

# Ottawa archbishop decries plans for Satanic black mass

A ritual Satanic black mass planned in Ottawa Aug. 17 is hateful towards Catholics and risks desecrating what they hold most precious, says Ottawa's archbishop.

"My concern is for the faith of our people and the offence that this brings to their love of and reverence for the Eucharist," said Archbishop Terrence Prendergast in an e-mail interview.

The black mass, sponsored by the Satanic Temple in Canada, will take place at 10 p.m. at The Koven, a heavy metal bar and restaurant only a few blocks from Notre Dame Cathedral and Basilica.

Nicholas Marc, the national co-ordinator for the Satanic Temple in Canada, and organizer of the event told Global News he believes the event will "be the first organized public black mass in Canadian history."

"Essentially, it involves using traditional symbols and inverting them to create a ritual that is meant to be the opposite of traditional mass," Marc told Global News.

"To tamper with and mock the Mass – which is what this satanic ritual does – is hateful and will affect more than those who participate in it," said Prendergast.

"It will say loudly that the central belief of Christians should not be shown respect, as we would expect respect to be shown to the Jewish Torah, to the Muslim Koran and to the sacred objects of other faiths.

"Such a ritual sends the wrong message that we're tolerant of what is in effect hate speech, which this has become by the widespread publicity being given to it," the archbishop said.

The leader of Ottawa's Catholics said inquiries were made as to whether organizers were using a consecrated host for the ritual, and organizers said none would be used.

The archbishop expressed relief at this news and urged priests and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to be vigilant that communicants consume the host as soon as they receive communion.

"The Blessed Sacrament is given to those with faith in Christ's presence in the Eucharistic host so that they may, by consuming it, achieve communion with Our

Lord,” said the archbishop, pointing out the Catholic faith teaches the consecrated bread and wine in Communion are not mere symbols, but Christ’s “Real Presence” in the Eucharist.

A recent Pew Research study that revealed 70 per cent of American Catholics believe the bread and wine used in Mass are only symbols of Jesus.

For Catholics who regularly attend Mass at least weekly, however, only 37 per cent are confused about this central teaching, the Pew study showed.

“Catholic tradition has developed a special terminology – ‘transubstantiation’ – to express that the appearances of bread and wine are only that – appearances – and that the reality, the substance, is now truly the Body and Blood of Our Lord, who gives Himself to us as food on the journey to eternal life,” the archbishop said.

Prendergast said he had been counselled to say nothing about the Black Mass because the organizers are “merely seeking publicity.”

“But I need to be concerned for my own people, who would be shocked to think this matter was publicized and we did nothing about it.”

According to the Global News report, the Satanic Temple is growing in Canada and boasts about 100,000 people worldwide, with many chapters in the United States.

Reportedly, its members tend to be atheists and secularists who believe Satan is a symbol and not a real being.

The archbishop warns that any dabbling in occult practices “has the potential of opening a spiritual doorway into the evil realm – giving demonic spirits permission, in other words – to infest our city with negative and evil energies.”

“People have expressed surprise that Pope Francis so often refers to the devil at work in our world as he and his minions attempt to thwart the good that Christians and the Church are committed to,” he said.

“But, as St. Paul says, our spiritual battle is not merely against flesh and blood – that is to say, other human beings who are opposed to the Gospel message, but ‘against principalities and powers, against the dark rulers of this world,’ that is rebellious angels who continue to attempt to undermine the spread of God’s Kingdom in human hearts.”

The archbishop said he will be offering a Mass of Reparation for the event on the morning of Aug. 17.

“Of course, we have many spiritual means and I am asking intercessory prayer groups to pray for those planning to take part in this event so that they turn

away from the path of darkness and turn instead towards the light of faith.

“We need to pray in reparation for the spiritual harm that is being planned, and that God would turn this blasphemous project into an occasion of grace,” he said, noting he is encouraging pastors to alert the faithful in their parishes and to offer Mass, holy hours and prayers in reparation.