



The Holy See

**LETTER TO ARCHBISHOP GIUSEPPE CHIARETTI
OF PERUGIA-CITTÀ DELLA PIEVE
FOR THE FORTH ARCHDIOCESAN EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS**

*To my Venerable Brother Giuseppe Chiaretti
Archbishop of Perugia
Città della Pieve*

1. I was very pleased to learn that this Archdiocese is celebrating its Fourth Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress, which will close in Perugia on 19 September with the participation of the prelates and representatives of other Umbrian Ecclesial Communities. The theme - "We cannot live without the Lord's Day" - refers to my Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* on Sunday, an important day for Christians, who have regarded it as the "Lord's Day" since apostolic times.

On so significant an occasion I willingly join you and the whole archdiocesan community, which is actively preparing the concluding phase of the celebrations. I send my cordial greetings to you all, encouraging everyone to make the most of the days of this Eucharistic Congress, which will certainly help to intensify the apostolic and missionary zeal of believers in view of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000.

2. The true heart of the Jubilee will be the Eucharist, the mystery of divine love, "an event and programme of true brotherhood" (*Dies Domini*, n. 72). In this passage from the second to the third millennium, the Church knows that she must face the challenges of the present time with new courage. She offers humanity, searching for true meaning of life and striving for the full realization of justice and peace, the prospect of finding in the Eucharist the place where brotherhood becomes practical solidarity and the last are the first in the minds and hearts of their brethren (cf. *ibid.*, n. 71).

Every Sunday the Ecclesial Community gathers round the Eucharist to "commemorate" the Lord's Passover and to proclaim his Death and Resurrection "until he comes" (1 *Cor* 11: 26). Sunday

Mass thus becomes a continual opportunity for the faithful to grow in their faith. From it flows a tide of charity destined to spread into their whole life (cf. *Dies Domini*, n. 72).

May the faithful of the Archdiocese of Perugia-Città della Pieve appreciate with renewed enthusiasm the value and importance of the Sunday celebration, "a great school of charity, justice and peace" (*ibid.*, n. 73). May the prayerful encounter with God in the liturgy enliven their apostolic commitment, lived with ceaseless thanksgiving to the Father who is rich in mercy.

3. Nourished at the table of the Word and Body of Christ, who died and rose for the salvation of all, the baptized are ready to bring the Gospel of hope to the men and women of our time, since they feel encouraged to do all in their power to help build God's kingdom by bearing concrete witness to the perennial message of salvation.

I truly hope that this Eucharistic Congress will enable all the faithful of the Archdiocese to experience a greater desire for holiness, an indispensable prerequisite for an apostolic commitment that can have an impact on society. In fact, it has been fittingly recalled at the various stages of the Congress that, together with the renewal of pastoral methods and forms of evangelization, a genuine zeal for holiness must inspire the entire Christian community.

Each pastoral worker and all who in various ways cooperate in the new evangelization should have a vivid awareness of this. How is it possible here not to mention the history of your land, marked by the significant example of martyrs and saints to whom you are deeply and sincerely devoted? I am thinking of St Laurence the Deacon, St Constantius and St Herculanus, Sts Gervase and Protase, the many confessors of the faith and particularly St Francis of Assisi, who had a tender love for the Eucharist.

In this regard, I am pleased to recall what I said to you during my visit to Perugia in 1986: "Your faith rests on solid rock, that is, on persons who testified by the gift of their own lives to their unconditional devotion to the Lord" (*Mass with Umbrian Bishops*, 26 October 1986, n. 2; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 15 December 1986, p. 23).

4. May this throng of witnesses be a stimulus and encouragement to your Archdiocese, so that the clergy, religious and laity will continue to draw strength and enthusiasm from the sources of holiness, mindful that a Church "in splendour, without spot of wrinkle ... holy and without blemish" (*Eph* 5: 27) is the most effective antidote to the structures of sin that afflict and often humiliate humanity.

I willingly assure you of my prayer that the Eucharistic Congress will be a privileged time of evangelization and will bring your Church abundant fruits of spiritual and social renewal. Venerable Brother, as I invoke constant divine help upon you and upon everyone who is taking part in the Congress' various programmes I entrust this particular moment of archdiocesan life to

the intercession of Blessed Mary and of all the holy protectors of your land.

With these wishes, I gladly impart a special Apostolic Blessing to you and extend it to the priests, religious and laity involved in pastoral and social activities, and to all who belong to the beloved Church of Perugia and Città della Pieve.

From the Vatican, 6 August 1999.