

Official Prayer of the 49th International Eucharistic Congress

God our Father,
We bless you and give you thanks
For your Son Jesus, the gift of your love
For the life of the world.

Watch over your Church as it celebrates in joy and hope
The 49th International Eucharistic Congress.

Renew our faith in the Holy Eucharist,
The memorial of your Son's death and resurrection.

May your Holy Spirit shed its light upon us
And grant us strength
To serve as faithful witnesses to the Gospel.

Nourish us with your Word and your Bread of Life
So that united with Mary,
The Mother of your Divine Son and Mother of the Church,
We will bear much fruit
For the salvation of the world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Gift of God

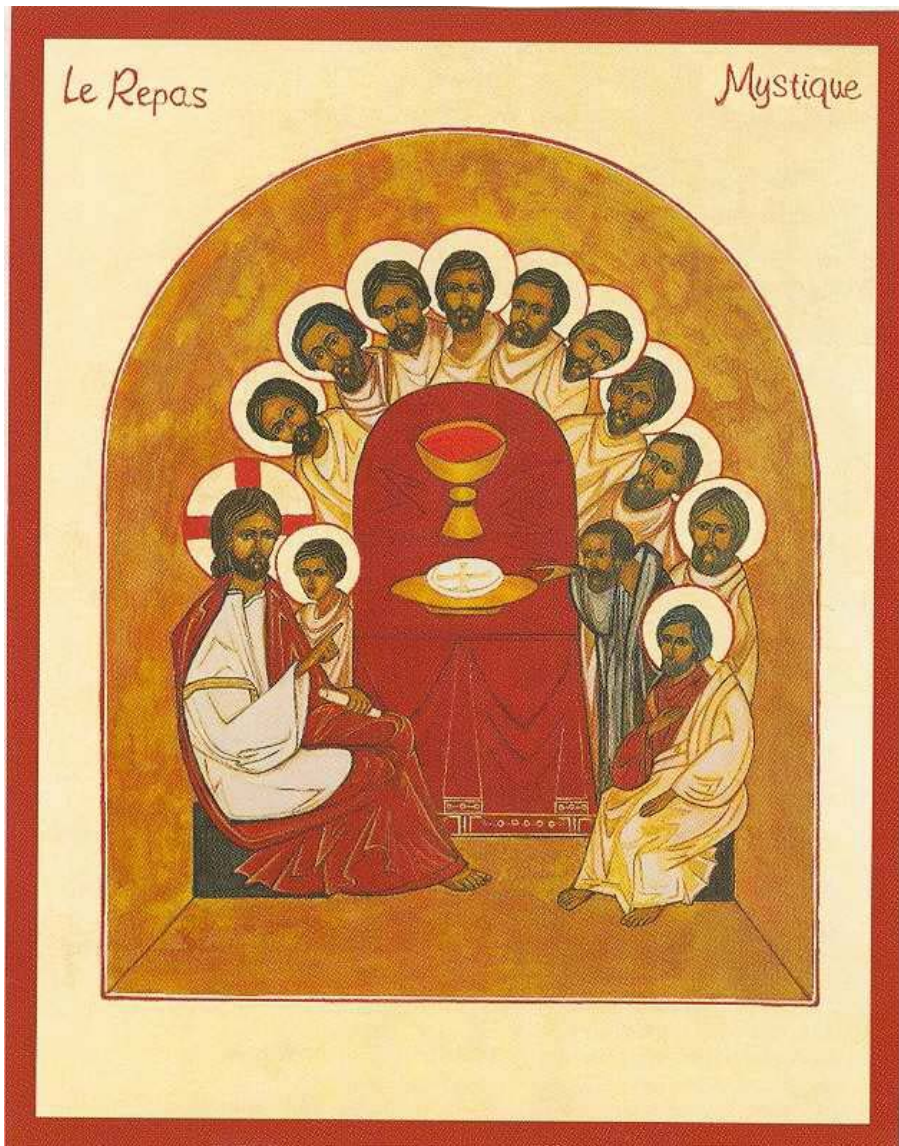
The Catholic Women's League of Canada Edmonton Diocesan Council



The Eucharist: Gift of God for the Life of the World Spiritual Program #2



(Based on materials from the 49th International Eucharistic Congress)



Eucharist as Mission for the Life of the World

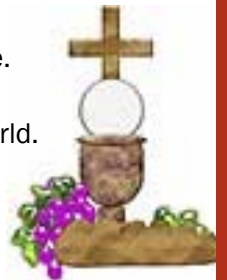
(Reader 5)

"Lord, may this sacrifice which has made our peace with you, advance the peace and salvation of all the world" (Eucharistic Prayer III).

Our participation in Sunday Eucharist is not for ourselves alone. We are fed with the Word of God, and we eat the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, so that we may become the hands and the feet and the voice and the face of Christ for the world. We are the People of God in the world. "By her very mission, 'the church ... travels the same journey as all humanity and shares the same earthly lot with the world: she is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God'." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 854). The One who feeds us empowers us to act for the good of the world.

PRAYER

ALL Lord God, tireless guardian of your people,
 you yearn to draw all people to you,
 to fill them with your holy Spirit of peace and love.
 Make this holy Eucharist bear fruit in us,
 that we become your faithful witnesses in the world.
 We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,
 Amen.



CLOSING PRAYER

ALL Wondrous God,
 Let our prayers be joined
 With the prayers of all those who pray today.
 Protect us as we travel home.
 As we place our lives in your holy hands.
 And when this day draws to an end,
 May we be able to reflect on it with holy satisfaction,
 Knowing that we have served you well.
 Amen.

Incarnation (Reader 4)

“And the word of God became flesh and lived among us.” (John 1.14)
“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” (Gal 2.20)

When we receive the Eucharist we gain an intimate connection to Christ who accepts us unconditionally and joins himself to our life by coming into our human body.

St. Augustine says, “Because He suffered for us, He left us in this Sacrament His Body and Blood, which He made even as He made us, also. For we have become His Body, and through His mercy we are what we receive.”

Our reception of the Eucharist transforms us, strengthens us in holiness and helps us to grow in the likeness of the risen Christ (who took our flesh). Having been fed at the table of the Lord we are sent forth to bring the Good News of salvation to the whole world.

PRAYER

ALL God ever faithful,
you have made a covenant with your people
in the gift of your Son,
who offered his body for us
and poured out his blood for the many.
Build up your Church
by deepening within us the life of your covenant
and by opening our hearts to those in need.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.
Amen



The Lord's grace is offered to us in a very special church event, the International Eucharistic Congress that will take place in Quebec City, from June 15 to June 22, 2008. The Congress provides us with an opportunity to renew our faith. We take time to prepare for this great event by embarking on a path of discovery, of catechesis and of celebration of Gift for the life of the world.

OPENING PRAYER

ALL God our Father,
look with favor on your Church
to celebrate the International Eucharistic Congress.
Help us to better welcome
the gift of your Son Jesus
in this memorial of his death and resurrection
which nourishes our lives as your children
and as brothers and sisters.
Send forth your Holy Spirit
that we may better appreciate this gift,
and become messengers of the life brought by Jesus
to our world searching for meaning.
In following the example of Mary, woman of the Eucharist,
may we always give thanks to you,
and make a continual offering of ourselves
to respond to your love and fulfill your will.
We ask this through Christ, your Son our Lord.
Amen.

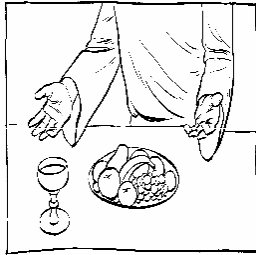
REFLECTION ON THE EUCHARIST

Source: 49th International Eucharistic Congress:
Reflection and prayer sheets for the Eucharistic Journey 2006 - 2008)

Eucharist as Gift of God (Reader 1)

God loved the world so much he gave us his only Son. What was this like for God? Can you imagine having created and loved so very much: the world, all creation, you and I, those living in the East, the West, North, South? God loved lavishly through the gift of Jesus, and then through continued life in the Risen Lord. The Spirit makes present this divine Gift each time we celebrate the Eucharist. But the Spirit sings

of divine Gift in every moment of life. This Gift of God is present wherever we gather in God's name. The Gift of God is hope for the world, compassion and care for the poor, victory over sin and death. God's love opens our eyes to see persons unloved, unwanted, used and abused. The Gift of God moves our hearts to shape life as intended in the Risen Lord.



PRAYER

ALL Pour out your Spirit, O God, over all the world to inspire every heart with knowledge and love of you. Grant that we who confess Jesus as Lord may shun whatever is contrary to this faith and give witness to your love that has saved us in Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Eucharist as Thanksgiving (Reader 2)

"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give him thanks and praise."

Every Sunday in every parish the whole community of believers gives thanks to God, again and again throughout the liturgy. The Church believes "... Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful and just in creation and in humanity ... Eucharist means first of all 'thanksgiving' " (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1359, 1360).

As disciples of Jesus, thanksgiving to God is our fundamental duty and right. The Spirit who lives in us prompts us to realize that all we are, and all we have, is God's gracious, undeserved gift of love; and so we bring our prayers of praise and gratitude to the Lord, who unites them to his own eternal act of thanksgiving to the Father.

PRAYER

ALL Wondrous God, Author of Life,
You meet all of our needs.
You nourish us with the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation.
Keep us ever mindful of Your gracious gift.
Receive our prayers of praise and thanksgiving,
Which we make through Christ our Lord,
In the Unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.
Amen

Eucharist: a body to build (Reader 3)

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10.16)

There is a grace that draws us to the table of the Lord, a joy and delight in knowing more is happening than the human eye can see. Life in the Risen Lord stems from this banquet feast. Scripture and Sacrament show us the way to live. The selfless offering of Christ invites us into total commitment. Commitment to what? To making the one body whole. Loving as Christ loved requires that we make relationships right. Eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood shifts our focus from self to others. To build the body is to improve the disunion in our lives, neighbourhoods, cities, world. We commit to seek places that cry out for reconciliation, healing, mending. We commit to build the body of Christ.

PRAYER

ALL Direct the course of this world, Lord God,
and order it in your peace,
that your Church may serve you
in serenity and quiet joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord
in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.