



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO THE FAR EAST AND MAURITIUS

CONCLUSION OF THE 44th INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II

Youido Plaza, Seoul (Korea)

Sunday, 8 October 1989

*"Yorobuni i ppang'ul mokko i chanul mashil ttaemada,
Chunim-kkeso tashi oshil ttaekkaji,
Chunim-e chugu sonpo-hanun koshimnida" (1 Cor. 11, 26).
Han'guk Kyohoe'e hyongje chamae yorobun,
Songchaneso Chu Yesu Kristo-rul chanyang-hagoya on sesang'eso
hanaro moishin hyongje chamae yorobun,
Chanmi Yesu! Yorobune Soure tto wassumnida.
Pan'gap-ssumnida. Uri modu Chunim-kke kamsa-hapshida.*

1. Five years ago, here in Youido Plaza, we celebrated together the bicentenary of the Church's presence in this land with the solemn canonization of the 103 Martyr Saints of Korea. They are the shining witness of how deeply the sons and daughters of this land have been grafted onto Christ. Today, our heavenly Father gives me the grace of celebrating this solemn Eucharist at the closing of the *Forty-fourth International Eucharistic Congress*. The Sacrifice of the Mass marvellously deepens our communion with those courageous martyrs, and with all the saints – in the first place with Mary, Mother of the Redeemer – for all who share in the Body and Blood of Christ in every time and place are brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit (Cfr. *Præx Eucharistica* II).

The *communion of saints* has its deepest source in Christ and its fullest sacramental expression in the Eucharist: "Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body" (1Cor. 10, 17). In fact, every time we celebrate the Eucharist, *we return to the Upper Room* in Jerusalem on the

evening before the Passover. The Church's celebration of the Eucharist cannot be separated from that moment. There, Jesus spoke to the apostles of his redemptive death. There, he instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood under the forms of bread and wine, following the traditional Hebrew rite of the paschal meal.

Giving them the bread, he says it is his Body which he was about to offer on the Cross. Giving them the chalice of wine, he says it is his Blood which he would shed in the sacrifice of Calvary. Then Jesus commands them: "Do this in memory of me" (*Ibid.* 11, 24). *The apostles received the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Redeemer as the Passover that truly saves.*

2. While all this was happening in the Upper Room at Jerusalem, the apostles *perhaps recalled those other words pronounced one day at Capernaum*, where Jesus had miraculously multiplied the bread for the crowd that listened to his teaching: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day (*Jo.* 6, 53-54).

Capernaum had prepared the apostles for the Upper Room. *What had been promised in Capernaum became a reality in Jerusalem.* "For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood *abides in me, and I in him*" (*Ibid.* 6, 55-56).

Yes, Jesus Christ is "our Life and Resurrection". The sons and daughters of Israel had eaten the manna which God had provided for them in the desert, but nevertheless they died. Jesus gave the Eucharistic Bread, on the other hand, *as the source of the life that is stronger than death.* Through the Eucharist, he continues to give *life*, that is, *the life that is in God and from God.* This is the meaning of Jesus' words: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me" (*Jo.* 6, 57).

3. All this is at the heart of this Forty-fourth International Eucharistic Congress. This gathering of God's holy people clearly reveals the very nature of the Church (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 41), the community of those reborn to a new life. United in prayer and thanksgiving around the altar, the whole Church is one with Christ, her Head, her Saviour and her Life. For, in fact, the Church comes into being through the Eucharist – the memorial of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole Church is here *to honour Christ in the Eucharist; to hear the words of eternal life* that Jesus gives us; and to deepen the Church's experience of sharing in the bread of life which satisfies *the deepest hunger of our immortal being: the world's hunger for "life"* which God alone can satisfy.

In the *Statio Orbis* the whole Christian community renews its determination to share the "bread of life" with all those who thirst for the truth, for justice, for peace and for life itself. This the Christian

community can do only by becoming an effective instrument of reconciliation between sinful humanity and the God of holiness, and between the members of the human family themselves. The Eucharist is the sacrament of the unity of the Church. The Church, by her relationship with Christ, is a kind of sacrament or sign of the unity of all mankind as well as a means of achieving that unity (Cfr. *Lumen Gentium*, 1).

4. The words “*Christ, our Peace*” have been chosen as the theme of this Congress. We have heard what the Apostle proclaims: “in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. *For he is our peace* who has made us both one and *has broken down the dividing wall of hostility*” (Eph. 2, 13-14).

The Apostle is perhaps thinking of the wall in the Temple of Jerusalem which divided Jew from Gentile. But *how many walls and barriers divide the great human family today?* How many forms of conflict? How many signs of mistrust and hostility are visible in countries all over the world?

East is divided from West; North from South. These divisions are the heritage of history and of the ideological conflicts which so often divide peoples who otherwise would wish to live in peace and brotherhood with one another. Korea too is marked by a tragic division that penetrates ever more deeply into the life and character of its people. The Korean nation is symbolic of a world divided and not yet able to become one in peace and justice.

Yet there is a way forward. True peace – the *shalom* which the world urgently needs – springs eternally from the infinitely rich mystery of God’s love, the “*mysterium pietatis*” (Cfr. 1Tim. 3, 16), about which Saint Paul writes: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (2Cor. 5, 19).

As Christians we are convinced that Christ’s Paschal Mystery makes present and available *the force of life and love which overcomes all evil and all separation.* Your admirable ancestors in the Faith knew that “in Christ” all are equal in dignity, and all are equally deserving of loving attention and solicitude. Just like the early Christians described in the Acts of the Apostles (Cfr. Act. 2, 42 ss.), they boldly abolished the inviolable class barriers of their time in order to live as brothers and sisters. Noble masters and humble servants sat together at the same table. They shared the riches of their new-found knowledge of Christ by composing catechisms and beautiful prayer poems in the language of the common people. They held their possessions in common so as to aid those most in need. They lovingly looked after the orphans and widows of those imprisoned and martyred. They persevered day and night in common prayer, thanksgiving and fellowship. And they gladly died for each other and in each other’s stead. They pardoned and prayed for those who persecuted them. Theirs was indeed a Eucharistic life, *a true breaking of the life-giving bread!*

5. In this great assembly of the *Statio Orbis*, we proclaim before the world that Christ, the only-begotten Son of the Father, continues to reconcile people “to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end” (Eph. 2, 16).

Yesu kristo-nun uri'e pyong'hwa-ishimnida.

(Jesus Christ is our peace) (Cfr. *Ibid.* 2, 14).

From the Eucharist springs the Church's mission and capacity to offer her specific contribution to the human family. The Eucharist effectively transmits *Christ's parting gift to the world*: "Peace I give you, my peace I leave you" (Cfr. *Io.* 14, 27). The Eucharist is the sacrament of Christ's "peace" because it is the memorial of the salvific redemptive sacrifice of the Cross. The Eucharist is the sacrament of victory over the divisions that flow from personal sin and collective selfishness. Therefore the Eucharistic community is called to be *a model and instrument of a reconciled humanity*. In the Christian community there can be no division, no discrimination, no separation among those who break the Bread of Life around the one Altar of Sacrifice.

6. As the Third Christian Millennium approaches, the urgent challenge facing Christians, in the present circumstances of history, is to carry this fullness of life, this "peace" into the structure and fabric of everyday living, *in the family, in society, in international relations*. But we must listen carefully to Christ's words: "I do not give (peace) as the world gives (it)" (Cfr. *Io.* 14, 27). Christ's peace is not merely the absence of war, the silencing of weapons. It is nothing less than the communication of "God's love that has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (*Rom.* 5, 5). Our sharing in the Body and Blood of the risen Lord cannot be separated from our own continuing efforts to share this lifegiving love through service. "Do this in memory of me" (*Luc.* 22, 19): do for one another as I did for you and for all. Yes, we must not only celebrate the liturgy but actually *live the Eucharist*. The Eucharist compels us

– *to give thanks for the created world, and respect and share it in a wise and responsible way,*

– *to esteem and love the great gift of life, especially of every human life created, from its beginning, in God's own image and redeemed by Christ;*

– *to cherish and promote the inalienable and equal dignity of every human being through justice, freedom, and concord;*

– *to give of ourselves generously as the bread of life for others, as exemplified in the "One Heart One Body Movement", so that all may truly be united in Christ's love.*

7. Each International Eucharistic Congress, each *Statio Orbis* is a solemn profession of the *Church's faith* in the Good News proclaimed and realized in the Eucharist: "Lord, through your Death and Resurrection you have set us free. You are the Saviour of the world".

In the great assembly of the Eucharistic Congress here in Seoul, on this soil of the Asian continent, we profess the Life in which we share through the Redeemer's Death. And we pray for all – for Korea, for Asia, for the world: *that all may have this Life in themselves and have it in*

abundance (Cfr. *Io.* 10, 10).

Uri modu soro saengmyong'e pabi toe'o-chupshida!

Cham pyong'hwa'e toguga toepshida!

Chanmi Yesu!

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