

We Are Made for More!

A Q&A with Christopher West and Mike Mangione

TORONTO. As parishes and families try to keep up with a fast-moving world where the definition and purpose of our humanity seem to constantly change, an eye-opening and breathtakingly beautiful national touring event called **Made for More: Visions of the Promised Land** is coming to **Merciful Redeemer Catholic Church, 2775 Erin Centre Blvd., Mississauga, L5M 5W23, at 7 p.m. May 29.**

"Where do we come from and where are we going? If we don't have compelling answers to these questions, we have no orientation in our lives," says Christopher West, world-renowned teacher of St. John Paul II's liberating vision of human life and love called "Theology of the Body."

The event, led by West and internationally touring folk/Americana musician Mike Mangione, will dive deeply into life's deepest questions and provide both grounding and great hope.

"This is not just a lecture or a talk," insists West. "It's an evening of beauty and reflection that weaves music, video, images and the spoken word into a message of hope that there really is a banquet of love that corresponds to the deepest hunger of our hearts."

West and Mangione recently spoke to the media about some of these clues and much more, including the transformation they hope takes place in those who attend **Made for More**. **The evening is sponsored by the Archdiocese of Toronto and co-hosted by St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius Loyola parishes in Mississauga.**

What is Made for More? Why is this your focus?

Christopher West: We call it **Made for More** because we yearn for so much more than what the world is telling us. The world understands that we are creatures of hunger and passion, but they lead us to what I call "the fast food gospel," which is the promise of immediate gratification for that hunger. Many people think Christianity, on the other hand, is an invitation to a "starvation diet." No! That's not the Gospel. Christianity is an invitation to an infinite feast of life-giving love, and that's what this event is all about.

Mike Mangione: It's a presentation meant to meet you where you are and bring you to a place of communion. It is the culmination of Christopher's 25 years in this work, my 15 in music and our friendship. It is a conversation through sight and sound about how God reveals himself through creation and how our desires are meant to draw us closer to Him. It is a special and unique opportunity coming to your area.

It is my focus because it addresses the question of what it means to be human, Christian, Catholic right at a crucial moment in our history. We really need to look at these questions before we lose ourselves and slip into a stale state of indifference as a culture.

How is it different from other Catholic presentations?

MM: It is broad and relevant to all types of people. "Catholic talks" tend to be more on a specific element



Christopher West (l) and Mike Mangione. Photo from The Cor Project.

of the Catholic tradition/faith. This talk will be focused on the human heart no matter where it has been before. This presentation uses sight, sound, video, music, and images to reveal, teach and enable us to experience something communally as a group. **CW:** Catholicism is a sensual religion – meaning, we experience the divine in and through our bodies, through our senses. And this event is designed to engage your senses, to wake them up and enable a new way of seeing, of hearing, of experiencing the world.

Mike, what is your role in the event? What are you trying to convey through your music?

MM: I am a co-creator as well as the musician for the event. My goal is to facilitate an experience that is communal between presenters, recipients and the Holy Spirit. I call it the Holy Campfire experience ... where we can all gather around and discuss the deepest mysteries of what it means to be human and be part of the human mystery. It is sometimes easier to achieve this with music because, like most art forms, it is often felt first and understood later. My aim is to create an event that brings the audience into the experience rather than just simply watching a talk.

Christopher, what are you trying to convey through your presentation?

CW: We're taking people on a journey through some particular words of Christ. We start with: "They look but do not see." So we've been trained to look at the world, but not see it; to look at the human body, for instance, but not see it. All of creation has a message, and Jesus says, "Come and become one who sees." He's in the business of giving sight to the blind.

The great battle between lightness and darkness is particularly intense in the world today. The meaning of our humanity is being eclipsed. The goal of this event is really to help turn the lights on for people, so they can see the mystery of God revealed through all of creation, and especially through our own humanity, our own bodies as male and female. Through that "coming to see," our eyes are opened in stunning new ways to God's plan for creation and for our own lives.

Mike, what is the "dance" between your music and Christopher's presentation?

MM: There are places music can go that the spoken word cannot. There is so much happening at once: lyrics, melody, instrumentation etc. All of these things can combine into a potent force that can pierce the heart. Sometimes the spoken word can tease out very clear ideas in a way that music never can. Combined, if done correctly, you can create a full head and heart experience. We try to create an experience where Christopher sets up a thought or a vision and then the music helps to prayerfully reflect upon it.

Is Made for More just for adults and parents? Or can youth attend?

MM: **Made For More** is for everyone who is ready to ponder the questions "Who am I, what am I, and where am I going?" This event is for married, single, celibate, Catholic, non-Catholic, devout, skeptic, youth and ... experienced.

Why is art and beauty essential to the event?

CW: Art is the language of the heart and the heart is wired for beauty, but, sadly, a lot of us are anesthetized in the modern world. "Anesthetized" actually means "numb to beauty." We want to wake people up to beauty, and through that, help people get in touch with their deepest yearnings. That's where we discover the great mystery we are all part of.

How can Made for More transform a parish? How can it help the priest and parish leadership?

MM: **Made for More** can tenderize the hearts and dig the furrows for the Holy Spirit to drop seeds and cultivate. We provide post-event resources that help those seeds take root and potentially grow into something beautiful and life-giving. Any seeds dropped in the right conditions can provide an abundant harvest.

What would you like attendees to come away feeling?

MM: Empathy, affirmation and hope.

CW: That they're not crazy to yearn for more than what this world offers. They're not crazy to want to be loved and affirmed as they are, behind the masks, warts and all. They're not crazy to imagine a world where every tear is wiped from the eye and every cry of the heart is answered. It's called "the promised land," and we want to give people a vision of it.

MADE FOR MORE
VISIONS OF THE PROMISED LAND

Wednesday, May 29, 2019 7 p.m.

Merciful Redeemer Catholic Church
2775 Erin Centre Blvd
Mississauga, ON L5M 5W23

Tickets: \$20 available at:
CORPROJECT.COM/TORONTOWEST