



# NATIONAL Eucharistic Congress

July 27, 2024

“If then my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and heal their land.” (2 Chr 7:14)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the opening Holy Hour of the 10th National Eucharistic Congress, on Wednesday July, 17, 2024, I prayed these very words, inviting tens of thousands in the stadium and thousands more watching virtually to join me in asking the Lord to pardon our sins and heal our land.

Then on Friday evening, July 19th, we all united around Our Eucharistic Lord again in Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis to make reparation for our sins. We humbled ourselves in the presence of Jesus, Our Lord and Savior. Recognizing that if one member of the Body of Christ suffers, we all suffer, we prayed together for healing and forgiveness. We were lead through a litany of healing and repentance in the Eucharist by Fr. Boniface Hicks, O.S.B. Many people told me that this moment of communal penance and reparation was a moment of great healing for them. It was amongst the most powerful experiences of grace for me personally during those holy days.

Just one week later, on July 26th in Paris, where the newly restored Cathedral of Notre Dame stands as an iconic reminder to our belief in the importance of the Mass, which makes spiritually present to us the Last Supper, nearly 1 billion men, women and children, in person and through live telecast, witnessed the public mockery of the Mass, the “source and summit of the Christian life” (LG, 11). During the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics, the famous DaVinci Masterpiece The Last Supper was depicted in heinous fashion, leaving us in such shock, sorrow and righteous anger that words cannot describe it.

Brothers and sisters, we know that what the enemy intends for evil, God uses for good. We know that “where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more” (Rom 5:20).

Throughout salvation history, the Lord and his prophets have called us—the people of God—to respond to the darkness of evil with the light that comes from the Lord. At the heart of this call are prayer and fasting. Jesus told us that some demons “can only come out through prayer [and through fasting]” (Mk 29:9). He modeled this for us when he spent 40 days in the desert before beginning his public ministry, praying and fasting, begging God the Father to prepare him for all that lay ahead—including his perfect gift of self through his death on the Cross.

We believe that the Last Supper is united with the death of Christ on the Cross and, together with the Resurrection, these events are all one in the Paschal Mystery. This passover, which begins at the Last Supper, is the most sacred moment in the life of Jesus. This is when Jesus offered his life for us so that we could share in his divine life forever.

Jesus experienced his Passion anew Friday night in Paris when his Last Supper was publicly defamed. As his living body, we are invited to enter into this moment of passion with him, this moment of public shame, mockery, and persecution. We do this through prayer and fasting. And our greatest prayer—in season and out of season—is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

As the Church throughout the world gathers tomorrow at the Lord's Altar, let us do so with renewed zeal. Let us pray for healing and forgiveness for all those who participated in this mockery. Let us commit ourselves this week to greater prayer and fasting in reparation for this sin. Perhaps you could attend Mass once more this week or do an extra holy hour?

We may also be called upon to speak about this evil. Let us do so with love and charity, but also with firmness. France and the entire world are saved by the love poured out through the Mass, which came to us through the Last Supper. Inspired by the many martyrs who shed their blood to witness to the truth of the Mass, we will not stand aside and quietly abide as the world mocks our greatest gift from the Lord Jesus. Rather, through our prayer and fasting, we will ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen us with the virtue of fortitude so that we may preach Christ—our Lord and Savior, truly present in the Eucharist—for the Glory of God and the Salvation of Souls.

Let us, strengthened by Christ, be the Eucharistic Missionaries we are called to be.

+In Christ Jesus,

Most Rev. Andrew H. Cozzens, S.T.D., D.D.

Bishop of Crookston

Chairman of the Board of the National Eucharistic Congress