



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY OF THE PONTIFICAL COMMITTEE
FOR INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES**

*Clementine Hall
Saturday, 27 September 2014*

Dear Cardinals, Dear Brother Bishops and Priests, Brothers and Sisters,

I am glad to meet you at the close of your Assembly's meeting, and I thank Archbishop Piero Marini for the courteous words, which he addressed to me on behalf of all at the start of this meeting. I greet the National Delegates from the Episcopal Conferences and, in a special way, the Delegation of the Filipino Committee led by Archbishop Jose Palma, Archbishop of Cebu, the city in which the next International Eucharistic Congress will take place in January 2016.

In those days, the heart of the Catholic world will fix its gaze on the supreme mystery of the Eucharist to draw from it renewed apostolic and missionary zeal. Thus it is important to prepare oneself well and I thank you, dear brothers and sisters, for the work that you are undertaking in order to help the faithful of every continent comprehend ever more and ever better the value and importance of the Eucharist in our life.

The Eucharist holds the central place in the Church because it is "what makes the Church". As the Second Vatican Council affirms, using the words of the great Augustine, it is the "*sacramentum pietatis, signum unitatis, vinculum caritatis*" [sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity] (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 47).

The theme chosen for the upcoming International Eucharistic Congress is highly significant: "Christ in you, our hope of glory" (Col 1:27). It sets in full light the bond between the Eucharist, mission and Christian hope. Today there is a lack of hope in the world, that is why humanity needs to hear the message of our hope in Jesus Christ. The Church proclaims this message with renewed ardour, utilizing new methods and new expressions. With the spirit of the "new

evangelization”, the Church brings this message to all people and, in a special way, to those who, despite having been baptized, are far from the Church and live without reference to Christian life.

The 51st International Eucharistic Congress offers the opportunity to experience and comprehend the Eucharist as a transformative encounter with the Lord in his word and in his sacrifice of love, so that all may have life, and live in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10). It is a propitious occasion to rediscover the faith as a source of Grace that brings joy and hope in personal, familial and social life.

The encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist will be the font of hope for the world if, transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit into the image of the one we encounter, we accept the mission to transform the world by giving the fullness of life which we ourselves have received and experienced, bringing hope, forgiveness, healing and love to those in need, especially the poor, the dispossessed and oppressed, sharing with them the life and aspirations and walking with them in the search for an authentic human life in Jesus Christ.

Dear brothers and sisters, I entrust from this moment the upcoming International Eucharistic Congress to the Virgin Mary. May Our Lady protect and accompany each one of you, your communities and make fruitful the work that you are carrying out in view of the important ecclesial event in Cebu. I ask you to please pray for me and I bless you with all my heart.