

**From:** [D]@gmail.com  
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[Bishop Jugis: The Eucharist is the love that can change our world](#)

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**CHARLOTTE** — In a world sadly in need of love, there is one place we know it can be found: at the altar in the Eucharist, Bishop Peter Jugis said during his homily at the closing Mass of the 2011 Eucharistic Congress in Charlotte on Sept. 24. Bishop Jugis encouraged his flock to embrace the Eucharist, placing Christ firmly at the center of our lives. Catholics from across the Diocese of Charlotte filled the Charlotte Convention Center for the two-day congress, and attendance was unusually high for the closing Mass in Hall A, which was overflowing with worshippers. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith, Bishop Jugis reminded the thousands of faithful, but he then asked, "Is it really the center of our life, around which everything revolves? Does the Eucharist give life to everything we do, day in, day out?"

Bishop Jugis said we should be eager to receive Christ in the Eucharist – eager to receive Him into our lives and eager to express our love for Him in all that we do.

"Are we eager to know our Christian faith? Are we eager to go to Sunday Mass?" he asked. The early Christians were, and we should model our lives on theirs, he said.

Bishop Jugis said that our love for Christ in the Eucharist should be mirrored in our love for each other and for our parish communities, just as the first Christians loved being together and caring for each other's needs.

"I want to thank you for your devotion to your parishes," he said. "Thank you for showing the world by your attendance at Mass that you are devoted to being together" and demonstrating that Sunday is the Lord's day, a reference to the theme of keynote speaker Cardinal Francis Arinze, who spoke Friday about the importance of keeping Sunday holy.

Bishop Jugis pointed out that the Apostles ordained seven deacons to minister to the needs of widows and the poor during the early days of the Church – the level of charity of the early Christians was so great that it took seven men all day every day to distribute it. This was "an avalanche" of love, an outpouring of love and eagerness to serve others that the community in Jerusalem possessed. Today, the faithful need to recapture that same sense of enthusiasm and abundance of love for one another, he said.

Too, the faithful's communal "Amen!" at the end of the consecration at Mass is an expression of our eagerness to receive Christ into our lives, Bishop Jugis said. It signifies our recognition of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and it gives us the opportunity to worship and adore Him. He said that our enthusiastic response of faith during that moment is as if we are saying, "My Savior comes to me!"

He concluded, "May His love lift you up! Jesus eagerly desires to give Himself to you! With joy let us receive Him!"

— Patricia Guilfoyle, editor. Photos by SueAnn Howell and Patricia Guilfoyle.

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