

**ADDRESS OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL CHRISTOPHE PIERRE  
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
UNITED STATES NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS  
LUCAS OIL STADIUM – INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
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Praised be Jesus Christ!

I am happy to be with all of you at this national Eucharistic Congress, an historic celebration for this country. Thank you, Bishop Cozzens, for your tireless work in leading this Eucharistic Revival. Thank you, Tim Glemkowski and the members of the leadership team, and all who have helped prepare for this Congress. I pray that your hard work of service may be rewarded with a consoling encounter with Christ during these days.

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I come here as the personal representative of the Holy Father to the United States. As such, my being here is a way to express the Pope’s spiritual closeness to you, and his unity with you and with this country. As the Second Vatican Council teaches: “The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful.”<sup>1</sup> What a gift this is! – that we can be united as a Church through our Holy Father. At the same time, what brings us together at this Congress – the Holy Eucharist – is also an immense gift for unity. As St. John Paul II said, “The Eucharist is the sacrament and source of the Church’s unity.”<sup>2</sup>

**Perhaps our main prayer for this Eucharistic Congress should be this: That we, as a Church, may grow in our unity, so that we become more fruitful in our mission.** This was the prayer that Jesus made to the Father on the night when

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<sup>1</sup> Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 21 November 1964, 23.

<sup>2</sup> Pope St. John Paul II, General Audience, 8 November 2000, 1.

he instituted the Eucharist: “that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to realize this unity which our Lord desires us to have, I think it can be useful to return to a basic question. (Often the most basic questions are the most important!) The question I would like to reflect on is this: *What is “Eucharistic revival”?* And to make the question more personal: *How will we know when we are experiencing Eucharistic revival?*

Over the course of the last couple of years, we have been part of a tremendously well-organized effort to focus the minds and hearts of Catholics on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We have made this effort in our parishes, our dioceses, and now on a national level – all of which has been building in a kind of *crescendo* up until now. At all levels, we have seen increased opportunities for adoration and benediction. There has been catechesis on the Eucharist and, of course, processions. By displaying the Blessed Sacrament for worship and increasing our acts of devotion, we have drawn attention once more to this great Sacrament in order to “stir up” a renewed faith, both in our fellow Catholics and in ourselves. We have even attracted the curiosity of people of other faiths.

And to be very clear: All of this is good!

But to return to the original question: *What is Eucharistic revival?* We know that such revival, while it is always accompanied by sacramental devotion, must extend *beyond* devotional practices as well. When we are truly “revived” by the Eucharist, then our encounter with Christ’s real presence in the Sacrament opens us to an encounter with Him in the rest of life. This means seeing Him everywhere we go. It means meeting Him in the interactions we have with others. Not only is He present in our family, friends, and communities; but He is also present in our encounters with people from whom we would otherwise consider ourselves “divided”. This might include people from a different economic class or race, people who challenge our way of thinking, and people whose perspective is informed by experiences that differ greatly from our own. When we encounter such people – and

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<sup>3</sup> *John* 17:21.

when the competitive logic of the world urges us to become defensive – Christ is present to be a bridge. Christ, the firstborn of all creation, wants to be a bridge between people who are members of the same human family: people who are children of the same Father in heaven, and whose destiny is to be united in love within the same eternal household. If we are experiencing true “Eucharistic revival”, then one of the signs will be a greater movement on our part to build bridges of unity.

Why does our engagement with the Eucharist impel us toward unity? Because, when we celebrate the Eucharist, we experience the One who built the first bridge, who crossed the distance and made Himself one with us, even when we were separated from Him. This is the One who is with us, making Himself present in the complex but concrete realities of our daily lives. And so, to believe in the real presence of Christ is not only to say: *In these forms of bread and wine are His body, blood, soul, and divinity*. Of course that’s true! But Christ is also present in the assembly of His believing people. Not only that, but he is present to people who struggle to connect with Him because of wounds, fear, or sin. We need to be there with Him, accompanying such people, and helping them to experience the real presence of Christ’s love.

Adoration is essential to our relationship with Christ – but it is important that we treat it as that: as a *relationship*. If, in the act of Eucharistic adoration, we were to look at the Sacrament merely as an “object” to be admired, then we would be remaining, as it were, “on the outside”. To *adore* Christ is to *relate* to Him. Pope Benedict explained:

“The Latin word for adoration is *ad-oratio* – mouth to mouth contact, a kiss, an embrace, and hence, ultimately love. Submission becomes union, because he to whom we submit is Love. In this way submission acquires a meaning, because it does not impose anything on us from the outside, but liberates us deep within.”<sup>4</sup>

Upon relating to Christ in this way through adoration, we can also relate to *others* in a way that reverences the presence of God in them.

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Homily on the Occasion of XX World Youth Day, Cologne, Germany, 21 August 2005.

This, then, is what it means to live a truly “Eucharistic life”. The adoration spills over into our daily life: our life of relating to others, our way of seeing others. When we are actually *revived* by the Eucharist – let us say, *transformed* by the Eucharist – we do not remain the same as we were. (If we remain the same, then we have to ask whether we have really *received* Him!) When we do receive Christ, not just outwardly and partially, but inwardly and fully, then we begin to *see differently*. We see with the eyes of Christ; we see reality with His eyes. We think differently, because, as St. Paul says, “we have the mind of Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Eucharistic revival, then, must involve *pastoral conversion*. The problems that our mission of evangelization must confront are not problems that we can solve on our own. How to deal with modernity, how to love the person who thinks differently, how to overcome division, and how to face suffering: these are not problems with human-powered solutions. It is only God’s power that can heal division, redeem suffering, and speak a saving word to those who are captured by deceit. God’s power comes to us in the Eucharist. But we can’t be agents of God’s power if we insist on seeing the same, thinking the same, and controlling God’s gifts. We have to let ourselves be possessed by the Spirit of God, and go where the Spirit leads.

Let us all pray for true Eucharistic revival. May this revival open our eyes to the ways that Christ is living and operating in the reality before us, and may it impel us to join Him in His work. I encourage you, during your adoration these days, to let the Lord reveal to you any places of resistance. Often, we resist the work of Christ when we are afraid to let go of our own understanding and control – afraid to allow His wisdom and power to lead. But by surrendering our reliance on our own certainties, plans, or agenda, we can follow where God leads; and He is the only one who can lead us to new life. By following Him, we can become true apostles of His Kingdom.

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<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:16.