

Theologian tells Catholics not to lose hope amid terrorism

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In the wake of recent terror attacks, a leading theologian has urged Catholics not to lose hope and to continue holding on to their faith.

Speaking during the first day of a three-day theological symposium in Cebu City on Jan. 20, Dominican Father Timothy Radcliffe blamed the rise of terrorism for causing a "crisis of hope."

"Appalling suffering may tempt us to doubt whether anything has meaning," said Father Radcliffe, consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

"If everything goes wrong, we need not be afraid," he told a gathering of some 1,500 bishops, clergy, religious and lay people ahead of next week's International Eucharistic Congress.

"When everything seems finished, the Lord draws closer than we could ever imagine," said Radcliffe.

"In the darkest moment of human history, Jesus performed an amazing gesture of hope: 'This is my body given for you. This is my blood poured out for you,'" he said.

Father Radcliffe said hope "is not just intellectual curiosity, it's also existential."

Glimpse at current issues

Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu said the discussions prior to the eucharistic congress, which begins Jan. 24, aims to deepen understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist.

Archbishop Palma noted that many Catholics tend to show their expression of faith in public but many do not understand the meaning of what they were doing. He noted a "widening gap between liturgy and practice."

"Many go to churches and pray novenas to the different saints. But many also have a very shallow foundation of the things we believe in," said Palma.

The theological symposium, which brings together church leaders and experts from around the world, aims to give a glimpse of current issues, problems, and challenges that the church is facing.

Other speakers include Father Mark Francis, president of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Canadian Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, chief executive officer of the Salt + Light Television Network, and Msgr. Piero Marini, president of the Pontifical Committee for the International Eucharistic Congress

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