

## **Homily – Eucharistic Congress Assembly**

**November 4, 2023**

**Pope Francis invites us to contemplate the patience of God our Father, which is well exemplified in our first reading today. Parents, grandparents, and those of you who are used to dealing with small children, know well that little kids need social training. Little by little, they need to learn to say “please,” “thank you”, “excuse me.” Little kids make demands and complain, much like God’s people in the book of Exodus. “Give me,” “take me,” “you didn’t give me what I wanted,” or they simply yell. Others may be surprised that parents put-up with those seemingly-rude attitudes. But parents, and especially grandparents, are remarkably patient. Patience is neither resignation nor an attitude of defeat, but bearing-up out of love. Think about God’s patience with us.**

**Despite our inadequate responses to God, He continues to feed us at this heavenly banquet.**

**Children gradually learn that everything they receive from their parents is the fruit of a gratuitous love. Likewise, we need to learn that God’s love for us knows no limits. Our very existence is the fruit of God’s love. Moreover, “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (Jn 3: 16). Jesus is “the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever;” and the bread that He gives is his flesh “for the life of the world.” (Jn).**

**Jesus Christ is truly present, living and glorious, under the consecrated species of bread and wine, where we really find him in a substantial manner with his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity.**

**But do we only truly find Jesus in the consecrated species? Of course not! Through the assembly, representing the whole Body of Christ – the Church – Christ is made truly present by the power of his word and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God’s Word Incarnate. He is really present, speaking to us, in the proclamation of his word. He is present in many ways to his Church: in his Church’s prayer; where two or more are gathered in His name; in the person of the ordained minister, and throughout the whole sacrifice of the Mass. And as the liturgy comes to an end, the assembly through which He made himself present, is sent into**

**the world to make him present to every person. And in every person we encounter in his name, we also find Him.**

**He is then truly found present in the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, and all those in need of our mercy, as well as in each of the other sacraments. Thanks to the sacrament of matrimony, for instance, husband and wives truly encounter Jesus in their spouses. Do you find Jesus in your spouse?**

**The celebration of the Eucharist is truly the source and summit of our lives and the life of the Church. It is the food for faith, hope and charity. The Church exists thanks to the Eucharist and for the Eucharist. The Eucharist is celebrated by the Church, through the work of the Holy Spirit. We need to be raised by our patient Heavenly Father, so we do not become like picky eaters, who only delight in one or two parts of the Meal He offers us. We need to pray insistently: Lord, increase our faith!**

**By allowing the Lord to express his love for us, we become more aware of our dignity and our mission, which is to communicate that same love. In the process, we learn to experience ourselves loving God, and God loving not only us, but others through us. We gradually learn to immerse ourselves in the mystery of God and in the lives of others. We learn that we cannot open our eyes to the Word and close them to the Eucharistic species, and vice versa. We learn that we cannot open our eyes to God in the Eucharist while we close them to our neighbors and their needs.**

**Let us ask Saint Mary of Guadalupe, fed with the living bread that has come down from heaven, to help us be worthy members of the Body of Christ.**