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Szombathely ünnepe

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FOREWORD

On September 7, 1947, Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, Primate of Hungary, born in Vas county and formerly a priest of the Diocese of Szombathely, together with the Hungarian College of Bishops, consecrated the newly rebuilt Cathedral of Szombathely, destroyed during the war and rebuilt with the countless sacrifices of its parishioners. And on the next day, September 8, with over one hundred thousand parishioners from the Diocese of St. Martin's he celebrated the Marian Congress, where again he dedicated his life to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The two events were joined by the evening candlelight procession and the night-long adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

There comes a time when the historian starts a new page when writing about these difficult and faith-defining times. Our wish is to not only remember these two events as a passing memory or a festive historical event, but as *Life and Truth*. That is the purpose of this commemorative book, which I lovingly offer to all the priests of my diocese and its parishioners with this request: May this historical double event stay alive in their souls, may it be a source that strengthens their faith, gives new impetus for renewal, and grants faithful attachment to Mary, the Mother of all Hungarians, to the priests and their faithful of my diocese.

Szombathely, Christmas Eve of 1947.

Sándor Kovács

Diocesan Bishop

NEW LIFE OVER THE RUINS

1. The Destruction

For those who knew Szombathely Cathedral, the city's architectural landmark, the date of March 4, 1945, will forever remain a date of mourning. On this memorable Lenten Sunday, World War II unleashed a storm of such ferocity on Saint Martin's birthplace, that it became the sixth most war-damaged city in the country.

This city of the western defenses has been leveled and again rebuilt over the ruins of earlier ages. Excavations revealed evidence of ancient Christian habitats. These ruins are no longer aching wounds, but eloquent witnesses to our Christian past. The spirits of two fourth-century bishops, martyred Saint Quirinus and native son Saint Martin stand guard over the blessed ruins.

The ruins of ancient Savaria were buried under the ruins of modern Szombathely on March 4, 1945... Bright sunlight ushered in the first Sunday of the month, with all-day adoration of the Eucharist in the Cathedral. Large numbers of the faithful attended Mass and went to Holy Communion. Within hours many joined Jesus on their journey toward the afterlife...

Spring breezes chased white clouds over the city, in whose cathedral bishop Sándor Kovács celebrated High Mass honoring Pope Pius XII on the occasion of the anniversary of his Holiness' coronation. But the festive strains of the Te Deum were suddenly overwhelmed by the wailing sound of air-raid sirens. The Holy Eucharist was quickly taken to the safety of subterranean crypts. In the next hour and a half many bombs were showered on the city, destroying the church and burying more than half-a-thousand people. The hands in the clock towers froze in position of five minutes before one o'clock, the bells were silenced... The vaulted roof structure, holding up the nave as well as the choir with the organ, collapsed in seconds. Nine altars became pulverized, Winterhalder's and Spreng's ceiling frescoes, Maulbertsch and Dorfmeister's paintings became dust, together with the altars. Some of the worst devastation was caused by the blast, which ripped the marble cladding off the remaining structure, and left huge piles of rubble in the place of the altar and the pews.

From the rubble below the small pulpit, a woman's faint pleas for help were heard. Fortunately she was rescued and treated for a broken leg. She had come from far away to visit her wounded soldier husband, and she happened to be in the church at the time of the air-raid sirens. Two parishioners lay dead amidst the ruins. Two prominent members of the parish ministry also became victims of the bombing: Canon Lajos Kiss, Assistant to the Bishop, and Canon Joseph Pintér.

The bronze statue of Bishop Szily stood lonely watch over the remains of the Cathedral on the square.

St. Quirinus Church of the Salesian parish became the temporary cathedral, and the members of the cathedrals parish used the church of the Dominican Sisters.

2. The Reconstruction

The enemy bombers attacked and destroyed the City in five waves. In the brief interval between waves, brave rescuers tried to rescue those trapped by the rubble. The bodies piled up rapidly, as the tears of survivors swelled. By nightfall, the hospitals were overflowing with the wounded. Priests and the religious were among the first to probe the rubble in attempting to save the priceless treasures of the Cathedral. The most precious relics, those of the Holy Cross and of Bishop St. Martin, as well as relics at the side altars were salvaged.

This was highly dangerous work; chunks of rubble and roof structure were teetering precariously up to thirty meters above the rescuers. By the next day many parishioners joined the ranks of volunteer workers. The following week every parish received a Diocesan Letter, read to all parishioners:

“I kiss this heavy Cross, placed on my shoulders by my Lord...I do not despair but continue to pray even more ardently and work more diligently. Help me with your prayers and with your work in order to reconstruct this Cathedral as soon as possible.”

Upon this proclamation personal sacrifice flourished. Catholics of the city lined up for clearing and salvaging work as if they had been working on their own houses. Students after classes, factory workers after their shifts, office workers after office hours hastened to the site to help with demolition work. The value of volunteer labor could be estimated in the hundreds of thousands. About 900 cubic meters rubble was cleared from the site, mostly by volunteers. The efforts of the volunteer brigades made it possible to start new construction by August of 1945, the scheduled date.

To answer the question in one word: How was it possible to rebuild the Cathedral in two years, during a time of so much hardship? The answer: Personal sacrifice. It was made not from the fat pocketbooks of the wealthy, not from the lost properties of the Church, not by the largesse of the State, but from the continuous contributions of the individual donors. For two years all priests of the Diocese gave up part of their monthly stipend. Economically struggling families took inventory of their remaining valuables and took them to the Cathedral. Gold watches, rings, gold chains were donated. *“I was christened in the Cathedral!”* said one donor, while giving up some gold jewelry. *“I was confirmed there,”* said another, donating a piece of heirloom. *“I was married there,”* chimed in the third, while handing over her contribution to Father László Szendy.

Hundreds of young people from the neighboring urban as well as from the rural communities held fundraisers, giving all the income to the Cathedral project.

When the demolition and clearing was completed, general contractor Ferenc Beer took charge of the work. Beer, with his crew of 50-60 journeymen, worked non-stop for two years (save for a few weeks of needed winter break). Due to the runaway inflation of the Pengő, payments for services could only be made in kind. Farmers from the villages delivered their donations with heart-felt generosity. In truth, the Cathedral was rebuilt with flour, grain, lard, beans, potatoes and wine during these most difficult months. During the following two years at harvest time, the farmer from Vas county, the vintner from Zala county was always thinking of the Cathedral. The password in the two counties became: *All for the Cathedral!* Villagers from Szentpeterfa cut down logs, transported 120 cubic meters of lumber and did the rough carpentry for the roof structure – all free to the Cathedral. Seventeen villages between Felsőszeleste and Szombathely offered 100 carriages and transported for free the logs cut down from the remaining woods of the Erdődy Family Estate and the Szombathely diocese.

In winter's frost and snow, with poor road conditions, the horsecart-wheels broke down. Who in those times had four good carriage wheels? There were broken horse implements on the 40 km. road – but still they continued on – *all for the Cathedral!* The people of Szombathely took on their share as well: 90,000 roof tiles, 140,000 bricks were moved hand over hand from the ground to the roof. Students made human chains, bringing the bricks and tiles from the carts to the ground and from there to the construction elevator.

The Ministry of Reconstruction allocated some funds for the Cathedral's reconstruction. The Assistant Bishop made several trips to the capital, hoping that by his personal appeal he could accelerate the procedure, since delays meant that the value of the pledges would diminish. The City of Szombathely and Vas County were not remiss in contributing their share. In addition, the City hired the workers who were furloughed for the winter to help in the construction of the church.

By the winter of 1946 the Cathedral was under roof. But getting the funds in time was often a nerve-wracking endeavor. When the sources dried up, loans had to be obtained in order to keep the construction going. In the meantime a series of pastoral letters were issued in order to keep the giving spirit alive, thanking, cajoling, and asking the generous donors for their continued support.

When in the jungle of numbers the Pengő was finally laid to rest, August 1, 1946, brought in a new and stable currency: the Forint. Ads and collection boxes lined the parishioners' route to the church with this admonition: "Give your first Forint to the Cathedral!" The campaign was a success. Many complied to the request by the letter: From the office, from the workplace, people went straight to the church to give the first Forint of their pay to the House of God. Many workers placed a mark on their shiny new Forint and held on to it till the following Sunday, when they placed it in the Cathedral's collection box. For weeks people brought in their first Forints, but there were many who offered a percentage of their weekly or monthly paycheck for the construction project.

For two years the Cathedral was covered in scaffolding and construction materials. People crossing the Square could often see their Bishop on the scaffolding among the workers, approving and encouraging them to carry on with the good work. On his descent, he was filled with great joy and satisfaction by what he saw.

On December 11, 1946 the Cathedral gave its first vital sign: After a year-and-a-half of silence, the tower clock could be heard again. We listened to its sound, because we felt that something that had been part of us over a lifetime, returned to us after an 18 months' exile, to be with us again every fifteen minutes, to encourage, warn, and strengthen us all!

In 1947 a new password was born. The Diocese asks every parishioner to pay one Forint. Those who can, should pay cash, those who cannot, in kind. The parishioners of the cathedral were the first to comply, and their example was followed by the sacrifice of the neighboring parishes. Many poor families could not contribute their share; but others, who were more fortunate by their God-given bounty, gave more. Next to the 10-20 Forint bills were many of 100-200 Forint value. "My son just got home from POW camp...My husband just got home from POW camp...I want to show my gratitude by giving to the Cathedral" – said the grateful parishioners with joyful tears in their eyes.

In the fall of 1946 the fundraising concerts began. The musical artists of Szombathely banded together for the noble endeavor. The church concerts of the Schola Sabariensis provided substantial monetary help. Members of the opera house: the people of Vas county came to perform, so that by their musical offering they could also help build the House of God, from whom they received their talents. Members of the Women's' Guild made and sold 600 wreaths for All Souls' Day, thus helping offset some of the financial problems of the construction. By All Saints' Day the next year, the wreaths almost doubled in number. Emblems of the cathedral were also made. All these new ideas meant new opportunities for further financial help.

Based on the good progress of the work, Bishop Sándor Kovács of Szombathely set the date for the rededication of the Cathedral for September 7, 1947; and for the next day, the Feast of Mary, he planned a large-scale celebration as well. He was guided by the idea that by combining the consecration of the church dedicated to the Virgin Mary with the Marian Congress, this double event would strengthen the veneration of the Virgin Mother in the souls of the parishioners.

By early 1947, the scaffolding had been moved inside, and the construction of the vaulted roof could commence above the 30 meter long nave. Over one hundred thousand bricks were used to complete the nave, and Monsignor Elek Sággy, the general overseer of the project, put the last brick in place. Three hundred square meters of glass were used for the glazing of the exterior big window openings.

It was a big surprise for the construction manager and his crew when Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, a native son of the county of Vas, went to inspect the reconstruction of the church, the church in which he was ordained to the priesthood in 1915.

The tempo of the reconstruction affected the neighboring Bishop's Palace as well. The main hall and its wide connecting corridors became the workshops of artists and sculptors. Sounds of the chisels and shredders resounded under the skilled hands of carpenters, artists, locksmiths and glazers.

The reconstruction of the sanctuary and the transept proceeded at a fast pace. Nearly 8000 square meters of interior wall surfaces needed plastering and painting. When finally the interior scaffolds were removed, 200,000 labor-hours of two and a half years had been expended on the Cathedral. Four-fifths of the work valued at one million Forints has been contributed by the priests and their parishioners, and one fifth was provided by the County, City and State combined.

This was good work, blessed work, with never any grumbling or cursing. The workers felt they were working in God's house, because beginning in December, 1946 some services were already being conducted in the undamaged Madonna Chapel. "God was with us," said one of the workers – there had been no accidents during construction. Only once did the construction elevator break down, but even then it was loaded only with bricks.

3. Spiritual Preparation

Bishop Sándor Kovács, while still visiting the ruins, sent the message that "even before the Cathedral's reconstruction gets completed, with God's help, I wish to continue building God's church in the souls of the people." The Bishop continued his monthly First Sunday eucharistic homilies in the Salesians' Church. From the fall of 1946 until May, 1947, at the diocesan Bishop's request, all parishioners participated in an eight-day Mission. Members of eight religious orders and numerous parish priests led the 350,000 faithful on the road to spiritual renewal. On two Sundays in May, 1947, 10,000 men made the pilgrimage to the Virgin Mother's holy sites at Vasvár and Kiscell. Parishes organized six pilgrimages for the diocese's 3,000 girls, who thus demonstrated their faithfulness to the Mother of Good Counsel.

Educators of the Diocese joined in the spiritual renewal in exemplary fashion: In Szombathely, Kőszeg and Zalaegerszeg, 220 teachers (120 men and 100 women) completed their spiritual renewal in closed retreats. These are not just data, these are results. The faithful, in tandem with the construction of the Church, also built and decorated temples of the Holy Spirit in their own souls. God's grace cut deeper than the horrors of war and life's current sufferings.

II.

The Rededication Ceremony

1. The Eve of the Ceremony

a. The Final Touches

In August, 1947 the diocesan bishop established from the priests and the congregation of Szombathely an organizing committee of 30, which made weekly reports on its work and prepared the program for the cathedral's Rededication and Marian Congress of September step by step. Alajos Werner, the teacher of the Academy of Music wrote a composition for the texts written by two poet-priests of the diocese, László Székely and József Rozman, so that the congregation gathering for the rededication would praise the Virgin Mary with a song appropriate for the occasion.

Men were working on the interior of the cathedral almost till the last moments. The sanctuary (almost a separate church on its own) preserved a lot from the furnishing and marble ornaments of the old church. These could more or less be renovated. However the transept and the nave were awaiting the ceremony with no furnishing or pews, with freshly plastered, bare walls and a cement floor. The side altars were carefully covered with pine garlands, the bareness of the walls were veiled with the papal and the Hungarian national colors. The cleaning and scrubbing was done by the eager women of the Altar Society of the cathedral parish, but following ancient tradition the maid and women-group of the Perint parish took part in it as well, since their village had been part of the unified Szombathely parish until 1930. The church towers were decorated with flags; huge Hungarian and papal flags were waving two stories high above the square, the Bishop's Palace, the seminary, Szily János Street and Széchenyi István Street. An atmosphere of a great celebration prevailed over the city.

b. Arrival of Church Dignitaries

From the members of the Hungarian episcopate József Grósz, Archbishop of Kalocsa, former diocesan bishop of Szombathely arrived a few days before the ceremonies started. On the 7th, in the afternoon arrived one by one: Gyula Czapik, Archbishop of Eger, Endre Hamvas, Bishop of Csanád, József Pétery, Bishop of Vác, Vince Kováts, Auxiliary Bishop of Vác, László Bánáss papal *trónálló* of Veszprém, Kálmán Papp, papal *trónálló* of Győr, Lajos Shvoy papal *trónálló*, Bishop of Székesfehérvár. After them arrived: János Folba, archdeacon, head of the army diocese, Vendel Endrédy, abbot of Zirc, Pál Sárközy, Benedictine governing abbot, Jenő Simonffy provost of Csorna and the provincials of the monastic orders.

The congregation of the city was expecting Cardinal Prince Primate József Mindszenty to arrive at 6 p.m. Gyula Szakos, head school superintendent of the diocese travelled to meet him at the border of the diocese. On the border of the county, in Jánosháza, the cardinal was greeted by the Lord Lieutenant and the Deputy Lieutenant of the county. The bells of the cathedral started to ring out signaling that the Hungarian High Priest arrived. At the border of the city, at the Cross in Rumi Street, a crowd was waiting. József Németh, town clerk, greeted the cardinal on behalf of the city which was 90 percent Catholic, Latin in its culture and maintained the strongest ties with the Eternal City of Rome. Árpád Vidos, the lay president of the congregation conveyed the respect of the parishioners. Responding to the greetings, His Eminence expressed his appreciation to the people of the church-building city with these words: "Blessed are the people who start reconstruction with the churches".

The crowd on the square in front of the Bishop's Palace was continuing to grow larger and larger. Inside, in the lobby, led by the Diocesan Bishop, the members of the Hungarian episcopate, the canons of the Vasvár-Szombathely chapter, the abbots, provosts and provincials of the Hungarian monastic orders, the teachers and students of the Theological College and the Franciscan Theology and priests and monks of Szombathely were waiting for and greeted the cardinal (who was accompanied by András Zakar, archiepiscopal secretary) with enthusiastic applause. Sándor Kovács, Diocesan Bishop greeted him as the Cardinal of the Church, the Prince Primate of the country, the former priest of the Szombathely diocese, the "native son" of Vas County returning home. In his response the prince primate said, among other things: "Church-builders have strong souls. I came here to take part in the joy of the builders and the congregation. I came home and I am happy I can be in my birthplace on the day its cathedral is rededicated and on the Holy Day of Mary. I wish that great joy will come for our congregation and all of us from the blessings of this dual celebration."

The crowd on the square joined the applause of the priests, they greeted the cardinal with fervent enthusiasm when he, together with the bishops, stepped out to the balcony to thank the congregation for their love in a few words: "I came home with joy - he said - because though the primate of the country is at home everywhere, he is still most at home here, on the ancient land of Vas, his homeland."

After the greeting ceremony, the lights next to the metal statue of Bishop Szily were lit, illuminating the cathedral. High spirits filled the city and the people's souls.

c. Open-air Festival

Bells tolled for the Angelus. The lit square of the church and its surroundings were filled with the crowd. People were hurrying in groups towards the seminary from the Bishop's Palace, at the gates of which policemen in new uniforms were standing as an honour guard. The facade of the cathedral was shining as in daylight. In the square yard of the seminary, under the starry sky on the open-air stage the theatrical group from Szöllös preformed the play written for the

occasion by János Németh, pastor from the 4th district: "The Cathedral Speaks". The author commemorated the struggles of the construction of the church which began at the beginning of the 1790s. Bishop János Szily, the first builder of the church came to life, with plans in his hand, along with architects Hefele and Amreith, painter Maulbertsch, sculptor Prokop and other clerical and lay contemporaries. In the forthcoming scenes the 170-year history of the church was staged, and thus the present was bound with the past. The experienced and widely-known amateur group proved to be worthy in its preparedness of the appreciation of audience.

2. The Rededication of the Cathedral

Pilgrimage started in the early morning of September 7th. Parishes from Szombathely and the country arrived one by one, led by their pastors. The first pilgrim train arrived from Zalaegerszeg, with more than 1000 passengers. Scheduled trains arrived with extra carriages. The crowd filled the square of the cathedral, the bishop's garden behind the church, the remaining ruins of the town hall, the square in front of the Bishop's Palace as far as the county hall.

At 9 o'clock the ringing of bells signaled when the Cardinal Prince Primate and the bishops left the Bishop's Palace. Surpliced priests lined up in the square of the church. The Schola Cantorum Sabariensis was singing *Ecce sacerdos* on the choir of the closed cathedral. The Cardinal Prince Primate, accompanied by his assistants, started the moving ceremony of atonement and dedication of the church. After the introductory prayers he took the bundle of hyssop in his hands and sprinkled holy water on the outer walls of the cathedral. Meanwhile, seminarists were singing the psalm of repentance (Psalm 50):

"Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow...

Create in me a clean heart, O God...

Cast me not away from thy presence;

And take not thy holy Spirit from me.

Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation...

Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;

And sinners shall be converted unto thee. "

After the prayers the litany of All Saints was started, the gates of the cathedral were opened and the cardinal approached the main altar with his assistants. The crowd was praying on the square and streets around the church. Every moment of the ceremony was broadcast through speakers. "Be so kind to conciliate this church"- came the sound from the speakers and thousands of people answered humbly: "Lord, hear our prayer." After the sprinkling of the inner walls, the congregation started to pour in through three gates.

First the builders stepped over the threshold of the church and took their places in the Sanctuary. These workmen with steady labor made possible the Re-Consecration of the cathedral in two short years.

The people are streaming into the church in an orderly fashion. The Nave, and Transept areas are filled with worshipers patiently standing. Even the side altars areas are filled with people. There are 5,000 + persons inside the church and ten times as many outside in the cathedral square and in the streets adjoining. Everyone is singing the hymn, “O Blessed Mother, the Patroness of our Country, the Patroness of our Diocese”... When the singing stopped, the bells of the cathedral started ringing, as well as, the bells of all churches in Szombathely. The bishop had instructed that at this very moment, every church in the Diocese should sound its bells, signifying the joy of the re-constructed cathedral and to its re-consecration to the Glory of God. At this moment, 350,000 people of the Diocese heard the bells ringing all at the same time.

The first Holy Mass

(the first service of the day)

While the congregation was assembling in the church, Cardinal Mindszenty put on the vestments. At the Epistle side of the Sanctuary the assembled Bishops and church dignitaries were kneeling. In the Canon’s Stalls and in the rows of seating in the Sanctuary area, sat the advisory board members of the Szombathely cathedral as well as Assembly Board members of other cities, such as Vasvar. Furthermore, the representatives of the University and the Abbots of the religious orders, took their places. Other dignitaries, city and county officials, sat in the rows of chairs along with representatives of Catholic organizations, and representatives of the Diocese. An unassuming figure sitting on one of the chairs and who was praying quietly, was the mother of Cardinal Mindszenty.

The High Mass began and was officiated by Cardinal Mindszenty with distinguished assistants. Mihály Radvány, who was a Teacher of Theology, conducted the Schola Cantorum Sabariensis in the choir loft (at the back of the cathedral), singing a Palestrina polyphonic setting for the Mass. At the same time, a “silent” Mass was being celebrated at the outside steps to the entrance of the cathedral at a temporary altar, so that the large crowd assembled on the square could also see the Celebrant and hear (from speakers outside) the progress of the service inside, as an active participant. In addition to the speakers installed at the cathedral square, there were also speakers set up in the surrounding streets leading from the cathedral for the thousands who had gathered there. The sky was beautifully clear and sunny this September day. There wasn’t a single cloud visible.

After the Gospel reading, Bishop Sándor Kovács delivered the first Homily from the pulpit of the newly reconstructed cathedral.

As an introduction to his sermon, Bishop Sándor Kovács read from the First Book of Ezra, Chapter 3, verses 10 - 12, which deals with the dedication of the temple (at Jerusalem) when the Jews returned from captivity.

“When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David, king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord. Then all of the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes.”

Also: Nehemiah, Chapter 9 vs. 16 - 38

"Our fathers hardened their necks and did not listen to your commandments... They did not remember the miracles that you performed for them... Therefore, you allowed that they would fall into the enemies hands... You are the true to every that has fallen upon us... Faithful, but we acted without faith... Therefore we entered into a covenant, put it into writing and sealed it..."

Bishop Sándor Kovács continued, “Let us praise God’s Providence by singing the Gloria and declaring the Word of the Lord for the first time in this reconstructed cathedral.”

The Bishop then recalled the events of March 4, 1945 which was a very sorrowful day in the Szombathely Diocese, more brutal than previous calamities that fell on the city such as: the Turkish invasion and destruction of the 1605, the Black Plague of 1710, and the fire-storm that destroyed Szombathely in 1715, because not only was the cathedral destroyed, but a large section of the city became ruins in an instant with nearly 500 people dying. "When we think of this sad date, continued the speaker, we do this with faith and supernatural thinking. We are looking for facts and reasons in this second World War beyond the ones that can be humanly determined. We agree with Pope Pius the X, that humanity often got into unfortunate situations because it strayed from God’s ways and did not keep God’s laws, so that the spiritual unity was severed between peoples as the Apocalyptic Horses are still roaming around the world.

However, we cannot stop at the bare conclusion; St. John’s Revelation cannot be locked into any particular framework of historical dates, but it warns Christians of all the ages, that innocent people also have to suffer because of the Sins of the Godless, however, at the same time the Lord’s consolation is sounding as follows: " The Bishop then quotes from the Book of Revelations, Chapter 2. vs’s 9 - 10.

“I know of your tribulations and your poverty..., have no fear of the sufferings to come..., remain faithful until death, and I will give you the Crown of Life.”

This thought sprung a pledge from our souls at seeing the destruction of the cathedral: We will rebuild with all of our spiritual and material resources because we wish to serve the "Glory of God" and the peace and happiness of men.

We rebuilt our cathedral, primarily to provide the moral strength which is necessary for the re-construction of our country, and from this source of strength, it could spread all over our Diocese. Our cathedral is the Mother of all churches in the Diocese. It is the resource and the leader of all the spiritual work which gives men grace to be reborn and guarantees adulthood in Christ.

Every church is the "Well of Grace" which makes every one a child of God through the Sacrament of Baptism, but, the Chrism for this Baptism is received from the cathedral. Catholic people pray in every church and learn to struggle for their faith. The necessary strength for this struggle is received in the Sacrament of Confirmation for a catholic person, so he could be a faithful witness to his faith by practicing it's laws. The Sacrament of Confirmation refers you back to the cathedral. Every church receives its dignity from the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass to the Heavenly Father, but the celebrant of the Mass receives his priestly authority in the cathedral. The Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is the basis for a-family's life. By Canon Law this priestly authority is given to the celebrant and this radiates from the cathedral. Every catholic receives on his eyes, the Blessed Oils at the end of his life, which is distributed from the cathedral to every parish.

So this is why we had to continue to carry out the re-construction of the cathedral, no matter what the sacrifice, so this great work could progress more forcefully to attain peoples spiritual rebirth and Christian growth, and guarantee a better and more peaceful time.

Secondly, we rebuilt our cathedral because we not only wish to bless ourselves with the graces that radiate from the cathedral, but we also want to build the Kingdom of God according to Christ's teachings with our prayers, atonement and the way we conduct our lives. We wish to be striving Catholics to which we are especially obliged by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and we receive our strength here at the cathedral for this struggle.

This battle for God's Kingdom cannot be measured with disintegrating and conflicting theories, but can only be understood in the light of the truths of our faith. Therefore, we demand that in every religious and church matter, totally unbiased, and objective opinion should prevail. Not only our country, but the entire world is suffering from a terrible crisis. Pope Pius the 12th. said on July 1st.1941, that the conflicts of our present time are spread all over the world, and the voices coming from the world's radio station antennas express irritation, despair, disagreement and crisis. Therefore, we had to rebuild the cathedral, so the faithful missionaries of God's Kingdom could receive grace to prepare for their work.

The church is now standing. Gratefulness and Thankfulness sounds from our lips. Surrounded by the ruins of our city and reduced to poverty, only Divine Providence and intervention of the Blessed Virgin Mary made the rebuilding possible. "We glorify you God... (fm. Te Deum). We trusted in you and no shame came to us." At the same time we think of Christ's earthly Regent (the Pope), with a grateful heart, who could make us conscious of his fatherly goodness in the midst of the world's large problems. The truth that the Catholic Church is the educator and mother of nations is still valid. It has been with the Hungarian nation and all its suffering throughout a thousand years and endured its share of the hardships. The church had not abandoned the faithful during the Koppány uprising, on the Mohi plains, at Mohács, and the church did not forsake the people during the recent war, but endured the sufferings, accepted the poverty of the people, and helped with the reconstruction.

When I celebrated the last Mass in our cathedral (March 4, 1945), it was the Anniversary of the Coronation of our Holy Father. Now when we offered the first sacrifice of the Mass, we turn towards Him with our child-like gaze and ask for God's Blessing on him the Pope, our Holy Father.

I give thanks to God that I found priests and faithful lay people in the course of reconstruction, who are worthy of the ancient Christians, who also had attended The Basilica of Saint Quirinus, the early church on this site. I am mentioning with gratefulness the assistance for reconstruction given to me by the Ministry of Culture. I have to thank especially the generous assistance by the County of Vas and the City of Szombathely. I want to thank my priests and my faithful citizens for the assistance of clearing the ruins, the manual labor and the financial sacrifice as well as prayers and moral support. All of this help made it possible that the cathedral is standing again and every one whom I have mentioned above, (and everyone knows well his contribution), that in front of the good Lord, I am thanking them, my faithful co-workers, and I ask God's Blessing on them all. I sense in them what the Evangelist said about Jesus the Lord: "The ardent fervor for God's house consumes me". Then I have to emphasize especially the contribution, the achievement of the skilled crafts people who considered this work their holy responsibility, and accomplished the rebuilding of the church with fervent enthusiasm. Every single worker felt that he was building a house for the Lord, and not a single disrespectful word was heard and the construction was never delayed because of a wage problem. Their names are indelibly written into the cathedral walls.

However, when I remember gratefully the various assistance, I have to emphasize, that the moral and spiritual forces showed us what the catholic reconstruction is capable of with God's Grace. The church is standing but it can only remain in existence in the future if we build God's church in our souls. God's church built from stone and our soul's church are in such close contact with each other that neither one can exist without the other. God's church that was built in our souls is a much stronger preserver of the cathedral than any cement or stone.

Therefore, I warn you with the Apostle (Peter) "1st. Peter ch. 2 vs 5"

"You are living stones built as an edifice of the spirit into a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".

Bishop Sándor: "You too, like living stones, build yourself up into a spiritual house, a Holy Priesthood, so that you could offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ".

The cathedral opened its gates. When we entered, jubilant singing and tearful crying filled the air as it had during the celebration of the temple reconstruction at the return of the Jews from their captivity. We reminisced about the lost beauty of our former cathedral and wept. We thought about the spiritual mission of our church and rejoiced. We also remembered those who sacrificed their lives along with the cathedral, beginning with two worthy members of the cathedral staff, through the 500 victims of our city, down to the smallest children who had been fortified with God's Grace when they had received the Eucharist on the first Sunday of the month, then died and stepped in front God's Altar to reconcile with Him as members of the Holy Innocents. I turn to you "Martyred Souls"; do not cease to intercede in front of God's throne so that God would have mercy on us. We would like to enter into a covenant with the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, pleading for help, so we could rebuild everything on this earth, our churches, our homes and our schools. We would also like to rebuild our entire lives so that there would be no more hatred, anger, envy, indecency, and discord, but there would be harmony among the God seeking and God fearing spirits both in the social and national life. This is how the angel's promise on Christmas Eve becomes reality; "There will be Peace on Earth for all mankind."

The Celebration by the Youth:

(the second service of the day)

The Mass consecrating the cathedral ended with a Thanksgiving Hymn. The congregation departed giving room to the students who were assembling behind the church around the ruins of the Roman Province and the Saint Quirinus Basilica. Girls and boys formed long lines led by their teachers. The large crowd in the square (in front of the cathedral) took delight in seeing this procession, watched with joy this hope of a better future. Surely the old tree with such beautiful bloom will bear fruit again...

The church was filled to overflowing. The service was attended by Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty and Diocesan Bishop Sándor Kovács. The prayers of the bishops merged with the chants and prayers of the youth, which were both Te Deum (Thanksgiving) and Veni Sancte (Come Holy Spirit) at the same time.

Lajos Shvoy, Bishop of Székesfehérvár, celebrated a silent Mass. Prior to the Mass he intoned the *Veni Sancte*, joined by 5000 young voices singing *Come, Holy Ghost!*

Following the Gospel, Bishop Kálmán Papp of Győr addressed the youth from the pulpit: "Following the consecration and Mass at the newly reconstructed cathedral— began the Bishop – we are calling on you, our young people first, as you were the first in removing the rubble and began the reconstruction of this edifice. You should be first in giving thanks and rejoicing over the resurrection of this church, which in spite of the war did not become its victim, but stands here fully restored to its former greatness and glory, albeit not its complete splendor. We called you also to let your prayers, your Veni Sancte be the first at the commencement of this new school year..

Next he turned to the newly rededicated Church as their example.

"During the Middle Ages, for those who could not read the Bible, it was the pictures in the church that taught them their faith's fundamentals. The walls of this church were at one time covered with such fine art pictures, but were destroyed. But three existing pictures give us an example of the past few years and show us the way for the future in this new school year.

The first picture shows us the glory of *The Work of Man*. The date of March 4, 1945, was a dark day in the history of Szombathely, when a large part of the cathedral was completely destroyed. And still, after the panic and the smoke of the detonation had barely settled, the reconstruction workers were already there: The Bishop with his priests, and the faithful of the city and the diocese. They vowed that the cathedral will be rebuilt. It seemed an enormous challenge, yet they proceeded with the work, and as you can now witness, through their efforts they accomplished their goal.

How this was possible under such difficult circumstances is shown to us by the second picture, which depicts the triumph of *Faith and Love*. A lot of money and the cooperation of the designers and workers were needed for the reconstruction. But all of this would have been in vain had not they been filled with faith and love. They wanted to build a beautiful house for God and their faith in God gave them the strength for building it. They cared for their fellowmen, and for the faithful, who were left without their church, they wanted to ensure a source of grace – so they built the church. Only faith can lift up; doubt and faithlessness only pulls down and unnerves us. Only love can build – hate only destroys.

The third picture: A dove, which is the symbol of the *Holy Spirit*. There is no point in building if the Lord doesn't build as well. At the beginning of creation God's soul hovered over the swirling waters and from this chaos He made order. The Savior of the World, who by the Holy Spirit was incarnate in the Virgin Mary, came to the aid of sinful man. On the first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the whole earth and gave the apostles the strength to fulfill their duties. Similarly, for the last two and a half years the Holy Spirit gave us again a miracle, because by his grace the reconstruction could be accomplished.

You too, on this beginning of the new school year should lift up your souls and ask for the Holy Spirit's help: *Veni Sancte Spiritus!* He will come, will shine his grace upon you, but you also need to work for this grace. Without the Holy Spirit you can do nothing, and without your cooperation the Holy Spirit will not live within you. At the beginning of this school year, these three pictures should be your guide: The hard work, the faithful's love and the grace of God. For the student, hard work means serious learning and acquiring knowledge. We live in a complex world, so learning is even more important today. The Catholic youth of today should not dwell on the past –though it should appreciate the values of the past – but should look toward the future with confidence. Start your work like the church builders: with faith and love. Guard consciously your faith in God and your adherence to the Catholic Church. Religion should not only mean the first subject in school, but here and outside of school the truths and precepts of the Catholic faith should be your guide as to how you can build in your souls the temple of the Holy Spirit. Ask for the Holy Spirit's help in your life and in your work. Try to live a pure, sinless and virtuous life; draw from the sources of grace, especially from the Holy Mass and by the frequent reception of the Eucharist. According to St. Paul's words, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit and the spirit of God lives within you. The struggling Catholic Church needs a strong youth to help the rebirth of our poor savaged homeland. The Holy Spirit will make you strong!

This school year is also the year of the Virgin Mary. She gazes down on you with joy, because you are the flower of the new life. Put your souls, like flowers, at the altar of his Holy Son, and through the intercession of your heavenly Mother you will accomplish what we have prayed for: *Veni Sancte Spiritus!* The Holy Spirit will radiate upon you, life will start again, and the earth will renew itself.”

3. Commemorative Events

a. Meeting of the Men's Credo Club

While the young people were praying in the cathedral, the men of the Credo Club held their diocesan meeting.

Árpád Vidos, the lay president of the diocese of Szombathely, welcomed the assembled bishops, the speakers of the meeting and the multitude of men.

József Pétery, Bishop of Vác, in his opening speech mentioned the steadfast John the Baptist, for whom Jesus merited glorification, as an example for the Credo Club members. (Matthew 11, 11) “Today’s Catholic men are full of good intentions. But the intentions in themselves are not enough, there has to be a life of grace as well. And this will only become evident if they partake at Jesus’ table as often as possible”, concluded the presiding bishop in his homily.

Father Kornél Böle, the head of the house, initiated the hundred Salesian members of the Credo, while Father Bertalan Badalik, the head of the Budapest branch and the president of the national Credo club, spoke about the Year of the Virgin Mary and the tenets of the true devotion to Mary. József Kamarás from Balassagyarmat, secretary of the Credo Club, spoke about the duties of the Credo Club members.

In the meantime, Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty arrived, who gave a short speech to the Credo members. Among other things, he stated:

“If nowadays we are in dire need of something, it is the clear vision and the strong will of Catholic men. They have to stand up to different worldviews, even to those that yesterday perhaps didn’t exist. Well, then the faith declared two-thousand years ago, sealed with Christ’s blood and strengthened by Christ’s resurrection, as well as the two thousand-year old history of the human race and the one-thousand year old Hungarian history shows us clearly that this faith known by its truth and reassurance must be defended.

It is especially important for the men to defend the faith. It is beautiful to see youth praying, it is beautiful to see a devoted woman in prayer; but the most beautiful sight is when grown men, Hungarian fathers, are praying, giving testimony of the true faith, which has been passed down to us for thirty generations. It is in this faith that the Hungarian men must be strong in, have to live by, and they must raise their children with this conviction.

The Catholic Church has great significance in Hungary. I frequently visit the different parts of the country and I see that the Church is present everywhere. Anyone who has seen the pilgrimages of the Catholic Hungarian people this year or last year; whoever has witnessed the processions and public prayers of the hundreds of thousands of people from North to South and from East to West; anyone who saw the procession of the Holy Right followed by over half a million faithful; that person can happily and proudly say: Thank you, God, for my being a Catholic!

It is in this conviction that the members of the Credo club should stand firmly, always faithful to Christ and the Church! This will mark the true rebuilding of Hungary.”

The Cardinal’s homily was received with unceasing applause, and the great multitude of men fell to their knees to receive his blessing.

The closing speech was given by Father Kornél Böle with these words: “Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. To be true to Christ is our Christian duty; to be close to the Church is Christ’s command!”

b. Among the builders of the cathedral

At noon on September 7, Diocesan Bishop Sándor Kovács hosted the workers, engineers, contractors and architect who had worked on the cathedral. The members of the episcopal hierarchy were also present. On the left and right of Cardinal Mindszenty were two workers, and all the other workers were seated among the archbishops, bishops and abbots. The principal contractor greeted the Cardinal on behalf of all the workers, and thanked the diocesan bishop for this caring love and support during the time of the construction.

Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty answered the workers’ greeting.

“I have been talking with an eighty-year-old, retired lay teacher about the meaning of life; he said: I’ve lived through three major tragedies in my lifetime. I grumbled against all of them, but now that many years have passed, I can see that God intended my own good by those trials. I say to you, I, who already have one foot in the grave: Do not fret or complain. Because if you cannot comprehend certain things now, you will understand in two or three decades, or if not in this life, in the afterlife for sure”.

If I look for the many circumstances of the terrible tragedy that befell the Cathedral, which was the pride and heart of Szombathely, among its effects we can see that the reconstruction begat from everyone’s soul priceless spiritual values, the likes of which would never have come forth had the Cathedral remained intact. Those who took part in the work saw that the church-building was successful not due to calculations; I have always known that churches are never built out of pocketbooks but by human hearts. I also have started to build a church with practically nothing, not even a moldy straw, but the church was built, because the people stood by it in spite of their poverty, and adopted God’s project as their very own.

The laborer can see the value of conscientious leadership. The worker merits praise for his good work – as does the intellectual worker, but above all, God’s blessing is needed. Man’s labor is in vain if God’s blessing is not asked for. If we appreciate the value of physical labor, intellectual labor, and intertwine it with praying for God’s grace – once we attain all of this, any misgiving or grumblings are silenced, and the “Holy God We Praise Thee” rings out again in the collapsed but newly rebuilt church, since we have witnessed truths that are concealed from our day-to-day life.

The convention of the Marian Congress in Ottawa (Canada) was attended by over one hundred thousand people, including the five quintuples and their mother. As the five girls sang the Lourdes hymn “Ave, Ave, Ave Maria”, I watched their mother’s transfixed face as to what she might be thinking: God has called forth these five lives to praise the Virgin Mother in front of all Canada.

The construction workers attending the rededication must feel the same way, as they present to God their holiest sacrifice, their own handiwork: the new Cathedral. When I remembered during the Mass the living and the dead, I placed on the Paten every petition sent from earth to the Lord. Those who prayed and sang here today will, at the end of their lives, be buried in the cemetery. But your priceless sacrifice will always continue to be present in the Holy Eucharist, people will unceasingly go to the confessional for solace and to the Communion railing for fortitude. And all the blessings will descend upon the hands and souls of those, who without any misgivings, that is, with prayerful souls, carried on the building of the cathedral.

I raise my glass to cheer the workers' team, who understood what they were working on; who understood that this is really "high building"- in the spiritual sense. I greet this community which was indeed united, just as their hands are now joined in prayer. This special community spirit that arose around this cathedral should be preserved by the workers and the Catholic Church – and also in the future, these linked hands should never unfold. God bless the Catholic Church and the community of workers!"

The workers thanked Cardinal Mindszenty's words with extended applause. From their watchful eyes and faces all could perceive that the Primate's words came from the heart and their own hearts were uplifted by them.

The Diocesan Bishop rose to speak next and expressed his gratitude to the workers, the contractor, engineers, and the members of the clergy most active in the project, then added:

"Those workers who continued to be faithful in spite of adverse statements about the Church and its members – although not shaken in their faith, but still hurt by such remarks - could now see first-hand that the leading members of the Church did not remonstrate about their poverty when they were deprived of their former holdings. This same fate was shared by the bishops of this Church, but still they proceeded to rebuild, because they wanted to provide work opportunities to many who otherwise would have been out of work. In the past two-and-a-half years the workers became better acquainted with their Bishop and his priests; learned to appreciate its social service agenda, which does not rely on revolutions or atheism, but with God's love could show that it can help the reconstruction even when at times it seemed humanly impossible. Every worker who participated in the construction – the bishop said in closing – became a member of a holy alliance. From this day on, we will reconvene every year for a thanksgiving Mass and Holy Communion and we will bring together all those who built this church. There will be no wages paid for this - only spiritual strength without which there is no reconstruction."

(The afternoon concert)

c. In praise of the Art of Song

Five choirs from the area of the Diocese came to the newly dedicated cathedral to enrich the souls with their religious, artful songs.

“On this day of joy and mirth – as Alajos Werner said – they wanted to present a bouquet laced with thankful melodies, exalted rhythms, a harmony of sounds and hearts – to compensate for all the tears, to secure smiles for the future, but mostly, for thanking the Holy Mother for giving us willingness to rebuild Her temple from the ruins.

On the afternoon of the rededication, in the presence of Cardinal Mindszenty and his fellow priests, for two hours the souls of three thousand faithful rose towards God on the wings of prayer-songs. The foreword for the concert was given from the pulpit by Dr. Alajos Werner, the professor of the Music Academy, with the following thoughtful meditation:

“Human history – he reflected – started with the ruins of the lost Paradise and its way continues through these ruins. But humanity was given singing prophets, who could not accept such ruins, but proclaimed with the Psalmist (Psalm 108:2*): *‘Wake up, cither, harp – I want to tint the dawn with my song’ – and they recalled the old melodies from the lost Paradise, and composed new songs about the Paradise to be regained.* *107 in original.

What was the star that always kept kindling and calling them, and did not allow their lutes to fade and their songs to get tired? God lit up above the ruins a star: the *Stella Matutina*, the portrait of the Virgin Mary. And ever since then, the Christian faithful surrounded this star with every form of art: Paintings, sculptures, poetry and architecture, but mostly with the language of the heart and soaring spirit: Music. Before there were any churches dedicated to Her (the first one was built in 363 A.D.), before there were any Marian holidays (the first one was in Syria c. 380 A.D.), on the example of St. Ephraim (who died in 373 A.D.), Christians already were praising the Virgin Mother every day, on every hour. At the birth of Christianity the Church was already singing about Mary, as the “Star of the Sea”, “Portal of Heaven”, “Priceless Flower of Heaven.”

Maybe it is not a coincidence that in the musical history of Hungary, the first song with notation is about the Holy Virgin; the song of the Franciscan friar András Vásárhelyi: “Mother of the Holy Angels” which was preserved for posterity on the Codex of Nádor (1508). Many years before the Turkish-Tartar ruins and even before the conversion of the faith, the praise to the Holy Virgin was ingrained in the Hungarian heart and soul. In the centuries that followed, these hymns about Mary resounded across Hungary that was in ruins– either in the hearts of some of the people, or through the entire history of the Nation: these songs about the Virgin Mary were a balm for our aching hearts. Oh, how many times did the Virgin sing into our hearts, into the conscience of the Nation, to the entire history of mankind! In the deep abyss of darkness, in the starless nights and lost trails, when dark thoughts tempted us, out of the depths of the souls or from faraway angels’ lips sprang up the Ave Maria, Salve Regina, Ave Maris Stella, our Mother in Heaven, or the Stretch out to us, Oh Holy Mother, thy Hand. And the sounds, that called back to the lost Paradise, once more showed the way, and from the ruins they vaulted us into new life.

Now, in this concert to the Holy Virgin, the fine choirs of Szombathely and its diocese, in the name of all of us and in thanksgiving, will present to us those churches and chapels dedicated to Mary, which for over centuries were built with living faith, feeling hearts and joyful souls. Bombs could not destroy these living, singing churches, and even time cannot diminish their beauty or brilliance, because every day they are rebuilt in the soaring souls and good hearts, emanating from the lips of the singers.”

The speaker left the pulpit and in the sanctuary the songs started to be heard. There were five mixed choirs on the program:

The Cecilia choir from the diocese of Szombathely, conducted by Boldizsár Horváth;

The choir from the parish of Kőszeg, conducted by János Szabó;

The choir from the parish of Zalaegerszeg, conducted by Ferenc Vargha;

The Salesian choir and orchestra from Szombathely, conducted by Mihály Schmidt;

The famous ensemble Scola Cantorum Sabariensis, conducted by Dr. Mihály Radvány.

The choirs presented the jewels of the sacred songs – in the works of Liszt, Kodály, Bárdos, Werner, Harmat, Deák and Szabó, the choirs showed us the beauty of the Hungarian sacred music; and through the works of Victoria, Lassus, Viadana, Pagella, Josquin and Schubert, the choirs showed us the rich world of polyphony from foreign lands.

The heard choral pieces radiated the Blessed Mother’s presence. Different composers projected different styles, but each chorus manifested the same greeting, the Ave Maria to the Holy Virgin with the same child-like love and artful experience. The Marian songs transported the audience to the manger of the Babe of Bethlehem, the trembling hands of Simeon, to the suffering of Golgotha. The songs conjured the glorious image of the Holy Mother of God and the Sorrowful Mother’s tearful eyes, in order that they may rise to the glorious and crowned Holy Virgin, in whose protection and words we have the greatest trust.

This joint concert of the participating choirs was made unforgettable by the rendition of the ancient Marian song: “Our Holy Mother” in the arrangement by Artur Harmat and conducted by the composer himself.

Everyone was deeply moved; it brought penitence, pleading, trust into the hearts, and for a long time afterwards the words were echoed in the minds of the departing crowd: “Do not forget our forsaken Nation and its long-suffering people!”...

4. Light in the Night

a. Candlelight procession

Dusk fell over the city. And then, it was as if the Church of the catacombs had opened up, such was the enormous multitude. From the village of Olad by the Zanati road, and on the opposite side from Kámon to Szentkirály, the crowd thronged the streets of the downtown area, and as if guided by some unseen power, they proceeded for hours toward the church of the Salesian Monastery. From eight o'clock at night, starting from Salesian Square, the crowd lined up along the one-and-a-half kilometer route through Tánctsis Mihály Street, Kálvária Street and Óperint Street, so that they would be able to participate in the procession held in honor of the Mother of Perpetual Help.

Sándor Kovács, diocesan bishop, bid farewell to the church of St. Quirinus (the Salesian Church), where for three semesters this bishop, deprived of his cathedral, had enjoyed the loving care of the students of Don Bosco

He recalled the memories of his function as bishop: the men's retreat, the diocesan Masses, the Adoration of the Sacrament on the first Sundays of the month.

“For the students of Don Bosco – continued the bishop – the Virgin's name day with the procession of the statue of the Mother of Perpetual Help, is an especially great feast, which today is combined with the liturgical one. We are returning the statue of the Mother of Perpetual Help, thus giving testimony of our love to our Holy Mother. And we are also returning the function of the cathedral: the bishop's work, as well as the blessing of the holy chrism, the reception of the Holy Orders, the Holy Masses, because once again they will continue to be held at the rebuilt cathedral. But we will not forget that this is the church which gave us refuge. I cannot express better my gratitude than with the wish that the intercession of Don Bosco bless and protect his sons; that his spirit continue to live in them and that this parish of Szombathely, which at one time was in a neglected part of the city, be fruitful in blessings, rich in strength and be holy ground to the nation of God.”

Then the bells of the Salesian church, as well as all the churchbells in the city rang out, the windows were lit up, and forty thousand faithful, candles in hand and singing voices, started toward the cathedral accompanying the statue of the Mother of Perpetual Help. The procession was led the József Pétery, bishop of Vác, with the participation of Cardinal Mindszenty, as well as the entire College of Bishops.

At least ten thousand people from the countryside joined the procession, among them one thousand faithful from Zalaegerszeg and eight hundred from Szentpéterfa. Just at the time the procession was to start two hundred dusty pilgrims arrived on foot after a 42 kilometer trek from Zalaháshágy.

The people of the city and countryside carried the statue of the Holy Virgin for an hour and a half through the city. At the start of the procession, the vanguard stood at the Óperint Street bridge, and the end was at the Salesion Square. The youth of Szombathely marched in separate groups, led by their Sunday school teachers. Along the route of the procession, the windows were decorated with flowers, lit candles, and pictures of the Holy Virgin. Those walking in the procession carried rosaries, music sheets and a lit candle. Marian songs alternated with decades of the rosary. These were hours of intimate prayer. The faithful were one heart, one soul – the marching multitudes provided lasting impressions to those who watched from the outside, from the sidewalks, burning candle in hand, moved to tears by this unequalled show of veneration to the Virgin Mary.

The cathedral shone in the reflection of floodlights. It was after ten o'clock when the huge multitude arrived. László Bánáss, bishop of Veszprém, rose to the pulpit and put into words the festive feelings of this night.

“I stand under the arches of the cathedral with my heart full after seeing the beautiful candlelit procession. I am sure the Virgin Mother looked smilingly on the streets of Szombathely, when seeing the all encompassing love shown to her by the people of Szombathely. When I saw this weaving thron, I thought about the sins and virtues of the Hungarians, the complexity of their souls, that intuitively places everything into a yearning for life.”

He then analyzed this quest of the Hungarian people. “In the recent past, to the wonder of everyone, a new political direction was started by the Hungarians. They perceived instinctively the need for an altar. Therefore at first they started to the rebuilding of the soul, then to the clearing of the ruins, and finally now to the rebuilding of their country. Not long ago, the people of Szombathely also stood crestfallen at the sight of their destroyed cathedral and with sorrowful souls watched its ruins. But after the first setback they realized their duty and started the rebuilding of their church.

This quest for life shows the link that exists between the Hungarians' efforts at rebuilding and their love toward the Virgin Mother. The honoring of her through the ages is an unbinding devotion to the Patroness of Hungary, who always rescued the nation from its travails. Ever since our first king, who died without heirs, offered the fate of the country to Her, the Hungarian nation was convinced that it can give its trust only to her. People realized that the Virgin Mary is their mother, redeptor, and their life. This traditional conviction explains the pilgrimage of millions in the recent past: the events at Máriapócs, Máriaremete, Sümeg, Andocs, Gyüd, Cell and Csongrád.

- a) *Mother!* A lofty notion, the most beautiful expression of God's thought. This ideal encompasses also the Mother of Heaven, mother of Christ, the ideal of our earthly mothers. Hungarians draw from this their ideal, their respect for women. Where the veneration of Mary is no longer extant, there the woman is a slave and an accessory – do not look for happiness there. The foundation of the family is the child. The nation that does not want to understand this does not deserve life. By deserting family and not helping to build the nation's future, who is the child, it deserves this fate.

- b) *Mary, the tool of our redemption*: God so loved the world that he gave it his only Son. The Mother of God also gave her only Son for the redemption of mankind. She accepted this sacrifice, and in this we can appreciate the special meaning of the words: Behold the Maiden of the Lord. In the struggle of life these words are important: My God, let it be according to thy Will. It is hard to say it; but once we uttered the words, whatever hardship we encounter in life, we feel relieved. The sufferings bring a reward: the crown of life, which is given to those who stay faithful until death. The enduring of suffering is the true mark of following Christ, therefore following His heart's wish conforms to our ideal of Mary.
- c) *Mary, our life* – because it is the token of the bread of life. Jesus' body is the bread of life, whoever partakes in it will have eternal life. And we received this body through Mary. The faithful of Szombathely will adore all night the holy Body of Christ. We need to be part of the Body of Christ because it shows us God's power and strength.

There is great purification taking place in the hearts of men. Multitudes attend church services, even many who avoided it earlier. Many have yet to approach the altar. But there will be no rebirth until the faithful, men and women reach the altar. The reawakening of the mind can only be manifested through Christ. In the recent processions women no longer were in the majority. The men took part also, they only need some encouragement and soon they will reach the altar as well. And then Hungary will be reborn. Let us pray that the Virgin, who came to know mercy through Christ, will help to accomplish this goal. Her helping hand is felt in the fate of Hungary from the days of Saint Stephen to the present. That is why we sing with confidence: Extend to us your hand from Heaven, Oh Holy Mother, after God only you are our only refuge! But her help will only become effective if we follow the will of Jesus.

Imbued with these emotions, let us prostrate ourselves before the Holy Altar. And when we pray to Jesus, let us ask his Mother, the hope of our nation: "Your nation weepingly pleads, do not take into account its missteps, but extend to it your merciful hand."

b. The Light of the World

After the homily, they placed the Holy Eucharist on the throne of the main altar. The light of the world shone through the darkness. The worshipers remained praying all through the night before the holy Redeemer.

The late night service began with the holy chant by the local chapter of the cathedral and by the clergy. The glory to God resounded once again, which on that mournful March 4 of two-and-a-half years ago became silent. The chanting of Psalms alternated on both sides of the sanctuary.

At midnight the spirit of Christmas enveloped the faithful. It was the beginning of the parish priest's Mass, which was concelebrated with Ferenc Rogács, papal protonotary. During the Mass, the chorus and orchestra from the Salesian Church was heard, conducted by Mihály Schmidt.

At one o'clock after midnight the Adoration of the Sacrament began, taking place every hour by the parishes of Szombathely. The Holy Hour was led by the Franciscan parish; after that, the faithful from the parish of St. Dominic participated in the Adoration. At three a.m. the joint Adoration by the nearby parishes of Olad and Szentkirály began with a Mass. It was followed by the faithful of the parishes of Kámon and Herény, who until 1930 were part of the parish of Szombathely. At five a.m., the people from Szöllős of the Sacred Heart parish came for the Adoration. Their new parish church had been completely destroyed by bombs, well before the destruction of the Cathedral. By dawn at six o'clock, the night-long vigil ended with the Te Deum Mass offered at the Cathedral bringing to conclusion the formal Rededication Celebration.

The silent adoration and the glorious praise to the Redeemer went on continuously. The clergy heard confession and offered the Eucharist throughout the entire time. On this holy night the city slept very little. The pilgrims' Marian songs echoed through the streets like morning greetings of happy celebrants. This night did not have any fearful shadow, only joyful brightness. The tiredness of the body was conquered by the alertness of the soul. The love of the Sacred Heart shone over the city.

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Toronyi István

István Németh Toronyi

István Németh Toronyi was an acknowledged poet and writer in literary circles between the two World Wars. He was born in the village of Torony, near Szombathely in 1906. He wrote and published his first work "The Struggles of Life", a series of short stories describing the poverty and conditions of life of the peasants in rural areas of the country.

Born into a large family of nine children, he was encouraged by his parents to enter the priesthood.

During the early period in his life he turned his interest to the Catholic Church. "Bales are Burning" a second book of poetry was published in 1937. His themes again are the lack of equity between the land-holders and the working peasants are vividly penned to paper. He attended literary meetings in Szombathely which was then an intellectual center for poets and writers outside of Budapest.

After the war he wrote: "Szombathely Ünnepe" in 1947, which is an authentic description of the Reconstruction Period and the events of the Rededication of the Cathedral that was severely damaged in a bombing raid on March 4, 1945.

He was close to Cardinal Mindszenty as a young priest, and was able to write the details of the Dedication by being able to move around within the cathedral and outside to record the events as they unfolded with much accuracy and in his personal style. Admiration for Cardinal Mindszenty and his involvement with the celebration events of this weekend and the Marian Congress set for the following day gave his writing a more vivid picture of the events unfolding. In two short years, Cardinal Mindszenty was arrested, tried and sent to prison (1948-1949) under the new Communistic Government now in place throughout the country.

In his last years, Toronyi suffered from poor eyesight, and withdrew from his parish life to a single room in a solitary life in Salköveskút. After the imprisonment of Cardinal Mindszenty, he never wrote again and descended into a life of thick darkness. He went over to a new life on July 20, 1991 and was buried in Torony, the place of his birth.

Born: Torony, Vas County	October 6, 1906
Died: Székesfehérvár, Fejér County	July 20, 1991
Consecrated as a priest in Szombathely	June 16, 1929
Chaplain in Jánosháza	1929 – 1930
Teaches religion in Zalaegerszeg, Chaplain to Mindszenty	1931
Chaplain in Salköveskút, Alsóság	1932

Teaches religion in Szombathely	1934
Published “The Bales are Burning”, Szombathely	1937
Secretary of AC (Actio Catholica)	1937 – 1949
Papal Advisor	1942
On the Staff of Katolikus Tudósító newspaper (Catholic)	1940 – 1945
Published “Szombathely Ünnepe”, Szombathely	1947
Pastor in Salköveskút, Alsóság	1949