

Jesus crosses from Quebec to Ontario

Written by Deborah Gyapong, Canadian Catholic News

Monday, 31 May 2010 09:58

OTTAWA – A eucharistic procession across the Ottawa River to Parliament Hill May 22 provided a sign of the spread of a new youth movement's from Quebec to the rest of Canada.

The Pentecost Eve procession crowned the May 21–24 Youth Summit/Montée Jeunesse here. The summits began in the years leading up to the 2008 International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec City as a way of harnessing youth creativity and energy. Now the Summits continue as a fruit of the congress. The Ottawa summit was the sixth and the first held outside of Quebec.

Commencing at the cathedral in the Gatineau diocese, the procession crossed the Ottawa River, then passed major national landmarks such as the Museum of Civilization, the National Art Gallery, the War Memorial and the Chateau Laurier.

Many tourists attending Ottawa's annual Tulip Festival lined the sidewalk, snapping photos and responding warmly to the joyous smiles, songs and greetings of the young people.

The procession wended its way to Parliament Hill, where Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast and 500 participants knelt to revere the blessed sacrament on the steps below the Peace Tower.

Earlier in the day, the youth had attended workshops, and a special Mass celebrated by Cardinal Marc Ouellet.

"The first thing I want to tell you is: I love you," Ouellet told the 500 youth from across Canada in the summit's opening session. "And I love you in the Lord. It is our joy as Christians to share our love in the Lord."

As Archbishop of Quebec and host of the 2008 Congress, he told the young people they are "joining a eucharistic movement and serving as a witness to His love."

"This makes you bearers of good news," he said.

"If I have a consolation it is to see these young people gathered and discovering Jesus Christ and developing a eucharistic culture," he said later in an interview.

The theme of this year's Congress was "Sent," indicating everyone is sent by God to further the kingdom.

In a teaching session, Companions of the Cross Father Mark Goring said everyone was called to be a saint. "Saints are given to us, not as moulds to be imitated but as models to be inspired from," he said. "The sanctity to which we are called is unique."

He urged the young people to surrender their lives to Jesus and overcome their fear.

"God's plan for our lives is infinitely better than anything we could ever want to come up with," he said.

The weekend also featured a rousing talk from Catholic evangelist Caroline Gambale–Dirkes, who spoke about how all are chosen by God, all are called to holiness and all are called to do great things for the kingdom. On Sunday night, the youth attended a concert with singer and songwriter Matt Maher, after going out in teams to evangelize and spread Christian love in Ottawa's Byward Market Sunday afternoon.

Alexandria–Cornwall Bishop Paul–Andre Durocher offered a rousing closing teaching about how Jesus' healings not only restored health and life, but relationships and the fabric of society. We have to carry hope to those who suffer, who feel rejected, cut off from their families and friends, who suffer from slow death, are in slavery to drugs, alcohol or their sexuality, he said. Through the power of the Holy



Catholic clergy and young adults paused to adore the Blessed Sacrament on Parliament Hill May 23, during a eucharistic procession that began in Gatineau–Hull and ended at Ottawa's Notre-Dame Cathedral. (Photo by Deborah Gyapong)



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"It was good to see there is energy in the Church, that the Church is alive," said Archbishop Prendergast in an interview. "Many of these young people come from the province of Quebec to Ontario; they have come to enrich us."

He called the event a gift for his diocese that furthered cooperation among youth ministries in all surrounding dioceses. The summit moves to Montreal in 2012.

During the closing ceremonies on May 24, the Ottawa youth organizers carried the Ark of the New Covenant on their shoulders down the aisle of Notre Dame Cathedral Basilica, and passed the symbolic object to youth organizers from Montreal. The ark was created for the first Youth Summit as a symbolic object, similar to the World Youth Day cross, and traveled throughout Canada. from many parts, and you come to meet Jesus Christ in this Eucharistic mystery, you feel a Pentecost, you feel this sort of effusion of the Holy Spirit, which is bringing all these young people into one body, one body with so much beauty," Ouellet said.

At the close, Prendergast spoke of the great gift the summit was to the diocese, even though things looked a little uncertain two weeks previously when only 150 people had registered.

"God wants to cause a great conflagration here in Ottawa," he said, adding that "God wants to do great things in us and through us" in dioceses across the country.

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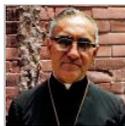
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