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The Cardinal Secretary of State closes the Second Eucharistic Congress of the diocese of Oppido Mamertina-Palmi, Italy

Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin closed the Second Eucharistic Congress of the diocese of Oppido Mamertina-Palmi, Italy, with the celebration of Holy Mass today.

In the homily he delivered during the celebration, Cardinal Parolin emphasized that “the Eucharist makes the Church and is, at the same time, an immense resource offered to the existence of the world”.

“First and foremost”, he explained, “the Eucharist makes the Church”. He recalled that, according to Saint Paul, “*the Church is the body of Christ*” (Eph 1: 22-23; Col 1: 24), and so it is important, first, to remember that the Church is a body, a visible social entity and not a mere ideal. “The Church is not experienced through purely inner belonging, but rather is external reality, visible and concrete, which is actively inserted in the history of the world. However that body, which is the Church, ‘is the body of Christ’, a body vivified and moulded by the Spirit of Christ, so that the social form of the Church manifests the presence of Christ today in the world”.

“The word that the Church announces is not her own, but that of Christ”, he added. “The Sacraments that the Church celebrates are not hers, but of Christ. The love that the Church endeavours to live is not the love that comes from her, but from Christ the Lord. Therefore those who encounter the Church can, in her and through her, truly encounter Christ, beyond the shortcomings and limits that are inevitable in the people who compose her”.

“If we were without the Eucharist, how could the Church grow effectively as a body towards her head, Christ (cf. Col 1: 18)? Certainly, we would have the Word of God which is like a seed that gives shape to the life of the Church, but the Word needs to be interpreted to be lived, which is not always easy. With the Eucharist, the Word has its perfect criterion for interpretation: ‘*This is my Body, which is given for you*’”.

“The Eucharist is then, at the same time, a resource offered to the existence of the world”, Cardinal Parolin continued. “The world itself becomes better if there are some who know and live the Eucharist. What is imbued into the structures of the world, through the Eucharist, if not the strength of love, forgiveness and reconciliation? And are love, forgiveness and reconciliation not indeed those forces that keep the world standing?”

“Often there are those who think that the world is supported by the interlinking of so many different egoisms. Each person is in search of his own interest, and society is formed because the interests of one are intertwined with those of others, and for this reason we support and sustain each other. Such an analysis is however gravely incomplete, and if taken as an absolute, is harmful”.

“The world stands up because there are people who truly love, who bear not only the burden of their own life but also the weight of the life of others, who renounce their own successes and honours to leave space for the affirmation of others and their good. If we remove all this, the world becomes a hell, and when the world becomes hell, the very desire to live and the desire to give life to others disappear”.

“Therefore the world needs the Eucharist. Not because it is evidently the exclusively source of love in the world; certainly God has placed the capacity and the desire to love in every heart, and the experience itself of being born, of being welcomed by someone becomes a strong impulse that drives us to love”.

“But”, he concluded, “it is important to reiterate that the Eucharist is indeed an immense wellspring of real love. And if we follow the history of charity in the West, that is in our own culture, we can see how much of this charity has as its source in the Eucharist; how much attention to the poor, the sick, the elderly, and children is due to the experience of the Eucharist”.
