



The Holy See

CELEBRATION OF MASS, ADORATION AND BLESSING
OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING
OF THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST 2004-2005

ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II

*Altar of the Confessio of the Vatican Basilica
Sunday, 17 October 2004*

1. *"I am with you always, to the close of the age"* (Mt 28: 20).

In contemplation before the Eucharist, at this moment we experience with special vividness the truth of Christ's promise: *He is with us!*

I greet all of you who are gathered at Guadalajara to take part in the conclusion of the International Eucharistic Congress. I greet in particular Cardinal Jozef Tomko, my Legate, Cardinal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez, Archbishop of Guadalajara, and the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and priests of Mexico and of very many other Countries who are present there.

I extend my greeting to all the faithful of Guadalajara, of Mexico and of the other parts of the world who have joined us in adoration of the Eucharistic Mystery.

2. The television link-up between St Peter's Basilica, the heart of Christianity, and Guadalajara, the venue of the Congress, is like *a bridge that spans the continents* and makes our prayer meeting an ideal "*Statio Orbis*", in which the believers of the whole world converge. The meeting point is Jesus himself, truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist with the mystery of his death and Resurrection in which heaven and earth are united and peoples and different cultures meet. Christ is "our peace, who has made us both one people" (Eph 2: 14).

3. *"The Eucharist, Light and Life of the New Millennium"*. The theme of the Congress invites us to

consider the Eucharistic Mystery not only in itself, but also in relation to the problems of our time. *Mystery of light!* The human heart, burdened with sin, often bewildered, weary and tried by suffering of all kinds, has need of light. The world needs light in the difficult quest for a peace that seems remote, at the beginning of a millennium overwhelmed and humiliated by violence, terrorism and war.

The Eucharist is light! In the Word of God constantly proclaimed, in the bread and wine that have become the Body and Blood of Christ, *it is precisely he, the risen Lord*, who opens minds and hearts and makes us recognize him, as he made the two disciples at Emmaus recognize him, in the "breaking of the bread" (cf. Lk 24: 35). In this convivial gesture we relive the sacrifice of the Cross, we experience God's infinite love, we feel called to spread Christ's light among the men and women of our time.

4. *Mystery of life!* What greater aspiration is there in life? Yet *threatening shadows* are hanging over this universal human hope: the shadow of a culture that denies respect for life in all its stages; the shadow of an indifference that relegates countless people to a destiny of hunger and underdevelopment; the shadow of scientific research that is sometimes used to serve the selfishness of the strongest.

Dear brothers and sisters, the needs of our many brothers and sisters call us into question. We cannot close our hearts to their pleas for help. Nor can we forget that "one does not live by bread alone" (cf. Mt 4: 4). We are in need of the "living bread which came down from heaven" (Jn 6: 51). Jesus is this bread. Nourishing ourselves on him means welcoming God's life itself (cf. Jn 10: 10) and opening ourselves to the logic of love and sharing.

5. I desired this Year to be *dedicated especially to the Eucharist*. In fact, every day, particularly Sunday, the day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church lives this mystery. But, in this *Year of the Eucharist*, the Christian community is invited to become more aware of it through a more deeply felt celebration, prolonged and fervent adoration and a greater commitment to brotherhood and the service of the least. The Eucharist is the source and manifestation of *communion*. It is the principle and plan of *mission* (cf. *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, chapters III and IV).

Therefore, in the footsteps of Mary, "woman of the Eucharist" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, chapter VI), the Christian community lives this mystery! Strengthened by the "bread of eternal life", it becomes a presence of light and life, a leaven of evangelization and solidarity.

6. *Mane nobiscum, Domine!* Like the two disciples in the Gospel, we implore you, Lord Jesus, *stay with us!*

Divine Wayfarer, expert in our ways and reader of our hearts, do not leave us prisoners to the evening shadows.

Sustain us in our weariness, forgive our sins and direct our steps on the path of goodness. Bless the children, the young people, the elderly, families and the sick in particular. Bless the priests and consecrated persons. Bless all humanity.

In the Eucharist, you made yourself the "medicine of immortality": give us the taste for a full life that will help us journey on as trusting and joyful pilgrims on this earth, our gaze fixed on the goal of life without end.

Stay with us, Lord! Stay with us! Amen.

At the end of his Address, the Holy Father said:

I am now delighted to announce that the next International Eucharistic Congress will be celebrated in Quebec City in 2008.

May this prospect inspire in the faithful an even more generous commitment to live with intensity the current *Year of the Eucharist*.

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