

CONGRESS

The Eucharistic Congress Icons and Prayer



Journeying towards the 50th
International Eucharistic
Congress

*The Eucharist – Communion with Christ
and with One Another*

The Eucharistic Congress Icons

On March 17th 2011 the Pilgrimage of the Eucharistic Congress Bell began. Travelling from Diocese to Diocese across Ireland, the ringing of the bell is an invitation to gather and to mark the journey of Pastoral Preparation towards the 50th International Eucharistic Congress.

A key feature of this journey is the Pastoral Programme exploring the meaning of the Eucharist in our lives. This is facilitated through reflection on the 4 Eucharistic Congress Icons. Each icon corresponds to one part of the Mass – Gathering, The Liturgy of the Word, The Eucharistic Prayer and the Dismissal. Together they invite us to look again at what we are assembled to do and sent out to be through our participation in the Mass.

It is hoped that the icons offer you some direction as you journey into a renewed understanding of the Eucharist, with the theme of the Congress as the goal of this journey: **The Eucharist – Communion with Christ and with One Another.**

A few thoughts about the Eucharistic Congress Icons:

Icons are:

Written not painted

Read not just admired

Symbols not portraits

Encountered not merely observed

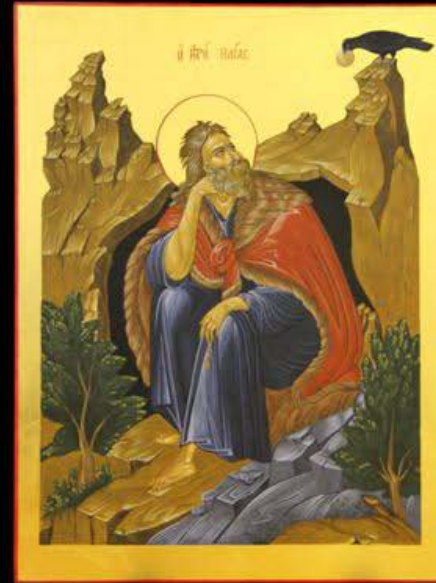
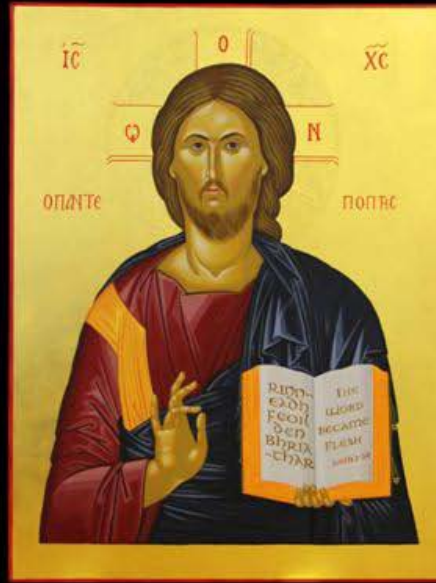


Gathering

Word

Communion

Mission



1. Our Lady of Refuge and John the Evangelist
2. Christ, Pantocrator
3. Elijah and the Raven
4. Pentecost



Look closely at the icon, be attentive to its colours – to read the message they hold. Notice the body language of both Mary and John, Notice the space around the figures and between them, sense the emptiness. Look at Mary's face – serious and concerned, sorrowful at the suffering of her son Jesus, looking outward, toward John. Yet look at her feet, clothed in red, the colour of joy – her faith in the resurrection revealed. Allow yourself be drawn into this gathering, Stand with Mary, Mother of the Church, and know yourself to be, like John, 'the disciple Jesus loved.'

Gather with them, fill the space between them, hear God speak to you with them, be aware that we all gather with them. Hear the words: "Woman, behold your child", And as though they are spoken to you, hear the words: "behold your mother."

Be drawn to the figure of John, the one who recognised Jesus to be the light that darkness could not overcome, who witnessed the Transfiguration and the one who sat next to Jesus at the last supper. What questions about his experience of Jesus would you like to ask him? Draw close, remember some of the verses from John's gospel about Jesus – behold the lamb of God; you are the Christ; remain in my love; abide in me and I will abide in you.



Read the icon,
Notice its colours, and its golden heavenly context.

Notice the body language of Christ,
his hand held up, to command attention and in blessing.

Notice the space into which you are invited
for this encounter with the Word made flesh.
Look at Christ's face - serious, teaching,
encouraging perhaps concerned that while
some listen they do not hear or engage with
him on a deeper level?

Allow yourself be drawn into this dialogue.
Hear echoes of his Word – scripture passages
that have consoled, encouraged, nourished
and supported you in the past.

Remember the words of the gospel as though
you hear God speak to you in them now,
be attentive to what that hearing evokes in
you .

Respond to Christ, tell him how you intend to
allow the Word to become flesh in you – in
your attitudes and actions.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among
us!



Read the icon, notice its colours, the rocky, rugged, earthy backdrop the dark opening in the earth – the cave – perhaps reminiscent of the tomb into which we enter and from which we emerge resurrected with Christ in Baptism.

Notice the wood of the tree, the wood of the cross, notice the water, clear and flowing – another symbol of baptism and new life?

See the golden heavenly context.

Look at Elijah, his appearance, the colours of his clothing. his cloak of camel hair, orange-red in colour – symbol of fire and fervour.

His garment is blue, symbolic of mystery and the mystic life.

Notice the body language of Elijah, perched a little, perhaps like the raven, waiting and ready to respond to God's commands. His eyes seem to be turned towards the raven, or are they fixed on the food the raven brings – food from the hand of God, bread that will sustain his life, but a shadow only of the gift God gives in the Eucharist, the very bread of Life, the body of Christ.

Be drawn into that gaze of Elijah's.

He is aware of the presence of the food, but beyond that he is a witness to God's promise fulfilled.

Call to mind some of Christ's promises –

"I am with you always"; "This is my body, given up for you"; "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day"; "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I remain in them".



Read the icon,
Notice its colours, the walls reminding us that this is an indoor event, in the upper Room
Look at the gathering, be drawn into that space
This space is filled with the presence of the Spirit of God. Jesus through the Word of God listed some of the signs, the fruits of the Spirit in our lives that would identify his followers: love your neighbour; clothe those who are naked; feed those who are hungry; seek reconciliation; Forgive; give to those in need.

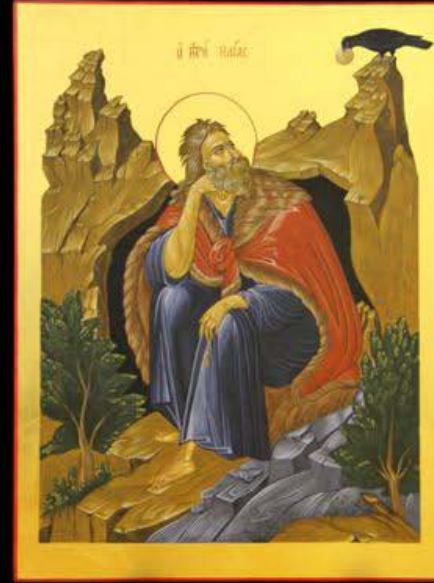
Remember the Be-attitudes
be good news to others; Be Christ to others
See the blue opening into heaven above the apostles' heads. See the rays descend upon them
Notice the red fiery flames of the Spirit resting, be drawn in.

Notice Cosmos, symbol of the world, in the dark doorway, collecting the scrolls of the Good News like bread for a starving world.

What Good News do you offer?
The Spirit of the Lord is upon you because the Spirit has anointed you to bring good news to the poor – to those who lack security, whose future may appear bleak to proclaim freedom for those imprisoned – by fear or guilt ...

recovery of sight for those who cannot see – perhaps due to anger or prejudice
release to the oppressed – supporting them, helping them find their voice.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon you!

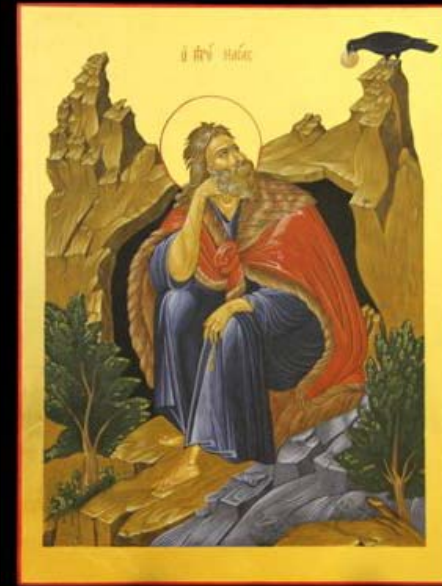


Concluding Prayer

Through baptism we are the children of God, called to be a Eucharistic Community. Let us pray the Eucharistic Congress Prayer, and learn how to entrustment ourselves to Mary, to recognise Christ in the Scriptures and in the breaking of Bread, and to live the life of communion to which this prayer refers:



Lord Jesus,
You were sent by the Father
to gather together those who are scattered.
You came among us,
doing good and bringing healing,
announcing the Word of salvation
and giving the Bread which lasts forever.
Be our companion on life's pilgrim way.



May your Holy Spirit inflame our hearts,
enliven our hope and open our minds,
so that together
with our sisters and brothers in faith
we may recognise you in the Scriptures
and in the breaking of bread.
May your Holy Spirit transform us into one body
and lead us to walk humbly on the earth,
in justice and love,
as witnesses of your resurrection.



In communion with Mary,
whom you gave to us as our Mother
at the foot of the cross,
through you may all praise,
honour and blessing
be to the Father
in the Holy Spirit and in the Church,
Now and forever. Amen



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