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THE CEBU INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

Its Missionary Challenges

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The Philippines has been privileged to have hosted two International Eucharistic Congresses (IEC): the twenty-third (Manila: February 3–7, 1937) and the fifty-first (Cebu: January 24–31, 2016). Many parallels between these two congresses can be drawn; however, in the basic vision and orientation of both events, one pivotal theme constantly appears: Eucharist and Mission.

The great theme of the 51st IEC in Cebu was "Christ in You, the Hope of Glory. The Eucharist: Source and Goal of Mission," a theme inspired by the letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians (1:24–29). The "Basic Text" of the Congress[1] asserts:

> This international gathering holds the promise of generating a more courageous and decisive carrying out of the Christian mission in the world and the society that are becoming more and more indifferent and hostile to the faith and to the values of the Gospel. This encounter with Christ in the Eucharist can be a source of hope for the world when, transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Him whom we encounter, we set out on a mission to transform

[1]The text is available in *IEC2016 Basic Text: Christ in You, Our Hope of Glory* by the Archdiocese of Cebu (InnoPub, 2015) and is the source of the quotes below except for those in Part II.

> the world with our zeal to bring to those who need most the same acceptance, forgiveness, healing, love, and wholeness that we ourselves received and experienced.

Commenting on the 1937 IEC, Fr. Catalino Arévalo, S.J., congress participant, recalled: "the theme of that IEC was (YES!): 'The Eucharist and the Missions'"! He then gives one example that he remembers from his participation in the "Children's Day 'Low' Mass" at the Luneta on February 6, 1937. Bishop Francis X. Ford, a Maryknoll Missioner and Vicar Apostolic of Kaying, Kwantung, China, made the difficult journey by ship to the Philippines and preached the sermon at the children's Mass. Arévalo notes:

> He earnestly asked the children present to pledge to be "true, valiant soldiers of Christ, ever bravely loyal to Him and His Kingdom" …. Bishop Ford pointed out the urgent need of priests for mission …. Yes, I do remember that morning, not very vividly now. But I think we received much grace from the Lord of the Eucharist, and maybe the grace of vocation was granted or confirmed for a good number of us.

The 51st IEC has "mission significance" for the Philippine Church which is preparing for "the joyous and historic observance of the 500th anniversary in 2021 of the coming of the Christian Faith and of the Christian Church to the country." In addition, the congress is also important for Asia.

> Now that Asia is becoming a new center of history in the contemporary world, the holding of the 51st IEC in its midst is an opportunity to radiantly manifest the continent's special and unique calling as a Church of love, communion, and mission. Given the multi-dimensional context in which the Asian Church accomplishes its mission, the continent has become a fertile field where the mystery of the Incarnation continues to be realized through genuine inculturation that brings the Christian faith to an authentic dialogue with the various Asian cultures, religions, and races.

This presentation now turns to highlighting the "Eucharist-Mission" dimensions of the Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu City. One finds rich insights both in (I) the Basic Theological Text, which shaped the perspectives of the entire congress, as well as in (II) the presentations made by various speakers during

the sessions held from January 24–31, 2016. The week-long congress contained rich insights manifesting how the Eucharist empowers the People of God for missionary evangelization.

I. Five Key Mission Themes Present in the IEC Basic Text

A. Dialogue as the Privileged Mode of Mission. In the concrete context of Asia, "the Church, which is always and everywhere a community-in-mission by virtue of her origin and relationship with Christ, is called in a very special sense to undertake her missionary mandate in a spirit of dialogue."

> Dialogue as a particular approach to mission is … necessitated by the multiracial, multilinguistic, multireligious, and multicultural reality of Asia on account of which peoples should be in constant conversation among themselves to ensure their peaceful coexistence. This mode of missionary engagement has its root … in the Trinitarian economy of redemption and call to communion whereby the Father engaged humanity in a loving dialogue of salvation with Himself through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Dialogue is the way God realized his plan for our redemption in and through His Son who became man, shared our human life and spoke in a human language to communicate his saving message.
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> There is no other way, therefore, for the Church to realize her missionary mandate from her Master and Lord (cf. Jn. 13:14) than by a dialogue of salvation with all men and women …. Vatican II's vision for the way the Church is to undertake her mission in the modern world likewise reflects a dialogical engagement with diverse races, languages, religions, cultures, and socio-political structures. This is true in a particular way in Asia where she has to engage in dialogue with those who share her belief in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior, but also with followers of every other religious tradition, on the basis of the religious yearnings found in every human heart.

Already in their First Plenary Assembly (1974), Asia's bishops (FABC) discerned what special configuration this dialogue in the context of mission in Asia should have: "continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions,

in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own." Referred to as the "triple dialogue" since forty years ago, it has remained valid until the present time: "dialogue with the cultures of the Asian people, dialogue with their religions, and dialogue with the life-situations of poverty, powerlessness, of suffering and victimhood, which is the lot of a great number of people."

This triple dialogue has to be undertaken "as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives." For witnessing to Christ in word, that is, in the explicit proclamation of the Gospel of salvation, the use of stories and other narrative forms holds greater promise of effectiveness, for most Asians are able to relate better with "an evocative pedagogy, using stories, parables and symbols." The First Asian Mission Congress held in Chiang Mai, Thailand in October 2006

> recalled with fondness and with much gratitude that Jesus himself taught by using parables and insightful vignettes that revealed the depths of God's reign—that he is God's love story in the flesh! Stories have a special power to make understood even the deepest mysteries of the faith, to transform perspectives and values, to form community, and to establish fellowship.

This dialogue

> is not an end in itself; it is in view of sharing and receiving. It disposes one to respect others and to recognize their giftedness. It enables one to listen to what the others are expressing in and through their lives of the goodness of God …. For their part, Christians in dialogue should be ready to offer their faith, to give an account of the hope that is within them (1 Pt. 3:15).

For further insights, see *FABC Papers 130*: *Dialogue: Interpretive Key for the Life of the Church in Asia.*

B. Mission in Dialogue with Peoples and Cultures. Asia is the world's largest continent and "home to almost two-thirds of the world's population; it is also host to an intricate mosaic of many cultures, languages, beliefs, and traditions." The Church's mission in

Asia, therefore, has to be undertaken in dialogue with a wide variety of cultures. Even Pope Francis has pointed out the many challenges that are being brought to bear on Asian cultures, among them the new patterns of behavior caused by over-exposure to various forms of mass media—traditional values, including the sacredness of marriage and the stability of the family, are being undermined by some damaging elements of the media and entertainment industries (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium* [EG] 62). Christianity, moreover, has remained a minority religion in many parts of Asia, having often been perceived as "too Western" and as an "instrument of colonial domination." Christian mission in Asia, therefore, must include "a dialogue between the Gospel and the Christian faith on one hand and the culture of the Asian people, on the other."

This effort, known as inculturation, "is motivated by a vision: that of genuine Christian communities in Asia—Asian in their way of thinking, praying, living, and in communicating their own Christ-experience to others." Inculturation is not merely one possible option; it is rather a theological and pastoral imperative. "The mystery of the Incarnation and the Paschal Mystery are at once the foundation and the model for the deep insertion of local Churches in the surrounding cultures"; this includes many aspects of their life: celebration, witness, and mission.

Jesus, the Son of God, "became man, a Jew, and thus became part of the history, culture, traditions, and religion of the Jewish people. The Church, too, should incarnate herself in every race and culture where she finds herself. She must become part of every people among whom she … [is] implanted." Why? It is "for the same motive which led Christ to bind himself, in virtue of his incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom he dwelt." The Church

> must be assimilated into the life of a people that receives her; she cannot remain a stranger to them. She must incarnate herself in such a way that she can be regarded not only as the Church that is in Asia, but as the Asian Church, not only as the Church that is in the Philippines but as the Filipino Church.

This incarnational stance,

> rather than jeopardizing the universality of the Church, will even foster such universality. Through the faith of the Church and through the celebration of his work of redemption, Christ continues to incarnate himself in the various races and cultures. He is the universal Savior because he can make himself part of the concrete realities of every particular people and there bring them redemption. The Church, too, is truly universal because she can incarnate herself in the concrete realities of every local Church. When she incarnates herself, she enriches both the local people and herself. Incarnation brings about mutual enrichment to the people who receive the faith and to the Church who incarnates herself.

Inculturation is not a mere clever device to make the Church's faith, worship, and life attractive and acceptable to a local people.

> Carrying out a dialogue with the cultures of Asia means to make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples so that they can live in a way that is uniquely Asian, that is, truly as a local Church of Asia. The Gospel is preached to them using living symbols, images, realities, and stories that are part of their day to day existence as a people. They receive the Word, make it the principle of their lives, values, attitudes, and aspirations. They are helped to understand and experience their faith and to celebrate worship in a way that reflects the values they hold dear, using expressions that are part of their culture.

The Church in Asia must regard with openness those elements that

> the local culture can contribute to authentic Christian spirituality: a richly developed prayer of the whole person in unity of body-psyche-spirit; prayer of deep interiority and immanence; traditions of asceticism and renunciation; techniques of contemplation found in the ancient eastern religions; simplified prayer-forms and other popular expressions of faith and piety easily available even to simpler folk, whose hearts and minds so readily turn to God in their daily lives. The Spirit is leading the Churches of Asia to integrate into the treasury of our Christian heritage all that is best in our traditional ways of prayer and worship.

All this certainly applies to the celebration of the Eucharist. This is Asia's gift of prayer to the Church.

C. Mission in Dialogue with Religions and Religious Traditions. Closely linked with its multicultural reality, Asia is also home to a wide array of religions and religious cultures. It is birthplace and host to the world's major religions—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, as well as to many other spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Shintoism. There are also other tribal traditions which are practiced in varying degrees. Such realities demand that "the mission of the Church in Asia should be undertaken in dialogue with religions and religious cultures."

> In her dialogue with the multi-religious countenance of Asia,
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> > the Church takes on the attitude of deepest respect and honor toward the other religions and faiths, acknowledging that these have somehow been instrumental in drawing people to God. As she endeavors to keep strong her rootedness in the Christian faith, she also seeks to better understand the life, doctrine, tenets, and rituals of other religious traditions in order to engage them in a mutually enriching and respectful encounter.

It is a fact that these great religious traditions enshrine "spiritual, ethical, and human values that are expressions of the presence of God's word and of the Holy Spirit's continuing creative activity in the world." The profound religious experience as well as the noblest longings of the hearts of multitudes of Asians have been deposited in these religions; present adherents continue to draw meaning, guidance, and strength from them. How can the Church not honor and reverence these faith traditions?

> The Church's positive disposition toward other Asian religions
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> > conforms with the incarnational plan of salvation whereby Christ embraced everything that is human (except sin) in order to assume them within the radius of his redeeming love and power. It was within the religious tradition of Israel that Christ revealed the mystery of God and accomplished his saving mission. His Apostles and the earliest foreign missionaries of the Church had the same dialogical stance in the face of the varied religious cultures of the Greco-Roman world.

In a dialogical and missionary spirit, the Church enjoins all Christians to assume an attitude of openness toward other religious traditions and discover "with gladness and respect those seeds of the Word which lie hidden among them" (AG 11). Moreover, she encourages Christians "to use cultural forms, teaching, arts, architecture, melodies, languages, and sciences of the other religious traditions, provided that these are not incompatible with the Gospel and the Christian faith, to praise the glory of the Creator."

This attitude of openness and sharing

> will enable Christians to discover and therefore appreciate the heart and soul of their fellow Asians …. Far from placing their Christian faith on shaky ground, this dialogue with other religious cultures and traditions will motivate Christians to find authentic ways of living and expressing their own Christian faith amidst the adherents of other faiths. It will help them discover the many riches of their own faith which they might not have seen before. This dialogue will help them discern in the light of God's Word how their faith in Christ can be enriched by the other religious traditions, [and] what in these religious cultures must be purified, healed and made whole before being absorbed into the practice of the Christian faith.

Given the multi-religious context of Asia, the Church's evangelizing mission will have to emphasize, first of all, direct Christian witnessing of the Father's love in simple, direct, and concrete ways. This means that,

> by living like Christ, Christians and Christian communities are called to draw their non-Christian brothers and sisters to faith in the one God revealed by Christ. Most of the time, this may be in the form of presence and solidarity with people to make them feel cared for and wanted in their poverty and misery. It may be to respond to people's needs as Christ would do in the Gospel, making them feel welcome …. Perhaps this attestation of God will be for many people the unknown God whom they adore without giving him a name, or whom they seek by a secret call of the heart.
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> In the midst of so much diversity and, many times, of conflicts of various kinds, the Church, by her own life, is called to witness to

> God's call to life-giving unity and harmony and be a visible sign and instrument of such unity. Equipped with their Christian faith and commitment, the lay faithful have a distinctive role to play in this dialogue on account of their presence and action in the world—family, politics, education, culture, social environment. In the manner of leaven, they are enjoined to direct the course of human affairs and history to the eschatological fullness that every man and woman of goodwill hopes for.

D. Mission in Dialogue with the Poor. While Asia is rich in culture and its people are rich in human and religious values,

> a great multitude of them live in situations of poverty, powerlessness, marginalization, victimization, and suffering. They are poor not because their continent lacks natural and material resources, but because they are deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to live with dignity and ensure a stable future for themselves and their families. Oppressive and unjust social, economic, and political structures keep them from enjoying the rich natural patrimony of their lands.

In the face of the particular situation in Asia where multitudes are poor and have no access even to basic necessities for living a life worthy of their human dignity,

> the Church in Asia has a special calling to be a Church of the poor. She must have the poor, the deprived, and the oppressed at the forefront of her life and mission. As in the case of the Church's dialogue with cultures, the Church's dialogue with the poor is a theological and moral imperative. The primary reason why the Church has to take on this preferential option for the poor is the very example of Christ who became poor and who identified himself with them in a special way. (cf. Mt. 25:40)

It is called a "preferential love" not to exclude anyone but to express that the poor, the deprived, and the exploited have a priority claim to the Church's attention, services, and resources. "The Sacred Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, are replete with attestations to the fact that the poor have always occupied a privileged place in God's heart, not the least, in the life and mission of Christ of which the Gospels are eloquent testimonies."

The bishops of Asia (FABC) have for many years discerned that the Church in Asia must increasingly be "a Church of the poor" with all its implications and consequences. This implies, first, that "those who have been placed as shepherds of God's flock in Asia must lead a life of simplicity by which the poor can perceive that their pastors share in their poverty." By this simplicity of life, which becomes an evident sign of the Gospel in action, "the poor will feel the genuine and heartfelt closeness of their shepherds and will feel more free to run to them for help and guidance."

A second implication of the Church's preferential love for the poor is that she should engage in active interventions for the liberation and alleviation of the situation of the poor.

> It means being at the service of human development and of life itself—engaging in the important work of healthcare, education, and peacemaking …. It also means promoting a disposition of solidarity among all—that "new mindset" which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.

A third implication of the Church's preferential option for the poor is that "she has to take a prophetic stance against the negative consequences of economic and cultural globalization, the ongoing impact of foreign debt especially upon the livelihood of the poor, and the environmental damage brought about by scientific, economic and technological progress." In a word, as the FABC noted in 1974, the Church as well as all local Churches in Asia are challenged to

> a continual endeavor to become more and more the Church of the "*anawim*," a Church [which] does not merely work for the poor in the manner of a beneficent institution, but labors truly with the poor, sharing their life and their aspirations, knowing their despair and their hope, walking with them in their search for authentic humanity in Christ Jesus.

In the Church's dialogue with the poor,

> the Eucharist, on one hand, upholds and reaffirms values that negate causes of poverty. It confronts selfishness and greed which are the roots of many forms of injustice, with the self-sacrificing love of Christ …. It confronts oppressive totalitarian leaderships which

> put political and economic advantages above people, with Christ's leadership of service—that of the Master and Lord who washed the feet of his disciples (cf. Jn. 13:13). Above all, the Eucharist challenges utilitarianism, consumerism, and materialism which treat the poor and the weak as commodities and tools that can be used for one's gain and pleasure, with Christ's self-donation that breaks and shares oneself so that others may live …. From our participation in the Eucharist, we are sent forth to be witnesses of God's compassion towards all our brothers and sisters.

E. Mission in Dialogue with the Youth. Asia is considered the continent of the youth since it is home to about 60% of the world's young people, many of whom are poor. Mission in dialogue with the youth of Asia, therefore, entails placing them among the priorities in the pastoral solicitude of the Church. Young people are not only the future of the world but are her present precious treasure. The Church recognizes that "she has to deal with young people not only as the adults of tomorrow but more importantly [as] the reality of today …. With their youthful energies, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness, however, they are even now dynamic agents of change and therefore a source of hope in society and in the Church."

The youth, however,

> are also the most vulnerable to many destructive forces in society and often fall victims to structures of exploitation. More than ever before, the realities that impinge upon young people today are both many and varied. Globalization, political changes, and the media explosion radically affect the lives of the youth in every part of Asia.

Thus, while candidly admitting that many complex problems confront young people in the continent today, the Churches of Asia are enjoined to "remind the young of their responsibility for the future of the society and of the Church, and to encourage and support them at every step to ensure that they are ready to accept that responsibility." Suitable and adequate pastoral care should be extended to them, above all by "sowing the truth of the Gospel in them as a joyful and liberating mystery to be known, lived, and shared with conviction and courage." But since the world now is full of rocks and thistles, not to mention the scorching heat, youth pastoral care also involves helping young

people to be "good soil" where the seed of God's Word can spring up, take root, grow, and bear fruit a hundredfold (cf. Mt. 13:4–9).

This ministry to the youth will mean

> accompanying them in their journey, which is not easy, on account of the rapid and drastic changes that are happening around them but also of the dramatic changes they are going through physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually at this stage of human development. This kind of pastoral care is directed toward preparing the ground before the sowing, softening it, making it receptive. It also seeks to strengthen them against the many influences and distractions that compete for their attention and energies and can choke the initial growth of the faith in them.

This aspect of pastoral care is necessary even before the sowing of God's Word or simultaneous with it—that they may be good soil where the seed of God's Word can bear abundant fruit.

In Asia, the highly successful World Youth Day began by Saint John Paul II in 1985 has its counterpart—the Asian Youth Day, where young people from the various Asian countries are able to experience a strong sense of being a community through common prayer and Eucharistic celebrations, sharing of life-experiences, working together, sharing meals, and joining one another's songs and dances. By such events,

> the youth come to feel that the Church is with them, walking closely with them, believing in what they can do with their youthful energies and good will, empowering them. Journeying with the youth means recognizing the important role that they have in the Church now and as the future of the Church.

The Church's mission today includes directing young people toward the Eucharist for sustenance in the face of their many uncertainties and questions. It is to see the youth as resources and not as problems.

II. Pivotal Mission Insights from Presenters at IEC in Cebu

Charles Maung Cardinal Bo from Myanmar was the papal legate for the IEC 2016. His message and homily at the opening Mass on January 24, 2016 focused on the theme "Moving from Eucharistic Celebration to Eucharistic Commitment." Some of his insights are presented here:[2]

> We are gathered on a global stage, a global table, for a cosmic Eucharist: Eucharist as a Mission in Cebu …. After 79 years of a Eucharistic Congress [1937–2016] in this great land of faith, you have come forward to celebrate this global fellowship …. You have proved your resilience, your faith, rising from all challenges. May this 51st IEC be the moment of healing the earth, the wounded planet, and healing the graceful people of this country and everyone gathered here.

Cardinal Bo asserted that

> a short sentence changed history. They are the words: "Take and eat, this is my body; take and drink, this is my blood." Yes, the most powerful words in human history, the most powerful words in the dialogue of God with man …. The Eucharist is a spiritual jewel …. The Eucharist and adoration is an intense faith encounter with Jesus …. It was Mother Teresa who contemplated this mystery of Presence. She says every Holy Communion fills us with Jesus and we must go in haste to give him to others [imitating Mary going to visit Elizabeth].
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> Adoring Jesus in the Eucharist is also accepting our fellow men and women as created in the image of God. In a world that kills children in the womb, in a world that spends more on arms than on food, in a world that continues to have millions of poor, Eucharist is a major challenge to the whole of humanity. Can we feel the presence of God in our brothers and sisters? …. Our adoration of the Eucharist affirms our inalienable faith in human dignity.
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[2]A version of this message and homily is available at http://www.rcam.org/news/1636-message-and-homily-of-cardinal-charles-maung-bo-at-the-opening-mass.

> Adoration alone may make us good devotees, but being a devotee is one of the easiest things …. Christ is calling us to be disciples, to carry his cross. The Mass of the devotee ends in an hour, but the Mass of the disciple is unending. The Eucharist of the devotee is confined to the clean, decorated altars of the church; the Eucharist of the disciples continues with the streets as altar …. Personal encounter with the Lord occurs in the Eucharist; and, this is precisely the personal encounter with the Lord that strengthens the mission contained in the Eucharist. Yes, Eucharist leads us to mission ….
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> …
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> Yes, we break bread in an unjust world. UNICEF says that every day 20,000 children die of starvation and malnutrition …. A silent genocide, the biggest terrorism in the world …. The Eucharist and the poor are inseparable. John Chrysostom said: "He who said this is my body is the same who said: You saw me hungry and gave me food." … In an unequal and uncaring world, the Eucharist steadfastly remains the beacon of human equality …. This calls for our commitment to a world of justice. Eucharist calls for a third world war, a third world war against poverty …. The Eucharist will remain a revolutionary flag hoisted everyday on millions of altars, crying for justice like the prophets of old. … This I think is the clarion call to mission today for all of us.
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> This congress highlights the presence of God through our veneration of the Eucharist …. [May this congress] make us move *from Eucharistic Celebration to Eucharistic Commitment in promoting the Eucharist as Mission*, the Eucharist as the bread of justice to the poor, the Eucharist as the bread of peace in conflict areas.

Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil, SDB, Archbishop Emeritus of Guwahati, India, spoke on the topic "The Eucharist as Mission: Mission as Dialogue," emphasizing that in diverse ways, the Eucharist is an invitation to communion among peoples; the Eucharist makes the Church. The "communion of believers" that the Eucharist creates is for mission. Some of his insights follow.[3]

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[3]A version of this text is available at http://congressupdates.iec2016.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Eucharist-as-Mission_Mission-as-Dialogue_Arch.-Thomas-Menamparampil-SDB.pdf.

During this Eucharistic Congress we would like to respond, "Stay with us, Lord," as the disciples of Emmaus did (Lk. 24:29), especially as we feel the challenges of a changing world press hard upon us and the vision of Faith grows dim all around us. His presence makes a difference; it provides the light we need and supplies the strength we lack. We pray that this is what the Cebu Congress will accomplish for us.

…

Saint Ephraem has a powerful image in this connection. He says that the one who eats this bread, eats *fire* and clothes himself with *fire*. The disciples of Emmaus felt as though *fire* was burning in their hearts when they heard Jesus explain the Scriptures to them. No wonder they set out on their return journey the very same night, with a sturdy sense of Mission, after they had broken bread with him (Lk. 24:32–33).

…

Benedict XVI says: "We cannot approach the Eucharist without being drawn into Mission" (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 84). Jesus' example of self-giving conceals irresistible motivating power within, so that everyone who derives strength from him feels drawn to do the same (I Jn. 3:16). Faith is not an idle intellectual conviction, it is a driving force toward self-giving, even to the point of self-forgetfulness.

…

"My life is the continuation of my Mass," Blessed Alberto Hurtado used to say. Yes, the Eucharist overflows into life in the form of generosity, kindness, forgiveness, sincerity, and persevering work. It adds a quality to our decisions at home, in the kitchen, in the bedroom, in places of business and entertainment; in hospitals when the elimination of an unborn child is being contemplated, in the streets where human dignity is dragged to dust ….

…

It is often during silent moments before the Eucharist that a believer hears the cry of the poor, a cry that rises to the heavens (James 5:4). It is here that he/she finds energies to sustain a worthwhile struggle. Some have gone to heroic extent in giving their lives in behalf of the weakest as Archbishop Oscar Romero did; he brought his Eucharistic energies to radical social commitment. He combined deep faith, with perceptive understanding of the situation and boundless courage.

…

> The Eucharist is eminently the Sacrament of Peace …. The greeting that Jesus gives his disciples is always "*Peace*" (Jn. 20:19). "Peace I leave with you", he says (Jn. 14:27). In fact, he is our peace (Eph. 2:14). He urges people to reconcile before offering sacrifice (Mt. 23–25) …. But, unfortunately there are jealousies and petty quarrels even among Christian workers and fellow-worshippers (I Cor. 11:18), as Pope Francis admits. Peace must begin at home: within Christian families and believing communities. However, Eucharistic peace should have a wider significance. Peace is a Mission. We are ambassadors of Christ, befriending the whole of humanity (II Cor. 5:18–20). It is our vocation to build bridges, heal wounds, remove ethnic and racial prejudices, and work for the prevention of war ….

"Blessed are the peacemakers," Jesus says (Mt. 5:9).

Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle spoke on the theme of the Eucharist and Dialogue with Cultures. Using a variety of striking pastoral experiences, he explored the question: "Why does the Church engage in dialogue with cultures?" For him, the simple answer is *to serve mission.*

Following upon a lengthy analysis of contemporary cultures, Tagle continued:[4]

> Let me turn to the Eucharist. The Eucharist offers an experience of another culture, the culture of convocation, "*convocare*," you are called with others. You are called to be with others, and you are called to be with others in a meal that the Lord hosts. When the Lord hosts a meal, be prepared to be with surprising others. But, in the meal hosted by the Lord, persons recognize a close neighbor, a fellow sinner, a sister, a brother, with a place at the family table. In each one, I see myself, as I see a brother or sister. I also discover myself: sinful but loved; undeserving but invited; shamed but embraced; lost but trusted. This is how Jesus hosted and participated in meals by calling together the most unimaginable combination of people to a community to become his family, his Body because he has convoked them.
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> …

[4]A version of this text is available at http://congressupdates.iec2016.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/The-Eucharist-and-the-Dialogue-with-Cultures-by-His-Eminence-Luis-Antonio-Cardinal-Tagle.pdf.

> My dear brothers and sisters, let us begin the dialogue with the culture of alienating individualism in our homes. Restore the family meals. The basic unit of the meal is the table, the common table. Nowadays, the basic unit of the meal is my plate. And, if I have my plate with food on it, I can go anywhere and eat by myself; but, that is not a meal, that is just eating. Individualistic persons know how to eat, but they don't know how to participate in a meal. May I ask ourselves here: are our sacraments and pastoral services accessible to the poor? Are our parishes welcoming to the deaf and other people with disabilities? Do the wounded, lost, shamed, humiliated, and despised find a family in our communities?

Following on Pope Francis (EG 53), Tagle analyzed a special type of culture—the "throw-away culture." In contrast, what "culture" should permeate the Eucharist? "We propose in the Eucharist the culture of gift and sharing …. We could go against the throw-away culture." Then Tagle asked some pointed questions to counteract the prevalent "use and dispose" attitude.

> Husbands who are here, are you tempted to throw away your wife like a home appliance? She is a gift; don't throw her away. Wives, are you about to throw away your husbands like junk? Think twice; your husband is a gift. Parents, do you see your son/daughter that gives you some difficulties a thing to be thrown away or do you see him/her as a gift of God? Mothers, do you consider the baby in your womb a burden or a problem to be thrown away or a gift of life? Teachers, will you throw away slow learners among your students, or will you treasure them as gifts, especially when you are teaching in a Catholic school? Politicians, will you throw away people's taxes for your parties and shopping or guard them as gifts for social service? … The Eucharist responds to the "throw-away culture" with the culture of gift. You never throw away important gifts, bread and wine, gifts of God, gifts of the earth, and gifts of human hands will become the gift of Jesus' presence, a gift of presence ….
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> …
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> Let us behold Jesus in the Eucharist, let us allow him to form in us a community of neighbors, brothers and sisters; no more barriers, only bridges. Let us allow him to open our eyes, to see in creation, in persons, in the poor, the discarded, but truly gift of God; no one thrown away, only gifts to be treasured. This culture of communion and gift shared will make a Eucharistic community, a real, credible presence of Christ in the cultures of the world.

Timothy Cardinal Dolan, Archbishop of New York, addressed the IEC on the topic of the Holy Eucharist and Mary.[5] He began by recalling the words of the great American evangelist, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, who asserted: "the mark of a genuine Catholic is the ability to detect the divine in a mother holding her baby in a manger at Bethlehem and in the bread and wine miraculously transformed at Mass." Dolan also recalled: "*Pueblo amante de Maria* was the title of the hymn for the International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila eight decades ago."

Outlining his presentation, Dolan said: "I want to speak of the Holy Eucharist as *sacrifice, meal, and presence*. I'll explain how Mary animates each of these three ways of looking at the *gift and mystery* of the Eucharist."

> *[The Eucharist as a Sacrifice.]* "Every time, then, that you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord," writes Saint Paul to the Corinthians …. There is, you see, an intimate connection between the Mass and the Sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. That's why we call it "the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!" … Now, who was there with Jesus as He was tortured on the cross? "Near the cross stood Mary, His Mother." "At the cross her station keeping, stood the mournful mother weeping, close to Jesus to the last." You want to be closer to Jesus on the cross at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Be closer to Mary, because she's right next to him.
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> *[The Eucharist as a Meal.]* As those two disciples on the Road to Emmaus that first Easter recognized the Risen Jesus when He sat down to eat with them, so do we recognize Jesus when He is with us at the sacred meal of the Mass. As most of the episodes when Jesus appeared to His friends after His Resurrection took place at a meal, so does Jesus now feed us at the Supper we call the Eucharist. The Mass is our family meal, especially on Sunday. The mother of our family, Mary, is always at the table with Jesus and us. She gave birth to the Son of God in a little town called Bethlehem, which means "House of Bread." There's a hint of the Eucharist at that first Christmas! She placed Him in a

[5]A version of this text is available at http://congressupdates.iec2016.ph/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/The-Holy-Eucharist-and-Mary-by-Arch.-Timothy-Cardinal-Dolan.pdf.

> manger, which means a "feed box," because Jesus was intended as bread for the world in the Eucharist.

[The Eucharist as the Real Presence.] After narrating the Eucharistic experience of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Dolan spoke about

> Thomas Merton, a drifting, agnostic intellectual at Columbia University in New York. Thomas Merton stopped out of curiosity one day at *Corpus Christi* Church, and was there moved by the obvious faith and piety of the people at Mass. He watched as they reverently genuflected, bowed their heads at the consecration, and humbly approached Holy Communion. He saw them return to their pews transfixed, obviously in union with Christ. "They really believe Jesus is present in that wafer of unleavened bread," he concluded. He would soon enter the Church, and become a Trappist Monk, and one of the great spiritual theologians my country has ever known. Such is the timeless faith of the Church: Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Holy Eucharist, body, blood, soul and divinity.

Our Blessed Mother is part of this too, my friends. See, at Mass, the mystery of the *Incarnation* continues …. Soon to be Saint Teresa of Calcutta once spoke to priests: "You priests must feel so close to Mary. At her word, the Word became flesh at the *Incarnation*. And, at your words, God the Son takes on the appearance of bread and wine, and is really present with us at Mass …. The Eucharist: *sacrifice, meal, presence*!"

Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop Emeritus of Manila, was the main celebrant of the Eucharist on January 26, the third day of IEC 2016. During his homily, Rosales reminded the participants that the Eucharist is "more than symbolic, it is the reality"; truly, it is "not just a task, but a mission."

> Yes, the Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's saving sacrifice, just like the Passover meal that commemorated the escape of the Jews from slavery under the pharaohs of Egypt. But, Christ's mandate to "Do this in memory of me" goes beyond repeating Christ's last meal on earth …. "Do this in memory of me" means that as often as one eats the Body of Christ, he or she announces to others the power of the faith of our Lord Jesus.

Quoting Pope Paul VI on the powerful example of lived faith, the Cardinal said: "Through this wordless witness these Christians stir

up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst?"

Rosales challenged the IEC participants:

> Do the Eucharist. Live the Eucharist. Release the Eucharist from mere celebration! And, allow the Body and Blood of Jesus in you to roam the streets and byways, in jeepneys, tricycles and busses, stores and cafés, offices and schools, in every dining table, in homes where families engage in dialogue. It [such witnessing of Eucharistic faith] could change the world!

Cardinal Bo presided at the IEC closing Eucharist on January 31, 2016.[6] His words emphasized the intimate connections between the Eucharist and the mission of the Church.

> We came from various countries, we spoke various languages, but like the day of the Pentecost, the Eucharist deepened our relationships. Today, we are returning as brothers and sisters, we are returning in haste like the disciples in Emmaus, whose ignorance was dispelled by Jesus' breaking the word and breaking the bread. This is a moment of grace …. Each one of you is a living bread …. What is the fruit of the Eucharistic Congress? Renewed apostolic and missionary zeal. Eucharist is the source and goal of our mission!

Recalling the many presentations during the congress proper, the Cardinal said that he did not have to give additional catechesis. He said: "I want to talk in simple words to the people, especially to families and the young—bring in mercy and love as the core values of the Eucharist."

> Family, Christ in you is the hope of glory …. Families are the living bread …. The Eucharist is sown and grown in the family. The family is the first communion; the family is the nuclear church. Table fellowship is held regularly in the family …. This Congress needs to end with a strong resolve to strengthen Catholic families, uphold the priesthood of the laity. Catholic families: Christ in you, you are the hope of glory.
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> …

[6] A version of this text is available at https://zenit.org/articles/cardinal-bos-homily-for-closing-of-51st-international-eucharistic-congress-in-cebu/.

> Youth, Christ in you is the hope of glory …. What is the status of the youth in our Churches? In many Churches they are the missing generation. Are they around the Eucharistic altars? Are they the lost sheep? Are the shepherds going in search of the lost sheep? Instead of expecting the youth to return to the Church, the Church must return to the youth. A Church that neglects the youth writes its own death sentence …. Our youth deserve understanding, not judgment.

Then, in conclusion, Cardinal Bo summarized his final message, saying: "Eucharist is True Presence; Eucharist is Mission; Eucharist is Service!"

Ite, Missa Est! Every Eucharist concludes with a "sending forth" of the assembly. As noted in the "Basic Text" for IEC 2016, this mission-sending character of the dismissal rite is related to the fact that both the words "Mass" and "mission" are derived from the Latin verb *mittere* ("to send"). It is also significant that this rite is described as one that missions the people "to go out and do good works, praising and blessing God."

> It has been said that those who form the assembly are gathered, disposed to listen to God's word and to take part in the Eucharistic meal worthily, always in view of sending them forth as instruments of unity, heralds of the Good News, and as bread, broken and shared for the life of the world …. At the dismissal rite, they are told, "Go, [the assembly] is sent." As in the story of the disciples of Emmaus, the encounter with the Risen Christ in his word proclaimed and in the breaking of the bread has the innate power to transform the assembly into enthusiastic and zealous heralds of the Lord. The fellowship they experienced, the Word they heard, and the Eucharistic meal they shared together, are now to be brought into the world in the form of coherent witness.
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> The dismissal at the end of the Mass sends us indeed with an invitation and a charge to work for the spread of the Gospel and to imbue society with Christian values. There is to be an uninterrupted continuity from the Mass just celebrated and our mission as Christians in the world …. With this continuity, the Church always emerges as a mystery of communion and mission inasmuch as the Eucharist which is at the heart of her existence and mission is the sacrament of communion and mission *par excellence*.

"The celebration of the Eucharist, and every part of it, shows that the missionary responsibility of the Church is instilled in her nature. Being a community-in-mission is part of her identity." One may thus slightly modify the classical adage about the mutual generativity of the Eucharist and the Church: *The Missionary Church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the Missionary Church!*