

50th International Eucharistic Congress in Dublin, Ireland 2012

The Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses has announced, in a communiqué made public September 22nd, that the next International Eucharistic Congress, the fiftieth of the series, will be held from 10th to 17th of June 2012 in Dublin, Ireland, on the theme: “The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another”.

“The choice of the theme arises from the fact that the celebration of the congress coincides with the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of Vatican Council II which, as Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin has affirmed, was a moment of renewal for the Church’s teaching and for her understanding of herself as Body of Christ and Body of God”, the communiqué explains.

The message goes on: “The archbishop of Dublin has also emphasized the possibility of developing the theme of the next International Eucharistic Congress by reflecting on certain important topics such as: communion with Christ as a foundation for Christian life; the Eucharist as a way of life for clergy, Christian families and religious communities; the gesture of ‘breaking bread’ as a principle of Christian solidarity; the Eucharist, seed of life for the world of suffering and fragility; and ecumenism and the sharing of the one bread”.

Dublin had already been the site of one International Eucharistic Congress before. In 1932 the 31st International Eucharistic Congress was held there from June 22nd to June 26th, that year being the 1500th anniversary of Saint Patrick's arrival. Ireland was then home to 3,171,697 Catholics, and the chosen theme was "The Propagation of the Sainted Eucharist by Irish Missionaries”.

As the last International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City in June of 2008 has shown, the event can have a considerable impact locally on Eucharistic faith and devotion. Especially young people were able and determined to bring the message home to our Diocese in the years preceding the last Congress. Through Youth Summits, Morning Watch and Operation POPE, they rekindled in our hearts the flame of faith, which draws its life from the intimate one-on-one with the Eucharistic Christ. May this flame continue to shine brightly in the parishes and schools of our Diocese.

Quick Facts on IEC

The first International Eucharistic Congress, held in France in 1881, gathered 300 people ahead of Eucharistic movements and gatherings in many European countries. During the following 125 years, the format of congresses strongly evolved and they now attract some 12,000 to 15,000 participants for a full week of celebrations, adoration, catechesis, cultural events, fraternal gatherings, and commitments to aid the poor.

Over the years, there have been International Eucharistic Congresses in places as diverse as Jerusalem, Israel (1893), London, England (1908), Montreal, Canada (1910), Amsterdam, Holland (1924), Sydney, Australia (1928), Carthage, Tunisia (1930), Budapest, Hungary (1938), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1955), Bogota, Colombia (1968), Nairobi, Kenya (1985), Seoul, Korea (1989), Wroclaw, Poland (1997), Guadalajara, Mexico (2004) and many more.

Since 1881, the Pope had always been represented by a special Delegate at the celebration of Eucharistic Congresses. In 1964, Pope Paul VI took part in the last two days of the Congress held in Bombay, India. In his encyclical on the Eucharist, *Mysterium Fidei*, promulgated at the height of Vatican II on September 3, 1965, Pope Paul VI expresses his hope that “the restored sacred liturgy will bring forth abundant fruits of Eucharistic devotion, so that the Holy Church, under this saving sign of piety, may make daily progress toward perfect unity and may invite all Christians to unity of faith and of love, drawing them gently, thanks to the action of divine grace.”

Pope John Paul II followed in the footsteps of his predecessor and attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Rome during the Jubilee Year 2000. “The worship given to the Trinity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... must fill our churches also outside the timetable of Masses... This worship must be prominent in all our encounters with the Blessed Sacrament... Adoration of Christ in this sacrament of love must also find expression in various forms of Eucharistic devotion: personal prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, hours of adoration, periods of exposition – short, prolonged, and annual (Forty Hours) - Eucharistic benediction, Eucharistic processions, Eucharistic Congresses... Let us be generous with our time in going to meet him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world. May our adoration never cease!” (Pope John Paul II)