



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

First Sunday of Advent, 28 November 2004

1. Today begins a new liturgical year with the *first Sunday of Advent*; during this year, we will contemplate with special fervour *the face of Christ present in the Eucharist*. Jesus, the incarnate Word who died and has risen, is the centre of history. The Church adores him and grasps in him the ultimate and unifying meaning of all the mysteries of the faith: the love of God that gives life.

2. It is in Italy precisely in these days that the preparatory work for the *XXIV National Eucharistic Congress*, to be held in Bari, Italy, from 21 to 29 May 2005, is starting. The theme of this important ecclesial meeting, which by providential coincidence places more emphasis on the Year of the Eucharist, is: *"We cannot live without Sunday"*.

I invite the Italian Ecclesial Community to prepare most carefully for this spiritual appointment, rediscovering "with new intensity the meaning of Sunday: its *'mystery'*, its celebration, its significance for Christian and human life" (Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*, n. 3).

3. May Mary Most Holy, "Woman of the Eucharist" and Virgin of Advent, prepare us all to joyfully welcome Christ's coming and to celebrate worthily his sacramental presence in the mystery of the Eucharist.

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