



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Bishop LeGatt discusses Eucharistic devotions



Bishop Albert LeGatt speaks at Humboldt Aug. 27.

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

During a presentation in Humboldt Aug. 27, 2009 Bishop Albert LeGatt described the intrinsic relationship between Eucharistic devotions and the celebration of the Mass.

Eucharistic adoration and other Eucharistic devotions such as Benediction, 40 hours of prayer before the Eucharist,

and Eucharistic processions are a way to prolong and deepen what is experienced in the Mass, said the bishop, addressing parishioners and parish leaders from the Humboldt and Wadena deaneries. The session was organized by St. Augustine Parish in Humboldt, which is preparing to launch regular Eucharistic adoration on the first Friday of each month.

If the Church engages in Eucharistic devotions, it is because of the nature of Eucharist, and the presence of the Lord, LeGatt said. “The Eternal Son of God, sent by the Father, is offering to be present among us in his body and blood,” LeGatt said, describing the gift that Christ left us at the Last Supper. “Until the end of



time this would be the sign and symbol and true reality of his presence, body and blood, soul and divinity. The total Christ, all of Christ, offering himself to the Father,” he said.

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“The Eucharist is the ultimate act of adoration by the Church, because it contains sacramentally, the adoration of Christ towards the Father,” LeGatt said.

“When we use the word ‘adoration’ what we’re first and foremost talking about is the adoration of Christ the eternal Son, towards God the Father. The Father pours out his love upon the Son, and the Son, receiving that love, pours it back, in praise and eternal worship. His act of ultimate love and adoration is seen most clearly in the cross.”

Receiving the Eucharist is adoring the one that we receive, LeGatt said, quoting Pope Benedict XVI’s apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*. “When you say Amen during the Mass, you are adoring Christ in his ultimate act of adoring the Father,” said LeGatt, describing the Great Amen of the Eucharistic prayer as a moment to join our adoration to the adoration of Christ.

“It is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist,” LeGatt said. “And what is that social mission? The care of the poor, justice in our world, the healing of division in the community; offering God’s love and compassion to all.”

Although Eucharistic adoration is a profoundly personal experience of God, it is never an individual action, stressed LeGatt.

The elements and themes of the Mass should also be part of Eucharistic adoration and other Eucharistic devotions, he said. Since Eucharist is thanksgiving, sacrifice and offering, communion with God and with one another, and sending forth in mission, the same themes and elements should be part of Eucharistic adoration.

“If at Mass we have given thanks, and given praise, then the first part of our Eucharistic adoration might indeed be to give thanks. Giving praise and glory to God then leads to the second element: sacrifice and offering.”

How we offer our lives in our everyday lives, our communities, families and marriages can be brought to Eucharistic adoration in prayer, and then lived out in love afterwards, he suggested. “In your prayer before the blessed sacrament, let that offering of yourself be there – as Christ offered himself for the sake of drawing all people to eternal life in a communion of love and life with the Father. He offered his life to unite us in Father’s love. That means reconciliation, compassion and mercy.”



Out of that experience of offering and sacrifice flows communion – another element of the Eucharist that should also be part of Eucharistic adoration, he said, noting the appropriateness of praying for the community, for the church, and for leaders.

“Do you find yourself in adoration praying for greater unity in your parish, for forgiveness where it is needed in your family, for service in your community that builds up community and sees to those who are weak and poor? To do so makes perfect sense.”

The importance of communion is clear in Jesus’ prayer in Chapter 17 of the gospel of John in which he prays to the Father that his followers “might be one as you and I are one, and may they be so one in us that the world will believe you sent me.”

The ultimate way to give glory to the Father is our communion together in love, through Jesus, stressed LeGatt. “The heart of Eucharistic devotion is that there is that desire and prayer for communion.”

Another element that should be part of both Eucharist and Eucharistic devotions is mission: the action of being sent forth in the world to bring about the kingdom of God.

“In the same way that we say ‘let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord’ at the end of Mass, so adoration should send us out to adore the Lord in service, compassion and by all that is love – in the spiritual works of mercy, and the corporal works of mercy.”

The bishop told the story of a Franciscan parish’s decision that for every hour of Eucharistic adoration there should be one hour of public service to those in need.

There are two signs that Eucharistic adoration is authentic, LeGatt suggested. “Firstly, it will lead us as individuals and as a community to be filled with love and service of others for the sake of God’s kingdom. Secondly, it will lead to greater participation in the celebration of the Eucharist: full, conscious and active participation.”