

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

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Traditionally Speaking by S. Casarotto 8/23/09

DISCOVERING THE CHURCH IN THE EUCHARIST

David Heimann's dream was to spend 365 days in 365 different places, each destination a new opportunity to experience Christ. From Chicago, where he lives, he embarked on a journey around the world, attending daily mass wherever he happened to be. "I abandoned everything I knew." He wrote in his daily blog. "I left my fishing nets on the boat. I followed."

He began every day with a simple prayer, "O Lord, lead me where you need me to go and show me what you want me to see." And every day his prayer was answered.

"I visited the Holy Sepulchre - he wrote - Lourdes and Rome, but when you truly recognize the presence of God in the simple and the poor, that's when you know that you have really achieved the spiritual journey of a pilgrim," Heimann wrote. "When I met a peasant in a Sierra Leone village who works in the mines, who comes to church because he experiences God there, - that's the holiest sanctuary I have ever visited."

Heimann came also to realize that true holiness comes from Christ's presence in the Eucharist wherever it is celebrated. "The beauty of the Eucharist is not in how much gold there is around the tabernacle but in how we have surrounded our hearts with the sanctuary of love we experience in the Eucharist," he said. "The Eucharist was the center of the experience - even when I felt lost and abandoned. I always understood the Eucharist. You can go to a poor village in Zimbabwe and still experience the same love. It was always there."

In visiting many churches and Christian communities, Heimann understood "the mystery of the Church as one body yet diverse in its members. The Eastern Church has a heart to the Church and the European and American Church an intellect", he said. "Africans have the souls of the Church. The Latin Church has a certain passion, almost like the blood of the Church, and together they make one body."

"I wish I could show people that because they live in a Third World country they are not lacking in faith, but in fact they are abundant in it. They have so little, yet they have so much more faith than us with so much privilege."

Heimann then observed, "America doesn't 'do pilgrimage' because we think we have already arrived. We think this is the Holy Land. In doing so, we have lost that sense that there is another journey that we must make, one to the center of the heart of every human being. It's the discipline of being a pilgrim and recognizing that our ultimate home is not here. Our ultimate home is in heaven."

"The Church makes the Eucharist and the Eucharist makes the Church" (St. Augustine)

YEAR FOR PRIESTS - "The Priest is something transcendent; through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them our Lord's body as He Himself did at the Last Supper, and at their death he helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them their final forgiveness and the supreme strength... every single day of his life, a priest does what Jesus did during his three years of ministry - He teaches men to know, love and serve their good Master." (*Charles De Foucauld to a friend preparing for Ordination*)