

Since 2009, the Archdiocese of Boston organizes an annual dinner celebration of the priesthood whose proceeds benefit the Clergy Funds Trust. This year, the third annual dinner celebration of the priesthood was attended by 1100 participants and raised 1,2 million dollars for the Clergy Funds Trust. The event took place on September 22, 2011 at the Seaport World Trade Center of Boston, Massachusetts.

Fr. Machozi, Assumptionist in the Brighton Community and student at Boston University, attended the event for the first time. The attendees are men and women, cardinal, bishops, priests, religious and lay from all over the Archdiocese who once in their life were touched by the service of a priest and who take this annual opportunity to say thanks to their special priest. That is how Fr. Machozi was invited by Paul & Helen Creegan Jr. Family of Immaculate Conception Parish, Everett, MA. According to Fr. Machozi, who celebrated on September 16, the silver jubilee of his religious profession (16/9/1986-16/9/2011), the invitation to this event was both a grace and a surprise as he did not know his religious and priestly service had made a difference in the life of the Creegan family.



Since February 2006, Fr Machozi celebrates the Sacrament of the Eucharist every Sunday at Immaculate Conception Parish. He also introduced the parish to what parishioners call “Congolese rite of Benediction”. Before coming to the USA, Fr Machozi was chaplain for all the

devotional groups of Divine Master Parish, Archdiocese of Kinshasa, D.R.Congo. Once a month, he used to lead the benediction service that attracted many people, sometimes more than the celebration of the Eucharist, simply because, like the imposition of ashes on the first day of Lent, all who are present at benediction partake fully in it, whatsoever their canonical standing within the Church. As Benediction is not a sacrament, it is open to all as a spiritual exercise of catholic faith. As a scriptural basis for Benediction, Fr. Machozi uses the gospel passage on “touching the hem of Jesus’ garment”(Mark 5: 25-26; Luke 8: 43-48). The example of the long-suffering and anonymous woman of the gospel who, in her great faith, said, "If I could just touch the hem of his garment, I am sure, he would make me whole", and who anonymously crawled through the huge crowd to touch Jesus’ garment, is enacted in the “Congolese rite of Benediction”. Like the anonymous woman of the Gospel, many parishioners who come to the Benediction service are seekers of healing, peace of mind, etc. Some of them who do not participate any more in the sacramental life of the Church for different canonical reasons find a spiritual connection with Jesus when they touch the monstrance or the chasuble or the veil wore by the priest during the procession with the Blessed Sacrament. During this procession, the priest takes one minute in front of each participant with the Blessed Sacrament to allow him or her to pray, speak, touch, … Jesus while a Gregorian chant or any meditative song is being executed by the choir. Many have come back to full participation in the sacramental life of the Church through this Benediction service.



Paul Creegan Jr is a frequent attendee of this “Congolese rite of Benediction” at Immaculate Conception, Everett, MA. As CCD teacher, he brings to Benediction his CCD students to initiate them to this spiritual exercise of the Catholic Faith. This service of Benediction has touched the Creegan Family so much that it wanted to thank Fr. Machozi for strengthening the faith in the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the healing that comes through touching the Hem of Jesus’ Garment. Unlike Jesus who felt right away that some power has gone out from him by the touching and healing of the woman, Fr. Machozi did not know the service of Benediction he leads every Thursday evening has made a difference in the faith of the Creegan Family until he got the invitation. Fr Machozi is struck by the fact that grace to the Creegan came not through the homilies, the celebration of the sacraments, the meals he shared with the Creegan, but through Benediction, a devotion within the Catholic Church. God chooses what he wishes to reach out to those he saves. Fr. Machozi is very grateful and energized by

the Creegan testimony in his religious and priestly service to the Church of God in Boston.

Speaking at the event, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, OFM, Cap, encouraged the priests of his Archdiocese to continue with joy their priestly ministry because they make a difference in the life of many who do not have always the opportunity to come back and express their gratitude. The annual dinner celebration of the priesthood was thus created to provide this opportunity in the Archdiocese of Boston. As it was said at Vatican II, "Let priests remember that in carrying out their task they are never alone but supported by the almighty power of God. (…) Let them remember too that they have their brothers in the priesthood and indeed the faithful of the entire world, as allies" (*Vatican II, Presbyterorum Ordinis, Life of Priests, Art. 22*)