



# ADOREMUS 2018

## Congress Keynote

8 SEPTEMBER 2018

## CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS

*adoration and benediction with evening prayer*

My brothers and sisters,

We are here in the presence of Jesus in this Most Blessed Sacrament. He is always present to us. But here we can see, touch, even taste that Presence in the Bread which is its sign and sacramental reality. Bread. Bread given, and received, so that we can have life.

This Sacrament is the presence of Jesus in the very act of Him giving Himself totally for us. Remember: Then He took some bread and said 'This is My Body given for you' (Lk 22:19). And so it is, to this very moment.

He gave His body, His entire self, so that we may live. It is the Bread of Life (John 6:34). He gave Himself, in death, so as to absorb all the anger of our hearts, like a sponge soaks up water. He gave Himself to take away the sins of the world. My sin, our sin. He alone can do this. He alone is not crushed by this reality of evil because He alone is truly God and truly also one of us. In His power of God He overcomes; in His humanity He takes us into that victory.

Today we come before Him knowing our failings, sensing the anger in many hearts, knowing the face of evil. I feel this with great keenness, and sadness, for the failings of my fellow bishops are there for all to see. As bishops we are bound to each other. As one of this College of bishops, I come before the Lord with little to offer; only to ask for a share in His new life. I come as a beggar, seeking forgiveness, laying the load of the hurt, damage and mistrust we have caused at the foot of the cross. Please join me in this, for me, for the Church, for yourselves, too.

The Lord is here, waiting for us to come, so that He may embrace, comfort and restore us. His presence here, in this Blessed Sacrament, is the work of God's Holy Spirit, poured out by the will of the Father, in response to our pleading, a pleading uttered by the Church through the words and actions of the priest.

In many places an image of the Holy Spirit is to be seen above the altar, for it is through the creative action of the Holy Spirit that this Sacrament of the Altar is brought about. This is the 'creator Spirit', the Spirit who hovered over the original chaos and brought forth an ordered world: the cosmos (Genesis 1:2). This is the Holy Spirit who recreates with a fountain of new life flowing from the Risen Christ. This

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Spirit works within our lives to bring about the holiness which is the Father's plan for each of us. Because of this work of re-creation by the Holy Spirit we can say that at every celebration of Mass, the Church is made new again. Yes, the Eucharist makes the Church afresh, each day! And as we stand so much in need of renewal, here, in this Sacrament, we come to its source.

Lord, create in us a new heart. Give us a new spirit in which to know You more clearly and love You more dearly. Recreate your Church, the visible Body of your Son, so that we may bring joy not grief, trust not betrayal, love not anger in the hearts of all people, especially your poor and little ones.

In our silence and prayer we ask the Lord to gather us in, to heal our wounds, to bind us to Himself. Yes, Yes, He says. But He also whispers to us, firmly, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Gospel to all creation.' (Mark 16:15).

Every one of the gifts He gives us is to be shared. He caresses us with His mercy, so that we may be merciful to others; He heals, so that we may heal; strengthens so that we may strengthen others; fills us with His unique joy so that through us that joy infects the whole world. In this Eucharist, this Thanksgiving, lies the source of our mission. From this Adoration we run forth, wanting, longing to share with others this great secret outpouring of life and goodness which has been disclosed to us. There is no true mission in the Church that does not start here, in prayer, before the Lord.

Tomorrow we will walk the streets of this City in our Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. We will carry this visible, sacramental reality of the life-giving death of Jesus into our world. There is not one iota of triumphalism or pride in our steps. In many ways ours is a penitential procession for we are focused on Jesus whom we have crucified. Yet we walk with a humble joy for He takes our failure, cruelty and deceit and overcomes it all with His love and mercy. He is our salvation and it is our humble joy to let His face be seen – his face of tender compassion and hope for our broken world.

Sweet Sacrament Divine

- in thy far depths doth shine thy Godhead's majesty

Sweet Sacrament Divine

- in thine ear all trustfully we tell our tale of misery

Sweet Sacrament Divine

- save us, lest we sink beneath the waves

Sweet Sacrament Divine

- earth's life and jubilee

We praise you, we thank you,  
we adore you.