

*The Eucharist,
gift of God for the life of the world.*



**49TH INTERNATIONAL
EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS
QUEBEC CITY 2008**

*Reflection and prayer sheets
for the Eucharistic Journey*

2006 - 2008



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A word of presentation

The Lord's grace is offered to us in a very special church event, the International Eucharistic Congress that will take place in Quebec City, from June 15 to June 22, 2008. The Congress provides us with an opportunity to renew our faith and therefore a time of preparation is needed.

For this preparation to be a path of discovery, of catechesis and of celebration of God's gift for the life of the world, we are happy to present you some educational sheets. This mailing is sent free of charge to each bishop and each diocesan delegate.

Over the next two years, additional sheets will be produced and may be conveniently placed in this binder; they may be used either by an individual or by a group, a movement, a religious community, and so on. It is up to you to decide what their most fruitful use can be.

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May we all together discover the richness of the Eucharist,

*(Msgr) Jean Picher, PH
Secretary General of the International Eucharistic Congress*



Shedding some light on the International Eucharistic Congress of Quebec 2008

1. What is an International Eucharistic Congress ?

It is a gathering of the Universal Church to celebrate Jesus living and present in the Eucharist, source and summit of evangelization and center of the life of the Church. One Diocesan Church invites the other Churches, with the approval of the Pope, to this time of prayer, reflection and commitment.

2. Have there been many Eucharistic Congresses in our country ?

Only one other international congress took place at Montreal in 1910. However, parish, regional or national Congresses were frequent up to the beginning of the 1960s ; our memories of congresses, therefore, go back prior to Council. Since Vatican II, a greater emphasis has been placed on catechesis, on the bond between the adoration and the celebration of the Eucharist, on the participation of all the Christian people and on the bond between the Eucharist and the commitment in the world. These are the highlights that will mark our Congress and that is a challenge we must face.

3. Does a Eucharistic Congress require a long preparation ?

The spiritual and pastoral goal of the Congress is reached inasmuch as it is prepared in advance. This preparation implies:

- An understanding at greater depths of the Eucharistic mystery through catechesis,
- An active and conscious participation in the liturgy that promotes the attentive listening to the Word of God and the offering of self,
- The search for initiatives in solidarity and sharing that will foster the growth of brotherly life.



4. What happens during a Eucharistic Congress ?

A preliminary program will be presented in the month of May. But already now, we can give some indications.

Every day, a solemn Eucharistic liturgy is celebrated and a catechesis helps to understand the theme of the Congress in greater depths.

The participants at the Congress of various languages gather in parish churches where they associate, share and pray with the parishioners.

Public celebrations take place, among others, a procession of the Blessed Sacrament and a youth event. Artistic and cultural activities are presented.

A social work for persons in need is inaugurated at the time of the Congress.

In a particular way, during the Congress, we foresee a family activity and also ways of highlighting the religious heritage through pilgrimages and commented visits of several churches at Quebec and in the area.

5. Will the Pope come ?

In 1964, Paul VI initiated the custom that the Pope would come for the closure of the Eucharistic Congress with a solemn mass. John Paul II continued in the same line, even if, on two occasions, his health condition prevented him from taking part. Benedict XVI told the Archbishop that he hoped to come; the definitive decision should be made in 2007.



**Prayer of the Ascent
to the Eucharistic Congress of 2008**

*God our Father,
look with favor on your Church
to celebrate the International Eucharistic Congress in 2008.*

*Help us to better welcome
the gift of your Son Jesus
in this memorial of his death and resurrection
which nourishes our lives as your children
and as brothers and sisters.*

*Send forth your Holy Spirit
that we may better appreciate this gift,
and become messengers of the life brought by Jesus
to our world searching for meaning.*

*In following the example of Mary, woman of the Eucharist,
may we always give thanks to you,
and make a continual offering of ourselves
to respond to your love and fulfill your will.*

We ask this through Christ, your Son our Lord.

Amen.



Thematic card 1 :

Word-images to point out the riches of the Eucharist

To bring to mind the riches of the Eucharist, the Church, since Vatican Council II (1961-1965), likes to use these words :



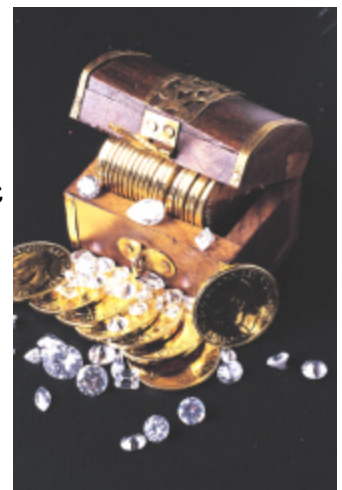
Source



Center



Summit



Treasure



Source

In the relation to this word, express the images that come to your mind...



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What this image brings to mind

In nature, the spring is a vital source of water. It supplies the stream that flows into the river, that, in turn, is at the origin of the larger river and of the sea. The source is a condition for life to exist ; without it, nature dries up, life dies away. We know how crucial oases are in the desert.

What this image brings to mind with regard to the « gift of God » that is the Eucharist

We say that the Eucharist is the source of Christian and ecclesial life. This means that we draw from it, as Christian men and women, to quench our thirst, to sate ourselves with Christ, to live from him. This indicates that the Church considers it essential for her to let her life be irrigated by Christ.

What this image brings to mind with regard to the Eucharist given by God « for the life of the world »

If the Eucharist allows Christian men and women to go to the living waters of Christ, if it allows the arid areas of the Church to be transformed by its waters, there are consequences. Christian men and women are thus made «wells» with Christ; the Church is thus made «fountain» through which Christ passes to quench spiritual thirst.



A few texts from Holy Scripture refer to this image :

- ❖ « O God, my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water », implores the psalmist (63 : 1) ;
- ❖ « The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad. Here is your God... For waters shall break forth in the wilderness... The burning sand shall become ... ground springs of water, » says the prophet Isaiah (35 : 1-7) to sustain his own ;
- ❖ « Those who drink of the water that I will give them will see this water become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life, » says Jesus to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4 : 13-14).

Prayer

*Give us, Lord,
the grace to become aware that, cut off from the Eucharist,
our Christian and ecclesial life
is like an arid soil,
threatened by decay, in danger of death.*

*Give us the grace to let your Eucharist
lead us to the uttermost depths of the mystery of your life
So that we may be, with you,
disciples and a Church who gives drink
and who make the thirsting lands rejoice.*



Center

In relation to this word, express the images that come to your mind...



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What this image brings to mind

The center is the point from which the various elements of a reality or of a living organism are organized. The city center designates the crossroads of the life of the citizens of a city, the nerve center of their social, economic, and cultural life. We say that a country whose capital is under siege by the assaults of war or the threat of an epidemic, is struck in its heart, squarely in its heart. In a wheel, the center – the axle – converges the spokes ; it unifies them.

What this image brings to mind in relation to the « gift of God » that is the Eucharist

To designate the Eucharist as the center of Christian and ecclesial life means that it is its force of unification. The Eucharist constantly brings Christian men and women to Christ and thus enables them to receive themselves continually from Him, that is to find in Him a foundation and breath for their life. Thus, centered on Christ, they are not adrift ; their life is not subject to dispersion : Christ gives it orientation and direction. Similarly, the Eucharist constantly brings back the Church to Christ and enables her to receive herself from him, to let Him permeate in what she is, what she says, what she does.

What this image brings to mind in relation to the Eucharist given by God « for the life of the world »

The Eucharist, that enables us to remain in communion with Christ, and to let Him be at the center of our life, produces effects. It makes of us beings of wonder and thanksgiving, but also of responsibility and boldness. Being made bearers of God, granted the « death-resurrection » of Christ as reference and hope for life, we are led to testify to others what God wants to do for them and with them. The Eucharist qualifies us as witnesses of the joy of living our daily life in the acceptance of the bond with Christ.



In the Holy Scripture,

there is a text in which the apostle Paul sings God's great project and places Christ in its center (Eph 1 : 3-6, 9-12) :

« Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather all things in him.

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined to be his people, so that we, who were the first to set our hope in Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. »

Prayer

Make us see, O Lord, the central place of the Eucharist in our Christian and ecclesial life.

*Make us discover
that your Eucharist invites to us to accept your Son,
to accept your fatherly gift of new life with Him.
Give us the grace to desire your Son's coming,
through the Eucharist,
to set the pace of our steps
and constantly reopen the march of our Church.*

*Grant us the grace to measure
that the Eucharist is as vital for our life with you
as is our heart for our biological life,
that it allows Christ to enter into our life,
to make it fruitful, to irrigate it, to strengthen it,
as the contraction of our heart drives the blood into the arteries.
Through your Eucharist, Lord,
come and touch every part of our being,
come and unite us to you, to unify us,
to fill us with the joy of communion with you ;
and grant that your Son, living at the heart of our life,
may make us radiate His presence.*



Summit

In relation to this word, express the images that come to your mind...



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What this image brings to mind

We can imagine of the summit of a building or of a mountain, of a viewpoint, a promontory, a lighthouse... The summit enables us to see far in the distance. It changes our perspective. It allows us to measure things, beings, the environment. It also enables us to assess our own stature. It often happens that these experiences of « height » take on a spiritual dimension: from on high, the question of one's place in the world and in life may emerge...

**What this image brings to mind in relation to the « gift from God »
that is the Eucharist**

In a life of relationship with Christ, and through Him with God, the Eucharist is a powerful moment. This is true for individual Christian men and women. It is so for the Church as well. In the ecclesial tradition, we maintain that the Eucharist leads to the very summit of blessings, to the *good par excellence* of the intimate encounter with God, of the profound union of God with us.

This « summit experience » gradually brings the men and women who live it to modify or broaden their range of vision of themselves, of their relationships with others, with the world, with life. It leads them to discover who God is for them : a God who loves them madly ; what they are for this God: His beloved. It brings them to read their life in the perspective of the great project of this God for them : a project of participation in His love and in His life, in their encounter and acceptance of Christ.

**What this image brings to mind in relation to the Eucharist given by God
« for the life of the world »**

The Eucharistic experience, that makes the acceptance of the gift of love and of the life of God be experienced intensely, calls for the witness of this love and of this life in the attitudes and the behaviours of gift of self, of devotion, of compassion and of solidarity, adopted personally and by the ecclesial community.



In the Scriptures,

- ❖ God often gives Himself for encounters on a mountain :
 - when he entrusts his commandments to his people, he calls Moses to Mount Sinai and it is on high that he hands him his tables of stone (Ex 24 : 12) ;
 - it is also on a mountain that the transfiguration of Jesus takes place “ *« Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transformed before them... Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here' »*” (Mt 17 :1-2, 4).
- ❖ Again a mountain is involved when Jesus invites to testimony : *« A city built on a hill cannot be hid...In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven »* (Mt 5 :14-16).

Prayer

Come, Lord, through your Eucharist,

to make us see through new eyes.

May it lead us to you,

to what we are for you.

May it transform our sight and our life

and kindle our heart.

Grant that in accepting your love,

we may become able to be a sign of you ;

that with your very love,

your Church may become a servant in the wake of your Son.



Treasure



In relation to this word, express the images that come to your mind...

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What this image brings to mind

What is a treasure ? It is an object we want to keep. It may be a good we have inherited from generation to generation. It may also be a possession for which we have worked hard and for a long time or that we have made fructify with great care. Treasure refers to something that is precious and important. It is relation with a scale of values. We do not wish to lose it.

The word « *treasure* » is often associated with a person. On the lips of a husband, we understand « my treasure » as qualifying his wife or on the lips of a mother referring to her child. In this way, we want to highlight the importance or the great value of a person in one's life.

**What this image brings to mind in relation to the « gift of God »
that is the Eucharist**

The Church considers the Eucharist as what she « can have that is the most precious in her journey », as « an unparalleled treasure that Christ has entrusted to her » (John Paul II, « *The Church of the Eucharist* », n° 9 and n° 29). Indeed, the Eucharist enables, in a wonderful way, the Church to remain in Christ, and Christ to remain in her : « Eat and drink, this is my body and my blood ». The Church receives, through the Eucharist, Christ Himself. Through the Eucharist, is given to her *par excellence* : the gift of the person of Christ, the gift of responding to the proposition of entering into an intimate relationship with Him. Through the Eucharist, the members of the Church are made rich with Christ and, in Him, find the realization of the most profound aspiration of their heart : that of the union with God, that of the communion to his life, his love and his light.

**What this image brings to mind in relation to the Eucharist given by God
« for the life of the world »**

This grace of communion with Christ and of participation in divine life leads to the manifestation of the gift received. Christian men and women and the Church are not only, through the Eucharist, made beneficiaries of the loving presence of God, but are made happy to share it.



This image is indeed present in the Scriptures :

- ❖ « *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also* » (Mt 6 : 21).
- ❖ « *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid ; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field* » (Mt 13 : 44).
- ❖ Saint Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, expresses his great concern for their faith (2 : 2-3) : « *I want them to have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* »

Prayer

*Praise be to you, Lord,
for the treasure of your Eucharist,
by which you fulfill your promise of being with us,
by which your body and blood are united to ours
and make us be in communion with you
in the utmost depths of our being.*

*Blessed are we
to let the joy of being with you, in the Eucharist,
open ourselves to others,
lead us to be at their service.*

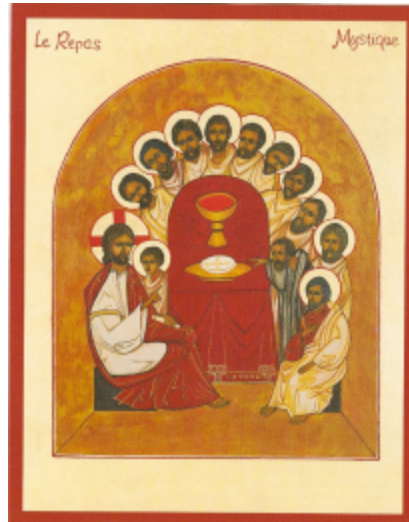
*Blessed be your Church
that enables the joy of Eucharistic communion with your Life
to be reflected in her efforts
for the respect of the humanity in every person,
for the building of the civilization of love.*



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