

# The Conclusion of the Year of the Eucharist – Sylvie Payeur-R.

## The SYNOD of BISHOPS at the VATICAN



POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST

One of the last actions taken by His Holiness Pope John Paul II was to proclaim the Year of the Eucharist (October 2004 to October 2005) in the wake of the Year of the Rosary (October 2002 to October 2003).

On Sunday, October 17, 2004, at the beginning of the Year of the Eucharist which opened with the International Eucharistic Congress being held at Guadalajara in Mexico, Pope John Paul II had emphasized that the meeting point where the believers of the whole world converge "is Jesus himself, truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist with the mystery of his death and Resurrection in which heaven and earth are united and peoples and different cultures meet. Christ is 'our peace, who has made us both one people'....

"The Eucharist is the source and manifestation of communion. It is the principle and plan of mission. Therefore, in the footsteps of Mary, 'woman of the Eucharist' the Christian community lives this mystery!" (Pope John Paul II's homily, October 17, 2004, Vatican web site)

To close the Year of the Eucharist, Pope John Paul II had convened the 11th Ordinary General Assembly for the Synod of Bishops to be held at the Vatican. It had as its theme "*The Eucharist, Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church*".

This Synod was held between October 2 and 23, 2005, in the presence of Pope John Paul II's successor, but he was not forgotten. On October 17, the day after the anniversary of Pope John Paul II's election as Peter's successor (October 16, 1978), the members of the Synod went to pray on his tomb in the Vatican grottoes for the success of the Synod and for the entire Church.

### THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON THE EUCHARIST

Cardinal Marc Ouellet, Archbishop of Quebec, had a primary role to play in the Synod, having been elected by his peers as the President of the Commission of the Synodal Message. Therefore, he had the task of coordinating the drawing up and publication of the message from the Synod Fathers.

On October 12, Cardinal Ouellet spoke to the synod assembly in these terms:



Friday, October 21, 2005, the Synod Fathers approve the Synodal message.

"The Year of the Eucharist is a launching ramp for a long term Eucharistic movement that allows the evangelizing of culture beginning with the family, the domestic church. Today's anthropological crisis is manifested in the break up of family and social relationships. Only the Eucharist, the source of Trinitarian communion, can respond to this cultural and social crisis. The assiduous practice of Sunday Mass in the family is the proven and always contemporary way to evangelize culture and society. The preparation of the International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec in 2008 promotes this, in the light of the teachings by John Paul II, who left us in heritage this conviction." (Vatican Press Office, Vatican web site)



Rome, 2005 – His Eminence Cardinal Marc Ouellet.

The Synod's Message, entitled "*The Eucharist, Living Bread for the Peace of the World*", was approved by the Synod Fathers on Friday, October 21. Written in French, it will be published in five languages.

On Saturday, October 22, "50 propositions from the Synod Assembly for Pope Benedict XVI" were voted on by the Fathers of the Synod. On that same day, representatives of the General Assembly addressed a message to the four Chinese bishops who had been unable to attend the Synod.

The Synod documents will help Pope Benedict XVI prepare a post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, the publication of which will mark the end of the Synod.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet is part of the group of fifteen cardinals and bishops



Pope Benedict XVI presiding over the Eucharistic concelebration.

charged with putting together all the material to be presented to the Holy Father.

### INTERVENTIONS OF THE EASTERN PATRIARCHS

The Fifth General Congregation of the Synod opened in the afternoon of October 5 with a presentation by H.B. Grégoire III Laham, Patriarch of Antiochia of the Greek-Melkites, Head of the Synod of the Greek-Melkite Church in Damascus, Syria.

H.B. Grégoire II Laham chose as his theme "*The Eucharist and the Economy of Salvation*".

"The Sacraments – called the Mysteries in Oriental tradition – are different aspects of the great Sacrament of the Mystery of God, who wanted to take human form and to raise men to His Divine image. Thus the Eucharist is the Sacrament of Sacraments, and the mystery of mysteries.

"Through it each Christian becomes a paschal man. The Church, in celebrating the Eucharist, becomes herself a paschal presence of Christ in the world.

"On this subject, I would like to insist on not only the theological meaning of the three Sacraments of Christian initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. It is not only a theological connection..., but there is also a Biblical relationship, which has its starting point in the concept of the economy of salvation: the Father created, the Son saved and gave the Sacrament of the Eucharist. (Lk 22:19: 'do this in remembrance of me') and the Holy Spirit vivifies...." (*Id.*)

During the Synod, the presentations made by the Eastern Patriarchs were taken much note of. In an interview granted the magazine *Inside the Vatican* of October 20, 2005, Cardinal Marc Ouellet emphasized how enriching the experience of the Eastern Churches was for the Synod. The Cardinal commented that the Christians of the Orient "have a deep sense of that which is sacred" which is manifested particularly in the liturgy. The Cardinal went on to say:

"In the West, we need to rediscover this sense of the sacred. But I noticed that adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is being revived and is developing throughout the entire world, and this will help to restore the sacred nature of the liturgical celebration of the Mass." (Zenit, French edition, October 21, 2005)

### THE 50 PROPOSITIONS OF THE SYNOD FATHERS

Here are a few of the 50 propositions by the Synod Fathers passed on to

Pope Benedict XVI for the preparation of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation.

**Proposition 6: Eucharistic Adoration**

Eucharistic adoration "springs from Eucharistic action that, in itself, is the greatest act of adoration of the Church, which enables the faithful to participate fully, consciously, actively and fruitfully in the sacrifice of Christ according to the desire of the Second Vatican Council, and refers to the same. Thus conceived, Eucharistic adoration keeps the faithful in their Christian love and service to others, and promotes greater personal sanctity as well as that of the Christian communities. In this connection, the renewal of Eucharistic adoration, also among young people, is manifested today as a promising characteristic of many communities. For this reason, in order to foster visits to the Blessed Sacrament, care must always be taken, insofar as possible, that churches in which the Blessed Sacrament is present stay open...."

"To promote adoration, it is appropriate to recognize especially institutes of consecrated life and associations of the faithful dedicated especially to it in different ways, and to help them so that Eucharistic devotion will be more biblical, liturgical and missionary."

**Proposition 8: Eucharist and Sacrament of Marriage**

"In the Eucharist, the love of Jesus Christ is expressed, who loves the Church as his Bride to the point of giving his life for her. The Eucharist corroborates in an inexhaustible way the indissoluble unity and love of every Christian marriage.

"We want to express our spiritual closeness to all those who have based their families on the sacrament of marriage. The Synod recognizes the singular mission of woman in the family and in the society and encourages spouses, integrated in their parishes, or in small communities, movements, ecclesial associations, to undertake paths of marital spirituality, nourished by the Eucharist.

"The sanctification of Sunday is also put into practice in family life. Because of this, the family, as 'domestic Church,' must be considered a primary realm by the Christian community. The family initiates children in ecclesial faith and the liturgy, above all in the Holy Mass."

**Proposition 43: Eucharistic Spirituality and Sanctification of the World**

"... The daily offering... can help each one to become a 'Eucharistic figure,' following the example of Mary, uniting one's own life to that of Christ, who offers himself for humanity."

**Proposition 49: Eucharist and Reconciliation of Peoples in Conflict**

"The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion among brothers who accept to be reconciled in Christ... During this Synod, several testimonies reported that thanks to Eucharistic celebrations, peoples in conflict have been able to come together around the Word of God, to listen to his prophetic announcement of reconciliation through free forgiveness and receive the grace of conversion that allows communion with the same bread and the same cup. Jesus Christ, who offers himself in the Eucharist, reinforces communion among brothers and, in particular, urges those who are in conflict to hasten their

reconciliation, through dialogue and justice. This allows for communing worthily with the Body and Blood of Christ (cf. Matthew 5:23-24)." (Cf. Zenit.org)

**NEXT GREAT EUCHARISTIC MANIFESTATION: THE INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN QUEBEC IN 2008**

On October 17, 2004, Pope John Paul II had ended his homily for the opening of the Year of the Eucharist with the announcement that "the next International Eucharistic Congress would be held in Quebec in 2008".

The Eucharistic Congress in Quebec will have been one of the last events announced by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the Pope who worked so hard for the unity of Christians and peoples, and whose funeral Mass brought together their representatives in Saint Peter's in Rome on April 8, 2005: "All confessions, all races... on that day, the Church was universal", commented *Paris-Match* (no. 2917).

**POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE ARMY OF MARY**

For the members of the Army of Mary, Pope John Paul II will remain a very dear and very important figure. We will remember, in particular, that he ordained the first Son of Mary who was ready to receive Holy Orders, and that he intervened personally in favor of the Sons of Mary pursuing their studies in Rome. And the thousand pilgrims of the Army of Mary present in Saint Peter's Square in Rome on May 27, 1992, will always remember the emotion felt when, at the end of the audience, Pope John Paul II, in his greetings to the groups present, had welcomed "al folto gruppo internazionale dell'Armée de Marie" ("the large international group of the 'Army of Mary'").



Rome, May 27, 1992 – At the end of the audience, Pope John Paul II blessed the Army of Mary pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter's Square.

For 34 years the members of the Army of Mary have walked along the long road that began with interior reform and a more intense Eucharistic and Marian devotion, guided along this way by the example of the *Life of Love* of their Foundress who helped them accept the Cross, regardless of the form it took in their lives. Since the year 2000, the Eucharistic and Marian Center Spiri-Maria fosters our Eucharistic devotion and attracts faithful not only from here but also from the two Americas and from Europe.

Cardinal Marc Ouellet mentioned to the magazine *Inside the Vatican* that "the revival of adoration of the Blessed Sacrament comes from the lay people. This is a sign of the times and a great encouraging sign." (Zenit, French edition, October 21, 2005) The Eucharistic and Marian

Center Spiri-Maria is a part of this worldwide movement that is contributing to making the Eucharist the center of Christian life and that is responding by anticipation to the wish expressed by the Synod Fathers and reaffirmed by Pope Benedict XVI during his homily at the closing Mass for the Synod on October 23, 2005.

"Contemplation of the Eucharist must urge all the members of the Church, priests in the first place, ministers of the Eucharist, to revive their commitment of faithfulness. The celibacy that priests have received as a precious gift and the sign of undivided love towards God and neighbour is founded upon the mystery of the Eucharist, celebrated and adored. For lay persons too, Eucharistic spirituality must be the interior motor of every activity, and no dichotomy is acceptable between faith and life in their mission of spreading the spirit of Christianity in the world." (Vatican web site)

Along with Cardinal Ouellet, we are hoping that much fruit will come from the International Eucharistic Congress to be held in Quebec in 2008, and that this event will mark a decisive step in the life of the Church.

Cardinal Ouellet who is a member of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses, declared to the magazine *Inside the Vatican* that the International Eucharistic Congress in Quebec will be "a great opportunity for the new evangelization of North America, of Canada and the United States in particular. It will also be the occasion to provide a follow-up to the Synod and to the Year of the Eucharist, and to rekindle the flame of the Catholic faith in our country where, in the past, there was a deep unity between culture and faith. Today, we need to rebuild a positive link with culture and generate a new Catholic culture." (Zenit, French edition, October 21, 2005)

May this event contribute to an awakening of our people that will only find its soul again by turning to the Eucharist and Mary, the "Woman of the Eucharist", under the aegis of the Spirit of Truth.

November 18, 2005

**Sylvie Payeur-Raynauld**

**Our Readers' Comments**

– Reading the paper *Le Royaume* enlightens us, guides us, gives us information and encourages us. What wonderful reading! Thank you to all those who contribute to it.

**Jeannette and Arthur Henrion**

– After Mass, a young man from Montmagny came towards me and said that he had come a little against his will and that he had not expected to be so deeply moved. He said that his life has now been changed and that he has been touched to the very depths of his heart. Only God can do things like that.

**Father Benoît Picard**

– A thank-you to all. You have taught me everything once again;  
 - the love of neighbor;  
 - the love of suffering;  
 - the love of crosses well accepted.  
 Always Love!

**Murielle Boivin**