

Closing Address by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin

"We go Away Deepened in Our Faith"

DUBLIN - 17 JUNE 2012

One week ago we set out on a journey of prayer and reflection, of song and silence, of renewal of our hearts and renewal of our Church. In these eight days the Eucharist has awakened in our hearts something which went way beyond our plans and expectations.

The Eucharist has been the nourishment of the extraordinary sense of our communion with one another which those of us who have been in the RDS and are here today have experienced. We have experienced the communion of the Church. We have been enriched by our sharing with those who have joined us from over 120 countries. We have been joined by individuals, parish groups, and diocesan pilgrimages from all over Ireland. We have come as bishops and priests, deacons, religious men and women, families, lay people who animate much of our parish life, young people and children. Catholic communities right across Ireland, and with them many communities of other Christian denominations, have been praying with and for this event.

We are grateful for his presence here today of the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins, along with public figures from North and South.

We thank God for the experience of these days. We experienced the presence of Jesus with us in the Eucharist and the power of the Eucharist spread through every aspect of our assembly. We thank all those who contributed to this great event. We thank Father Kevin Doran, the General Secretary and his team for the extraordinary organization; we thank Father Damian McNiece who prepared all the liturgies and his team who coordinated them.

We thank the various choirs from all over Ireland. We thank the volunteers who made us welcome and assisted us and kept us in good cheer. We thank those who spoke at the various events. We thank those who celebrated our liturgies and those who ensured vital moments of silent prayer and adoration.

We thank Cardinal Marc Ouellet most sincerely for his tireless work during these days in Dublin, at Lough Derg and in Knock. We express through you our affection and loyalty and gratitude to Pope Benedict XVI and you can assure him of the prayers of all of us.

Our prayers and support go to the city and the diocese which will host the 51st International Eucharist Congress: Cebu City in the Philippines. We pray that the Congress will bring the same special blessing to that city and diocese and nation as this Congress has brought to Dublin and Ireland. I am told that in the monsoon season you can produce rain storms which equal or even surpass the ones we experienced in these last days.

The 50th International Eucharistic Congress was not just a seven-day event. Over the past year a great deal of catechesis has been carried out across Ireland in preparation for this week. Tomorrow we must start our catechesis anew to prolong the fruits of this Eucharistic Congress through a dynamic of New Evangelization. The extraordinary interest that was shown in these days for the workshops and catecheses of the Congress tells us just how much thirst there is in our Catholic community to deepen the understanding of our faith.

In my service at the Holy See I was privileged to work alongside two extraordinary superiors. One was a Polish Bishop, who in the early days of the Second World War, then a young Deacon, was arrested and interned for the entire period of the War in Dachau where he was the object of horrendous medical experiments. The other was a Vietnamese cardinal who was held in prison camps, often in total isolation, or under house arrest for over eleven years. Both had remarkable stories to tell of their ordeal, but the most striking thing that both spoke about was the Eucharist. Both told of the extraordinary lengths they went to in order to be able to celebrate or participate in the Eucharist in secret and how it was the Eucharist which gave them courage and hope in the darkest of days.

They spoke of the sadness they experienced on the days and months when it was not possible to experience the nourishment of the Eucharist.

We must go away from here with a renewed passion for the Eucharist. We must go away with a renewed love the Church. We must go away from here wanting to tell others not just about the Congress, but about Jesus Christ himself who in giving himself in sacrifice revealed to us that God is love. In the Eucharist we are captured into that self-giving love and are empowered to be loving people.

We go away deepened in our faith. In October next, Pope Benedict will inaugurate the Year of Faith. His words about that year can be a programme for us as we move forward from this Eucharistic Congress: "We want this Year to arouse in every believer the aspiration to profess the faith in fullness and with renewed conviction, with confidence and hope...; to intensify the celebration of the faith in the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist...; to ensure that believers' witness of life may grow in credibility; to rediscover the content of the faith that is professed, celebrated, lived and prayed.

In our prayers in these days we have kept in our prayers and in our hearts all those who suffered criminal abuse within the community of Christ's Church and all those who feel in any way alienated from the Church and who have not experienced in our Church the love of Jesus Christ. We go away from here committed to build a Church of communion and service after the model of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus himself who will renew his Church. It is Jesus present in the Eucharist who will be food for the journey of purification and renewal to which we commit ourselves as we leave this Fiftieth International Eucharistic Congress

strengthened in our desire to deepen our Communion with Christ and communion with one another.