

The Year of the Eucharist

It was with an unconcealed joy that the members of the Community of the Lady of All Peoples welcomed the news and the gift of the Year of the Eucharist. What a marvelous Pope is John Paul III! He is the Pontiff of many accomplishments. In the midst of an historical framework darkened by the pride and sin of man who cuts himself off from God, he announces that a dawn of Light and Peace is definitely rising before humanity. This year is like the logical follow-up and the summit of a well-established plan¹ that will lead the Church to the springtime that has been announced and glimpsed. It would seem, once again, that with this Year, the Holy Father is responding to the Lady's wishes.

The Lady of All Peoples tells us: "*The time has now arrived. The time is here.... Before the Lord Jesus Christ returned to the Father, and before the Sacrifice of the Cross began, the Lord Jesus Christ gave to all the peoples of the earth the gift of the daily miracle.*" Lowering her gaze, she seems to be searching for something on the globe. Her voice is slow, questioning. It is only after a long silence that she says, "*How many are there for whom this great miracle... is really lived? They disregard it, disdain the great miracle. The daily Sacrifice must be re-established in the midst of this corrupted world.*" Looking far off, the Lady declares: "*And now I am speaking to the Holy Father: "You have already done much. The Lady of All Peoples asks you once again, at this moment, to hold firm and to complete all that remains to be finished."*" (45th apparition, March 20, 1953)

How good it is to think that the God of immortal beauty who never tires of offering His Love and His forgiveness will come, transforming all things. It is through the Eucharist, the source and summit of

Christian life, that God will transfigure our time. It will be like a dream become reality and the fulfillment of ancient prophecies.

In the context of the Year of the Eucharist, a recent decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, dated December 25, 2004, in answer to the Holy Father's desire, offered a plenary indulgence in order to promote public and private devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Pope John Paul II thus desires that all the faithful acquire a deeper knowledge of and a more intense love for the ineffable "Mystery of the faith", drawing from it spiritual fruits always more abundant.

The document emphasizes to what extent the Eucharist, the greatest of miracles and the supreme memorial of the Redemption, produces, in an indestructible manner, the unity of the Church, sustains it through the power of supernatural grace, floods it with an ineffable joy and is a supernatural aid in nourishing the piety of the faithful and leading them to the perfection of their Christian life.

It indicates that the plenary indulgence is granted under the usual conditions, that is to say, sacramental confession, Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father, while rejecting all inclination to sin, every time the penitent participates with attention and devotion in a liturgy or a pious exercise in honor of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or present in the Tabernacle.

Furthermore, the plenary indulgence is granted under those same conditions to all those who, through their rules, are obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as all the faithful who do so through devotion, every time they pray at the end of the day Vespers and Complines in private, in their own homes, or together before the Lord present in the Tabernacle.

The faithful who, because of illness or other just reason cannot receive the Eucharist in a church or a chapel, may gain the plenary indulgence in their own home or wherever they are which prevents them from going to church if, having fulfilled the three usual conditions, they spiritually visit the Blessed Sacrament, pray the Our Father and the Creed and add a prayer to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament (for example: "O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament divine! All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine.") If even that is not possible for them, they can gain the plenary indulgence by offering to divine Mercy the illness and difficulties of their life and uniting themselves spiritually to those who fulfill, in the ordinary way, the conditions set out to obtain the indulgence.

Local and parish priests must inform the faithful of this Decree in the most appropriate manner and be available to hear the confessions of the faithful and lead the public prayers to the Eucharistic Jesus. The faithful too are encouraged to bear witness publicly to their faith and their veneration of the Blessed Sacrament by means of processions, Eucharistic adoration, as well as spiritual and Eucharistic Communion. **Father Benoit Picard**

1. "A Eucharistic initiative of this kind had been on my mind for some time: it is a natural development of the pastoral impulse which I wanted to give to the Church, particularly during the years of preparation for the Jubilee and in the years that followed it." (Pope John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* / "*Stay With Us, Lord*", no. 4) "The Year of the Eucharist takes place against a background which has been enriched by the passage of the years, while remaining ever rooted in the theme of Christ and the contemplation of his face. In a certain sense, it is meant to be a year of synthesis, the highpoint of a journey in progress." (*Id.*, no. 10)