



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

ANGELUS

Sunday, 17 October 2004

1. The *International Eucharistic Congress* closes today in the Mexican city of Guadalajara. For eight days the Eucharist has been celebrated and adored as the "light and life of the new millennium". "*Light*", because the presence of Christ, the Light of the world, shines forth in the Eucharistic mystery; "*life*", because in the Eucharist Jesus gave us himself, the Bread of life.

This afternoon I will preside at a Eucharistic celebration in St Peter's Basilica in spiritual union with the great gathering in Guadalajara. In this way, I will *solemnly open the Year of the Eucharist* that will last until October 2005.

2. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council and the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, the Year of the Eucharist is to be a strong time for *meeting Christ, who is present in the sacrament of his Body and his Blood*. In this mystery, he sacramentally actualizes his Paschal sacrifice which redeemed humanity from the slavery of sin and inaugurated the divine Kingdom of love, justice and peace.

The Church was born from Christ's Pasch which is why she "*draws her life from the Eucharist*", as I recall in the Encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (n. 1).

3. Let us together invoke the Virgin Mary, so that she will help all Christians to live this Year of the Eucharist as a time of deep conversion to Christ and intense commitment to spreading his message of salvation.

After leading the prayer of the Angelus, the Holy Father said:

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who sent me their good wishes and assured me of their prayers on the anniversary of my election to the Chair of Peter.

While I ask the Lord to bring comfort to all with the abundance of his gifts, I entrust myself to him and ask, through the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin, for his constant help in making the exercise of my ministry in the Church fruitful.

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