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**Pastoral Letter to be read  
on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ  
Corpus Christi  
Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ is perpetuated and remembered pre-eminently in the Eucharist which, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, is *"a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet."*<sup>1</sup> In February 2005, Pope Benedict issued an Exhortation on the Eucharist, following a Synod in Rome. And I just want to quote a little from that Exhortation, as he has summed up very succinctly and beautifully the meaning of the Eucharist. This is what he wrote: "The sacrament of charity, the Holy Eucharist, is the gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself, thus revealing to us God's infinite love for every man and woman. This wondrous sacrament makes manifest that 'greater' love which led him to 'lay down his life for his friends' (Jn 15:13). Jesus did indeed love them 'to the end' (Jn 13:1). In those words the Evangelist introduces Christ's act of immense humility: before dying for us on the Cross, he tied a towel around himself and washed the feet of his disciples. In the same way, Jesus continues, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, to love us 'to the end,' even to offering us his body and his blood. What amazement must the Apostles have felt in witnessing what the Lord did and said during that Supper! What wonder must the Eucharistic mystery also awaken in our own hearts!"<sup>2</sup> ... When we celebrate the Eucharist our "...faith is nourished and grows in the grace-filled encounter with the Risen Lord which takes place in the sacraments ... For this reason, the Sacrament of the Altar is always at the heart of the Church's life: 'thanks to the Eucharist, the Church is reborn ever anew!' The more lively the Eucharistic faith of the People of God, the deeper is its sharing in ecclesial life in steadfast commitment to the mission entrusted by Christ to his disciples."<sup>3</sup>

The real celebration of the Eucharist, then, consists not merely in the performance of a ceremonial, a ritual, however devout or prayerful it may be. It must also consist in practising what is 'proclaimed' in the Eucharist, that is, our Lord's self-giving sacrifice. We 'practise' this sacrifice by actually 'sacrificing' ourselves for others, that is, by serving and helping others, without reservation or limits. At the same time, by celebrating the Eucharist liturgically, by communicating with our Lord in the Eucharist, we are 'proclaiming' that we are also practising the reality of the Eucharist in our daily lives. We worship God in loving and serving others; and the Church, as a whole, has the mission to serve, or minister to, the world. We all have a God-given duty to help, and to look after the world, to be Christ the Servant's instruments in bringing the world to health and fulfilment.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution on The Sacred Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium No.47.

<sup>2</sup> Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Sacramentum Caritatis 1.

<sup>3</sup> Sacramentum Caritatis 6.

Every four years the universal Church celebrates an International Eucharistic Congress in a different country, but last year Pope Francis asked the Bishops throughout the world to have a Eucharistic Congress in their own country. In England and Wales this Congress will take place from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of September in Liverpool, with delegates from every Diocese. So far we have some 180 delegates from a variety of parishes who will represent our Archdiocese at the Congress. The Congress will be a gathering of God's people in prayer, adoration and reflection. It will be a moment to pause and engage in prayerful dialogue, listen to each other and use the grace of discernment to determine a way forward together. Discernment, according to Pope Francis is about '*recognising how we can accomplish better the mission entrusted to us at Baptism.*'<sup>4</sup>

I invite and encourage every parish, every school and every community in the Archdiocese to engage with and explore the Congress themes because they all lead us into a deeper encounter with Jesus of Nazareth. I hope that as many parishes, schools and communities as possible will devote some time to prayer and Adoration in the coming months and especially during the Adoremus weekend in Liverpool, so that our deliberations in Liverpool and our reflections here at home are united together in prayer. We should all take heed to the words of Pope Francis: "*Meeting Jesus in the scriptures leads us to the Eucharist. When we receive him in Communion we renew our covenant and allow him to carry out ever more fully his work of transforming our lives... Let us listen once more to Jesus, with all the love and respect the Master deserves. Let us allow his words to unsettle us, to challenge us and demand a real change in the way we live.*"<sup>5</sup>

With an assurance of my prayers and good wishes,



Archbishop of Southwark

Given at Southwark, 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2018,  
Solemnity of the Holy Trinity.

Please visit the Diocesan Adoremus webpage: [www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/2018Eucharist.htm](http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/2018Eucharist.htm)

and the Adoremus pages of the Bishops' Conference:  
[www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Special-Events/Adoremus-National-Eucharistic-Pilgrimage](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/Special-Events/Adoremus-National-Eucharistic-Pilgrimage)  
(*this short address "tinyurl.com/y7m9b8gq" points to the same website*)

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<sup>4</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete Et Exsultate*, on the Call To Holiness in Today's World, n.174.

<sup>5</sup> cf *Gaudete Et Exsultate* n.157 & n.66.