



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL DELEGATES ON THE OCCASION OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS OF SEOUL

ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Sejong Cultural Center, Seoul
Sunday, 8 October 1989

Your Eminences,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. It is very appropriate that we should meet together this afternoon while the experience of the closing celebration of the Eucharistic Congress is still fresh in our minds. This morning's Mass was truly a *statio orbis*, an immense congregation of pilgrims from throughout the world. United around the Table of the Lord, our common prayer was a powerful expression of that communion of the particular Churches in union with the Successor of Peter, from which and in which Christ's one Catholic Church exists (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 23). Composed of men and women of so many races and nations, it was a palpable reminder that *God has established his Church to be the visible sacrament of the unity of the entire human race* (*Lumen Gentium*, 9).

In greeting all of you, who represent the immense amount of labour, planning and prayer which have made this Eucharistic Congress such an inspiring and memorable event, I wish to express my appreciation for all that you have done to make these days so enriching an *ecclesial event for so many people*. In the first place, *my thanks go to the delegates*, who have come to Seoul from countries and peoples spread far and wide across the face of the earth. Your unity in prayer and brotherhood before the Eucharistic Lord has been a powerful witness to the universality of Christ's

call to holiness and to membership in his Mystical Body. I am grateful as well to *Cardinal Opilio Rossi and to the members of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses, to Cardinal Kim and the members of the Hosting Committee*, and to *all the volunteers*, whose dedicated service contributed significantly to the organization of this great assembly. A very special expression of thanks must go to our Christian brothers and sisters who prayed with us for Church Unity, as well as to our brothers and sisters of other spiritual traditions who prayed for true peace in our world.

2. Dear friends: Every Eucharistic Congress provides us with an opportunity to deepen our *gratitude to God for the many graces which he has bestowed upon his Church*. In Jesus Christ, each of us has received a very real and personal call to be born into a new life, the life of grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon us at our Baptism and Confirmation, we have been made members of the Body of Christ, which is the Church (Cfr. *Eph. 1, 22*). Once incorporated into the Church, we are called to deepen our union with Christ, “from whom we go forth, through whom we live, and towards whom our whole life is directed” (*Lumen Gentium*, 3).

Our gratitude for God’s gifts is perfectly expressed in the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist. Conscious of our sins and our unworthiness, we nonetheless rejoice in the grace which has made us children of God and co-heirs with Christ. Through Christ, with him and in him, we have been enabled to offer the Father that perfect sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which is the self-oblation of his Son upon the altar of the Cross. As our High Priest (Cfr. *Hebr. 2, 17*), the Risen Lord gathers his Church together in an *eternal Liturgy*, to the glory of God the Father and for the sanctification of all mankind (Cfr. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7).

3. As we leave Seoul, having participated in this International Eucharistic Congress, I would ask you to nourish in your hearts *a deep appreciation of the gifts which Christ continually bestows upon his Church*, and in particular, for *that supreme gift which is the Eucharist*. Our gratitude for the Sacrament of the Eucharist is ultimately rooted in our recognition of the fact that there is nothing we have that we have not first received from God, the Father of mercies (*2Cor. 1, 3*). Saint Paul introduces his account of the Last Supper with these words: “I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you” (*1Cor. 11, 23*). The Eucharist, this great “mystery of faith”, remains first and foremost a gift, something “received”. *The Church has received the Eucharist from Christ* and in celebrating this sacrament she gives thanks to God our Father for all that he has given us in Jesus his Son.

For our part, we must receive this gift anew at every celebration of the Eucharist, and strive to let its divine power pervade our hearts. That, dear friends, is the challenge that now faces you as you leave Seoul and make your way to your homes, your families and your communities. Only by living in communion with “Christ our Peace” in an attitude of humility and awe, will you be able to experience the Eucharist’s *profound spiritual power*. Only by accepting Christ’s gift with gratitude for all that he has done for us, will you be enabled by the Holy Spirit *to fulfil the vocation which*

God has given to you as members of the Church. Only by recognizing in Jesus and in the gift of his Eucharistic Sacrifice the source of that truth which alone can set you free, will your hearts be purified to render God true worship and to work for the coming of his Kingdom of justice and peace.

4. For the many gifts which the Lord has showered upon us in these days, and for all those that he continues to shower upon the Church, let us give thanks. And let us pray that this Forty-fourth International Eucharistic Congress may strengthen the entire Church in her witness to Jesus Christ, risen from the dead for our salvation. May God grant that these days of prayer bear fruit in true conversion, in an increase of holiness and in a renewed commitment to work for the unity and peace of all mankind.

Once again, I thank you for all that you have done to make these days a success. Let us now go forth to live that new life which Christ has given us in Baptism and which he renews in us at every celebration of the Eucharist. Upon all of you I invoke the grace of "Christ our Peace", and I commend you to the intercession of his beloved Mother, Queen of Peace. To each of you I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

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