have two reports on her presentation, viewed from different perspectives.

Yumna Joubaily reported as follows:

Sister Margaret opened with the emotive statement 'Was ever a command so obeyed... this action has been carried out for every human need....for kings at their crowning, for a prisoner on the scaffold, the sick old woman afraid to die... tremulously, gorgeously, week by week, month by month across all parishes of Christendom ...we should teach this practice 'faithfully and unfailingly' - but how can we achieve this? We can only achieve this in a suitable environment.

We have to start with our society. In comment on a picture of a busy station, Sister Margaret asked 'How many are eating? How many are talking on their mobile phones; how many are distracted or multi-tasking? Our own experiences of the everyday practices shape the way we understand and learn. Our own society limits our understanding and ability to relate to the Eucharist authentically. The more we form healthy human communities, the better we can preserve our God given practices. The life and work of Christ is given as food and drink as a meal, but in a fast food society. In the following slide of a hamburger she described the juxtaposition of the burger versus the Eucharistic experience. With fast food, there is an ignorance of food as a gift. There is a sense of possessive individualism with fast food. A burger is prepared; we buy it. There is now a commercial relationship; we own it. We choose the burger and we make an active choice.

But how does this individual act relate to others? The act of eating a burger is a lone pastime. We buy it not for health but to satisfy hunger. We do not associate it with any other task. The philosopher Leon Kass said that wolfing down food ignores the sacrifice in preparing it. In 'The Hungry Soul 'We see that eating becomes mere feeding.' Then insensitivity is learned at the table. So let's consider eating. Let's move from this to good eating where consumption is replaced by reverence. This food is produced by effort and sacrifice, and it is received as a

gift from the host. This gift is sanctified, indeed all 'commensality in antiquity is based in religious element.'

In the Eucharist we cannot choose when to have it at any time, we cannot choose our own menu or where we eat. We also need to consider how children learn from us. Sister Margaret then described a child called Tim who wanted desperately to eat the last ham sandwich of the meal but thoughtfully offered it around for others to enjoy, so depicting the giving up of self in a shared meal. The table is an opportunity for relating to others even just in the act of eating together. It is a builder of identity. We identify other cultures by what we eat. Sometimes this is done rather unkindly. Two examples are of people from Wigan being called 'Pie eaters' and those from Preston known as 'Cabbage Cutters.'

In a typical meal, nourishment is the purpose of a meal. There is a natural rhythm of eating/not eating throughout the day. We eat to be restored and as Leon Kass said 'good habits and thoughtful attitude will have far reaching benefits.' We can learn good habits, for example conversation and relating to each other.

Christ chose a meal to represent him in the form of bread and wine. Why did he choose bread and wine? In the new covenant no blood was shed except for his and this was further supported by the fruit and seeds command in the early Bible. Bread is and was a staple diet of all, rich and poor. Bread is breakable and shareable. The word companion has its roots in this, roughly translating to those we 'share our bread with'. On Earth he was physically present as man and he chose to join with us in the present as the Lord of Creation, fruit of the Earth. As the main theme of Mass, indeed 'through him all things were made.'

When we consider ownership and self, in Christ's public life he chose to think first of the needs of others and gave of himself in this way in a life of self-giving. In the lead up to the crucifixion he said 'Father take this cup from me,' at the moment of sanctification. This moment is the giving up of self-choice and the transubstantiation. The resurrection is the deepening of this relationship. Union is brought about by taking part in the Eucharist. The broken bread is both the symbol and the true body of that union. The food blessed by his Word nourishes us spiritually so that we 'are what we eat'. Nourishment allows us to go out and follow our mission in the World at the dismissal after Mass.

Unity in the Eucharist should be the ultimate aim of bringing about unity in our church, although this is used to divide or define. Consider then, is it a meal or a sacrifice? It is a meal that helps us to participate in the sacrificial work of Christ. If we look deeper we can see the deeper unity. Sister Margaret feels that it is both a sacrificial memorial and a sacred banquet at the same time. Difficulty in understanding this concept lies with the themes of Adoration and the Eucharist. Does Adoration mean losing the meaning of the activity of the gathering? Sister Margaret ventured the view of one retired priest that it can objectify the activity. That being said, it would be agreed that it remains the most powerful way of prayer, although solitary. Rather less controversially perhaps, Eucharistic Adoration is known by its fruits therefore. It can be improved both by our teaching and our capacity to learn in a Eucharistic community. This was witnessed first-hand when some Polish people asked for their traditional Easter food to be blessed by the priest. This is an example of a truly Eucharistic

gathering as the whole community takes part. It is perhaps this sharing of the family meal that passes on and teaches the true meaning of the Eucharist. The teaching is deepening of knowledge passed down, rather than that imparted through the classroom base.

To conclude Sister Margaret said that 'Just as many grains come together to make one loaf and many grapes hang as a bunch ... they come together to make bread and wine.' We reply Amen after the receiving of the Body and Blood and in so doing you say Amen to what you are - in that you are a member of the Body of Christ. 'So your Amen is true.'

#### *Author's note*

*This is a partially paraphrased account of Sister Margaret Atkins' speech. Some quote markings are omitted for the flow of this piece .It is reasonably complete per each phrase however. It aims to impart the actual or implied meaning as the author understood it and apology is made for slight or material errors, and in the hope that the greater good of passing on the essence of the knowledge gained excuses this.*

Gerald Soane's report, below, was based on notes taken from a recording of her talk, which may be found at: <http://catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Special-Events/Adoremus-National-Eucharistic-Pilgrimage/Symposium-Day/Teaching-the-Eucharist>

Sister Margaret quoted an Anglican Benedictine monk, Dom Gregory Dix about the centrality of the Eucharist across the world and down the centuries for all classes of people and occasions. She also quoted from Rowan Williams about the impossibility of imparting Christian teaching and moral perspectives in an environment that refuses the experiences that will make sense of them.

Our everyday experiences are the context in which we try to teach the Eucharist. What type of environment will make sense of the content we want to pass on when we want to make sense of the Eucharist?

Considering our society Sr Margaret presented a picture of people on a railway station concourse, where all the people were all doing different things. The striking features was that (almost) none of them was interacting with anyone else.

Our experiences of society shape the way we are able to understand and learn. If our society has limitations, that will affect our ability to teach about the Eucharist authentically. The more we form healthy communities, the better we can preserve our God given traditions. Grace, as well as building on nature, also builds on culture. Our everyday experiences and practises shape the way we are able to understand and learn.

She then discussed our culture of eating and how that might affect our understanding of the Eucharist and the life of Christ. She considered eating under the headings:

TIME

CREATION

OWNERSHIP & SELF

RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY

## NOURISHMENT AND PURPOSE.

Fast Food – She showed a Picture of a hamburger

Sr Margaret quoted from a Daily Mail article that stated that 1/10 families never sit to have an evening meal together; 36% all eat at different times; 16% wanted to watch something on TV. And of those that do eat together, only half have the whole family around the table; indeed, many families do not even have a dining table.

**TIME.** The burger does not need to be eaten at an appointed time and takes little time to consume.

**CREATION.** Little thought need be given to who created it or its origins.

**OWNERSHIP & SELF.** In a society of possessive individualism it simply results from a commercial transaction. I buy it and now it is mine – mine alone.

**RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY.** It contributes to neither.

**NOURISHMENT AND PURPOSE.** We don't think of eating it necessarily as nourishment – it fills a want at that time and might not be nutritious.

Quotation from 'The Hungry Soul', by Leon Kass: Meals before the TV turn eating into seething. Incivility, insensitivity and ingratitude that can infect all other aspects of our life.

## COMMUNAL EATING

Good eating replaces consumption with an attitude of reverence and thoughtlessness with gratitude.

**TIME** For a communal meal you must be there on time and take time to savour the food. We have to honour a common timetable. We cannot choose where to eat.

**CREATION;** with a proper family meal you are more likely to appreciate where the components came from. Also, the relationship between destruction and giving life.

**OWNERSHIP & SELF.** Someone there has given their time to prepare it. The meal is not a commercial exchange but a gift. Maybe even a gift from God also.

**RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY.** Eating together, thinking about the other people at table. It is where children learn their manners; engaging in relationships and community. An opportunity to deepen relationships. Eating together with others is a builder of identity.

**NOURISHMENT AND PURPOSE.** The traditional meal is nourishing and purposeful. A sense that we eat so that we are restored for the purpose of our work. We cannot choose what to eat.

For the devout Jew there was no meal that was not seen as being sacred. 'All eating at table in antiquity has a religious element.'

Christ chose a meal to institute the Eucharist; faith building on culture. The food that he chose: bread and wine, which were the staff of life, representing also elements of food that involved no bloodshed (Genesis 1:30) Bread is very shareable; share it with our companions (con pane). Wine a symbol of celebration and joy.

**TIME.** God at the incarnation is involving himself in time. At the mass we are there in Time.

**CREATION.** The same Lord is there who is Lord of Creation: Blessed are you Lord, God of all creation...

**OWNERSHIP & SELF.** Christ's public life, one of giving himself for others and having compassion for them, is told in the Liturgy of the Word.

## RELATIONSHIP AND COMMUNITY.

The Resurrection symbolises the deepening of friendship, and communion as a communion with the presence of Christ.

Pentecost is that moment of signifying the presence and role of the Eucharist. Our Communion with God and our communion as the Body of Xt.

In the early church that sense of Union was keenly felt. Church fathers pondered the way in which the broken bread is a symbol of our unity<sup>1</sup>.

Unity – the mass should be the ultimate means for bringing about our unity. It is both a meal and a sacrifice. The sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated – the sacred banquet of communion see CCC.

NOURISHMENT AND PURPOSE –the sacraments and especially the Eucharist – food for the mission. Our own flesh and blood are nourished by the Eucharist. We are what we eat.

We are sent out nourished by the Eucharist to carry out our mission.

ADORATION is a very powerful way of praying and reflecting on the meaning of the mass. It is done as a way of taking it in as an extension of the Eucharist. It encourages us to build Eucharistic communities in which we can teach and pass on the Eucharistic tradition and live our lives as ones of love and reconciliation.

## PRESENTATIONS

In the afternoon we each attended three Presentations (out of nine)

### GROUP ONE

**First Presentation (GDS) Eucharistic Liturgical Rites outside of Mass:** Father Paul Gunter OSB<sup>2</sup>

In considering Eucharistic liturgical rites outside of Mass, this presentation focussed on the Worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass, its value and meaning to us today, alongside how Adoration of the Blessed Eucharist is interconnected with the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

Alternative Presentations in the first group were:

**Preparing Children for the Sacraments of Initiation:** Dora Nash<sup>3</sup>

Preparing children for their First Holy Communion in a completely Christocentric way, maximising the opportunity of sacramental catechesis to help the children encounter Jesus and the Church, in full accordance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

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<sup>1</sup> 'After all, just as many grains are mixed into one loaf in order to produce the visible appearance of bread, as though what holy scripture says about the faithful were happening: They had one soul and one heart in God (Acts 4:32); so too with the wine. Brothers and sisters, just remind yourselves what wine is made from; many grapes hang in the bunch, but the juice of the grapes is poured together in one vessel. That too is how the Lord Christ signified us, how he wished us to belong to him, how he consecrated the sacrament of our peace and unity on his table.' (Augustin 272)

<sup>2</sup> A monk of Douai Abbey, Fr Gunter has a doctorate from the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy in Rome where he taught for many years. He is Secretary of the Department of Christian Life and Worship of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and parish priest of Our Lady and St Joseph Alcester.

<sup>3</sup> Author of popular Sacramental Preparation Courses Confirmed in the Faith and Jesus Comes to Me. She was Head of RE for over twenty years at Newman's Oratory School, now near Reading.

**The ministry of the Eucharist in hospitals and prisons:** The Right Reverend Paul Mason, former Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Southwark. Fr Paul Douthwaite is the Bishops' Conference National Chaplain for Prisons.

These presentations focused on how through the Sacraments, especially that of the Eucharist, those who are serving time in prison, or an extended period in hospital, are united with the worshipping church.

## **GROUP TWO**

**Second Presentation (GDS and Yumna): The Eucharist as a sign of the Church's Unity: "One Bread, One Body" revisited: Dr Dominic Robinson SJ<sup>4</sup>, assisted by Canon John O'Toole<sup>5</sup> and Anglican, Methodist and Salvation Army ecumenical colleagues.**

This presentation focussed on the Eucharist as a sign of unity and revisited the teaching document "One Bread, One Body" issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland in 1998. The non-Catholic confreres talked about the interpretations of their own denominations, (and not very convincingly in one case.)

Alternative Presentations in the Second group were:

**A kingdom of justice, love and peace: The Eucharist and Social Justice: Dr Phil McCarthy<sup>6</sup>**

Addressing how the Eucharist changes the way we can see the world and the demands it makes on how we should live.

**Teaching children to pray before the Eucharist: Julie Rourke<sup>7</sup>**

Sharing ways in which we can teach children to pray before the Eucharist.

## **GROUP THREE**

**Third Presentation (GDS and Yumna): "John Henry Newman and Dominic Barberi: An historical moment in Eucharistic Adoration": Fr Ian Ker<sup>8</sup>**

This talk described how Blessed Dominic Barberi's personal holiness was the deciding factor that brought Blessed John Henry Newman into the church. But Newman knew little or nothing about Catholic practices and devotions when he converted; he was delighted to discover the practise of Eucharistic Adoration and that he could sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle and at Exposition.

Unfortunately the amplification was very poor, or Fr Ker did not know how to use it, and we heard very little of this talk.

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<sup>4</sup> Teacher of Dogmatic and Pastoral Theology at Heythrop College and Allen Hall Seminary and the Vice-Chair of the Society for Ecumenical Studies and of Churches Together in Westminster.

<sup>5</sup> National Ecumenical Officer for the Catholic Bishops' Conference; a Southwark Priest.

<sup>6</sup> Chief Executive of Caritas Social Action Network, the domestic social action agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. He is a former family doctor with a strong interest in Catholic Social Teaching

<sup>7</sup> Primary Religious Education Advisor and Section 48 Inspector for the Christian Education Department at the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Before this, she was a primary school teacher for many years. Julie has worked closely with colleagues from the Christian Education Department to share ways in which we can teach children to pray before the Eucharist.

<sup>8</sup> Generally regarded as the leading authority on the life and writings of Bl John Henry Newman, on whom he has written the definitive biography as well as several other books. He is also the author of the definitive biography of G. K. Chesterton and other books. He has taught both English literature and theology at universities in the US and UK, including most recently Oxford. He recently retired as parish priest of Burford in Oxfordshire.

Alternative Presentations in the third group were:

**Musical Resources for Adoration:** Dr Christopher McElroy, Director of Music at Liverpool Cathedral  
This presentation surveyed music suitable for use during Adoration in Parishes.

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: Ministry and Practice:** Fr Chris Thomas<sup>9</sup> and Sr Moira Meeghan<sup>10</sup>

Both are members of the Archdiocesan Tutor Group providing initial training and in service for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

## DAY 2

After Welcome and Opening Prayer, as on Day 1, there were two Keynote Addresses by Bishop Robert Barron, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and the founder of the Word on Fire evangelisation series that makes comprehensive use of the internet and Facebook to disseminate sound teaching. There were other items also during the day.

### **Keynote 1: Bishop Robert Barron - a dissertation on the different parts of the mass.**

The first thing we learned was that Bishop Robert had been a Beatles Fan all his life.

He referred to the current very painful time and the need to return to the fundamentals and most of all Christ in the Eucharist.

The mass is the source and summit of the Christian life yet 75%-80% of Catholics stay away from the source and summit of the Christian faith.

Vatican II wanted a revival in the mass. Calling back to the mass is a central concern of the church. Even a lot of mass-goers fail to understand what the mass is; it is a supreme mystery.

#### General Remarks

The Mass is a privileged encounter with Jesus Christ; Christianity is a relationship with a person. There is no more intense encounter with Christ than in the mass.

If you invite someone to your house you first have a conversation and only then do you sit down to the meal.

‘Let us prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries’. Quotation: ‘A mystery is a concrete something that when you bump into it puts you in contact with a divine reality.’  
Bread, wine, water are the concrete things, as are all of the sacramental and the actions and gestures.

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<sup>9</sup> A priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool and the Director of its ‘Irenaeus Project’.

<sup>10</sup> A Sister of St Mary of Namur and former school head who joined the Irenaeus Project in 2015.

The mass is a supreme form of play. Play is the most serious thing in life. There are actions which we carry out for a particular end, like repairing the car so you can drive it = useful things. Yet listening to music is not useful but it is beautiful in itself. Philosophy is another example. The mass is 'wasting time with God – the highest form of play.'

The mass is the supreme form of worship. Adoremus: ad ora – mouth to mouth = mouth to mouth with God. The whole of the bible is about how to adore the Lord. Otherwise we will be mouth to mouth with things like money etc. When we are mouth to mouth with God, peace tends to break out in me and around me.

Supreme form of worth-ship. What is our highest worth? When we come to mass it is God.

Supreme call and response between man and God: ref the Song of Songs. The Mystical Body becomes more connected, more unified through the mass.

### A Walk Through of the Mass

Introductory Rites: by the very act of gathering we are initiating the Mass – we all come together in our great diversity. In coming together we become the Ecclesia =called out from something (the World).

Dorothy Day, before she became a Catholic, was deeply moved by the diversity of people all together in the Catholic Church.

Singing: this is not incidental but it is one of the ways in which this Ecclesia expresses itself in harmony. (When we sing together we don't sound too bad somehow). In our singing we express the harmonic quality of the ecclesia.

Our singing is an echo of the angelic singing; this is not just sentimentality; this harmony that comes from right praise mirrors the singing of the angels around the throne of God; they live in Adoration: 'May our voices be one with theirs as we say....'

The mass is meant be the place where heaven meets earth; where heaven and earth embrace.

The Sign of the Cross: we claim ourselves as belonging to the Trinitarian God.

In the West – I invent myself. How boring that is. I do not belong to myself; I belong to the Trinity; I live in the Trinitarian love and the sign of the cross on my body is a sign of that. (I am not just soul; that is heresy; my body is contained by my soul.)

Greeting: the priest operates 'in persona Christi capuit.' He puts on vestments to signify this. The priest then is greeting people in the person of Christ the Head. 'And with your spirit' refers to the grace that the priest received at his ordination.

Confiteor: then we acknowledge our sins. We see our sins when looking into the light, not looking away from it, as with car windscreen driving into and out of the sun. If you think you're OK, then you're driving away from the light. So as we turn towards the light we acknowledge our sins and say 'Lord have mercy'. We Christians happily acknowledge our sins.

Gloria: then that most beautiful prayer; 'Glory to God in the Highest'. All you need to know about someone you can find out by asking them, 'What do you worship?' Only when my highest is God will peace break out in me.

Liturgy of the Word: this is a conversation – we listen and then speak back.

The Christian distinctiveness is this odd claim that God has spoken. That is the Biblical God; one who speaks: in creation, in history, but especially in the people of Israel and then in the Church; but in this the final age he has spoken to us through his Son (St Paul). During the liturgy of the word we listen to this God who speaks to us.

You are part of this great story but learn your part in it – and we need to hear it over and over again – that we might discover who we are.

The First Reading – Marcian heresy was an early heresy that taught a version of Christianity without the OT, and not even all of the NT in his case. This heresy is current.

You are not going to get Jesus right if you ignore the OT. The Gospel statements, 'according to the writings', are references to the OT. Luke 22 Emmaus – He sets their hearts on fire by going through the OT and showing the prophecies that referred to him.

The Responsorial Psalm: allows us to respond to the Word we have just heard. Psalms are the songbook of the Church. Anger, frustration, exuberant joy, hatred for enemies, great love for God, celebration of life; it is all there. You are talking back to God about what you have heard.

The Second Reading: is normally apostolic – the words of people who knew Our Lord; people who want to grab you by the shoulders and tell you something. A Church of England bishop wrote, 'When St Paul preached there were riots – when I preach they offer me tea.'

The Gospel: is the Word person speaking, which is why we herald it with an alleluia and greet it with special solemnity.

The homily is a continuation of the readings, unpacking the words spoken but also representing the people to God.

The Creed is a one page summary of the Bible: creation, reincarnation, dying, rising – and we say I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE, I BELIEVE ; this is our moment to state our acceptance of the faith with our whole body.

Prayers of the Faithful: having heard all of the liturgy of the word we come back to God expressing our confidence in God that he will respond to our requests.

### The Eucharist

We are now ready to make the great act of sacrifice. Sacrifice was a basic element of all ancient religions. Those people, other than the Jews, were trying to placate their Gods. The logic of sacrifice is that we symbolically return to God something that he has given us.

God does not need our sacrifice. God could not need something from us; by these acts we become rightly ordered, aligned to God. We benefit from sacrifice – not God.

Then we gather and bring forward gifts for the sacrifice: bread, wine, water and money! That money represents sacrifice because it is money we could have used for something else. It stands for work.

Bread and wine derive from the whole of the Cosmos. Bread, baker, oven, flour, wheat, seed, rain, earth, sun, the whole of the Solar system. Similarly, the wine. So these represent all of creation. 'Blessed are you Lord God of all creation...'

Feeding of the five thousand – a few loaves and fish – what god does not need, he now multiplies for the spiritual feeding of the World.

Karl Rahner – 'The Eucharist is a word event'. The real presence is a word event. Christ becomes present by the power of the Word. By Christ's word they become transubstantiated. God's words are active; they make something happen.

Even our word can have profound effects but God's words bring things into being, e.g. 'Let there be light' – and there was light. Our language tends to be passive and descriptive but God's word is creative (Aquinas.) Jesus is the Word made flesh. 'Little Girl, get up'. 'Lazarus, come out'. 'My son, your sins are forgiven.'

So at the last Supper: 'This is my body' – it becomes His body; This is the chalice of my blood' – it becomes His blood.

Note the change in person from third to first in the Institution Narrative; On the night before he suffered...' to 'Take this all of you...' – at that latter moment the priest is most fully in persona Christi capuit.

What we now give the Father, not just symbols but the Son; that is the moment of supreme Adoration. God does not need our sacrifice but any sacrifice we make now comes back to us – we are then fed with the body and blood of Christ.

Having received the body and blood of the Lord we are now 'sent out'. *Ite missa est*. Nobody in the Bible is ever given an experience of God without being sent. Fulton Sheen: 'Our lives are lived between two great commands from Jesus: Come and Go.'

Henri de Lubac: 'the most important words in the mass after those of the consecration are *Ite missa est*'. The world needs us to Christify it (*Lumen gentium*:)

Right at our doors is mission territory and we are the missionaries. That is the missionary purpose of the mass.

## **Keynote 2: Bishop Robert Barron – a dissertation on Sanctity.**

### Find the Centre

Bishop Robert reflected on rose windows in different cathedrals, especially one at Notre Dame Cathedral, where Christ is at the centre. He is seated on Our Lady's lap in the Notre Dame window. Bishop Robert visited it on the day that he arrived in Paris and every day thereafter when he was there as a student.

When Christ is unambiguously the centre of our lives, without competition, everything else will fall into place. : St Thomas Aquinas said the beautiful occurs at the intersection of three things – *integritas* = wholeness; *consonantia* = harmony and *claritas* = radiance'.

When Christ is the centre of your life your soul becomes beautiful. He explained the implication of these terms. If only one area of your life is off-kilter will affect the whole harmony of your life.

What is at the centre of your life? If it is not Christ, your life will be unsatisfactory. Make Jesus the master of your life in every respect.

Martha and Mary – why did Jesus upbraid Martha – it seems so unfair but the key is that Martha was anxious and upset about many things; Mary has chosen the one thing necessary. Mary was ordering her life to Christ<sup>11</sup>.

The demons in the Gospels speak in the plural; have you come to destroy us, e.g. the demoniac at Gazzara – 'We are Legion'. Diabolic comes from a word that means to scatter. Jesus is about bringing us back to harmonised unity.

Another common Cathedral painting is of the Wheel of Fortune. In the middle of that wheel is a depiction of Christ but on the rim of the wheel, at the top, is a King, with the word *Regno* (I reign); half way down –the word is *Regnavi* (I have reigned); at the bottom – the words are *Sum sine regno* (I am without power) and half way up, *Regnabo* (I shall reign).

That's life: there's not a lot we can do about it. Are we happy at the top: not really. Every point on the rim of the wheel is a point of anxiety. But if Christ is the centre, where we are on the wheel is relatively unimportant. 'Don't live your life on the rim of the wheel.'

Ground yourself on Christ, who never fails us: live in that state of indifference – divorced from any feelings about being on the rim of the wheel.

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<sup>11</sup> And of course Martha did also (John 11.27)

### Know you are a Sinner

Christian spiritual life never begins with sin. Realise, I am a sinner; 'We are all in the same boat and we are all seasick'; 'A saint is a man who believes he is a sinner.' Both by Chesterton. If we believe we are completely OK, then we think we don't need Christ.

Christ is the Light and it is the Light that shows us what is off-kilter in our lives

The woman at the well – you drink and get thirsty again – I want to give you water that will well up into eternal life. (John 4: 13-15). The heart is restless till it rests in God (Augustine).

Wealth, pleasure, power and honour are four great substitutes for God (Aquinas). When we get these things we always want more: we are never happy because we are wired for God. All these things wear off and cause us to become frustrated and 'thirsty again.'

The water Jesus offers her will make her happy. Because God is love; it is only by filling the soul with love that we are filled up.

Elijah and the 450 priests of Baal and the challenge he sets them. Like the priests we engage in false worship, for all our effort nothing happens and then we start wounding ourselves; Elijah just calls on God and things happen spectacularly.

### Attachment

St Ignatius Loyola: 'What would you do if your order was banned?' 'I should need 15 minutes before the Blessed Sacrament and then I should be OK'.

Initiation ceremonies are quite common in tribal cultures – they show young people, your life is not about you but is situated in your family, tribe, village etc.

Your life is not about you. It is not about self-discovery but about finding God's plan for you.

Bishop Barron believes that in each of us there is a pusilla anima and a magna anima: a small soul and a great soul. When we allow, our small soul causes us to be caved in about ourselves. But our great soul allows us to understand the truth of God. We need to move out of the confines of the pusilla anima into the world of God.

An example was Richard Rich<sup>12</sup> who, in a Man for All Seasons, wanted St Thomas More to obtain him a big job. More did find a job for him: an opening in the local school. Richard Rich was dismayed but More told him, 'You would be a good teacher' RR asked, 'Who would know?' More replied, 'Yourself, your friends, your pupils and God: not a bad public that.'

More played for the one public that matters: for God. At his trial in the play, More calls to Richard Rich, who has just committed perjury, and asks about the new badge of office he is wearing: Attorney General of Wales. Then comes the wonderful line, 'It profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world ---- but for Wales?'

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<sup>12</sup> One of the most despicable people of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.

'People may spend the whole of their lives climbing the ladder of success only to find, once they reach the top, that the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall.' (Thomas Merton)

Urs von Balthasar referred to the Ego-drama versus the theo-drama. Forget the ego-drama; concentrate on the theo-drama because you have a role in it – find what God wants you to do.

Jean Pierre de Caussade said that everything that happens to you is in some sense the will of god, (directly or indirectly.) Stop directing your life ego-dramatically but direct it theo-dramatically.

Find the Centre, know you're a sinner and realise your life is not about you.

### **Other Presentations on Day 2**

Various groups made presentations under the heading, 'Exploring the themes of the congress with Drama, Testimony and Presentations.

These included:

- Mary's Meals – most impressive; it stemmed from a Eucharistic shrine that his parents set up at their home in the Highlands
- Aid to the Church in Need - most impressive also.
- Three young people were interviewed and gave witness to their faith. They included a very impressive girl from Leeds University, whose evangelising work among her flat mates brought a tear to the eye; she is now a lay chaplain there.
- A silent drama based on the life of Christ.
- Nightfever, which started in Germany, invites people in from the streets into city centre churches where the Blessed Sacrament is exposed, to light a candle, say a prayer and if they want to , to talk to a priest. (It happens at St Patrick's, Soho and also at Holy Name, Manchester, I believe. I am told that many people respond positively.)

There might have been another one but if so I cannot remember what it was.

### **Adoration and Benediction**

The day ended with Exposition and Benediction with all of the Bishops in attendance, led by Cardinal Nichols, who preached very beautifully, emphasising the need for prayer to the Blessed Sacrament especially at this dark time for the Church. Over 6,000 people engaging in silent adoration is a wonderful sight.

### **DAY 3**

All three of us attended sung Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral of Christ the King at 11.30 am. It was a splendid celebration presided over by the Cardinal. Archbishop McMahon preached but none of us at the back could hear a word he said; the deaf had an advantage because there was sign language throughout the Congress.

### **Eucharistic Procession.**

This assembled outside the Cathedral after mass. Each mass could hold 2,000 and we would have been joined by people from the first mass and others from Liverpool and roundabout. It was reported by the BBC that 10,000 walked in the procession, led by the Cardinal holding the monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament. As the procession set out the heavens opened and made it into a penitential event. Being a 'wise virgin' I had brought a golf umbrella, which sheltered me from the rain, and much of Pauline also.

The procession finished with Benediction on the steps of the Cathedral, it which point the skies cleared and the sun began to shine.

The thing about such a procession is not that you feel good but that you are there to show witness to your love and worship for Our Blessed Lord in the Eucharist, even if it rains.

### **An Overall Personal Impression (GDS)**

This was an event not to be missed. We were left with so much to ponder, and it would have been worth being there just to hear Bishop Barron, who can put over profound doctrine in a most engaging way.

I need to revisit the transcripts of the first two talks on the Friday and study them bible in hand (or at least, the digital version that I have on my iPhone.)

Also, being there was an act of pilgrimage, and processing en masse on Sunday was both an act of worship and one of witness.

The next task is to spread the practise of extended Eucharistic worship across Southwark via the Lay Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration.

Gerald Soane and Yumna Joubaily  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018

PS We have tried to provide a synopsis of what went on at the Congress but there will undoubtedly be omissions and errors in our report, for which we apologise.