



The Holy See

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS OF INDIA
[MUMBAI, 12-15 NOVEMBER 2015]**

*My dear Brother Beatitudine Cardinal Thuttunkal Baselios Cleemis, President of the Bishops Conference,
my dear Brother Cardinal Oswald Gracias, President of the Organizing committee of the National Eucharistic Congress, Beloved Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of India,
dear priest brothers and religious men and women, believers in Jesus Christ and all people of good will in India.*

It is with great joy that I greet you as you gather for the National Eucharistic Congress. The Eucharistic Congress has great significance as it marks the golden jubilee anniversary of the International Eucharistic Congress celebrated in Mumbai in 1964 and which was the first International Eucharistic congress to be personally presided over by a Pope. The National Eucharistic Congress also gains another special flavor because it will be celebrated just before the initiation of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy which I have so desired to have. The theme chosen for the Eucharistic Congress, Nourished by the Eucharist to nourish others is indeed very relevant and inspiring.

The Eucharistic Congress is God's gift not just for the Christians of the India but for the entire population of a country culturally so diverse yet spiritually so rich. Over thousands of years India has been permeated by the desire for truth, the search for the divine, the effort at goodness and kindness. As you celebrate this great event, the words of Pope Paul VI in his address to the members of the non-christian religions of the 3th December, 1964 come to mind: "The Eucharist is the commemoration of Jesus Christ and his love for God the Father in heaven, and for all men, a love into death. This love of Jesus is not a matter of the past; it is meant to remain present and to live in every human heart. Christ is dear also to this country, not only to those who are Christians - they are a minority - but to the millions of people who have come to know and love Him as an inspiration of love and self-sacrifice".

The Eucharist as the theme chosen rightly points out nourishes us. As I underlined in the homily of *Corpus Domini*, "the Eucharist actualizes the Covenant that sanctifies us, purifies us and unites us in the marvelous Communion with God. Thus we learn that the Eucharist is not only a reward for the good but also the strength for the weak and for sinners. It is forgiveness and sustenance which helps us on our journey" ([4th June 2015](#)).

Human beings all over the world today need nourishment. And this nourishment is not just to satisfy physical hunger. There are other hungers- for love, for immortality for life, for affection, for being cared, for forgiveness, for mercy. This hunger can be satiated only by the bread that comes from above. Jesus himself is the living bread that gives life to the world (cf. *Jn* 6:51). His body offered for our sake on the cross, his blood shed for the pardon of the sins of humanity is made available to us in the bread and wine to the Eucharist transformed in the consecration.

But the Eucharist does not end with the partaking of the bread and blood of the Lord. It leads us to solidarity with others. The communion with the Lord is necessarily a communion with our fellow brothers and sisters. And therefore the one who is fed and nourished by the very body and blood of Christ cannot remain unaffected when he sees his brothers suffering want and hunger. Those nourished by the Eucharist are called to bring the joy of the gospel to those who have not received it. Strengthened by the living Bread we are called to bring hope to those who live in darkness and in despair. "In the Eucharist the Lord makes us walk on his road, that of service, of sharing, of giving; and if it is shared, that little we have, that little we are, becomes riches, for the power of God — which is the power of love — comes down into poverty to transform it" ([Homily for the Corpus Domini 2013](#)).

May this Eucharistic Congress be a beacon of light to the people of India, may it be the harbinger of great joy and happiness, may it be an occasion for my Indian brothers and sisters to come together in unity and love. May all those who participate in this Eucharistic Congress walk along with Mary our Mother singing the *Magnificat* for all that the Lord has done for us.

I bless all of you my dear brothers and sisters in India. May God be with each one of you and your great country.