EDITOR'S PREFACE

The 51st International Eucharistic Congress held in Cebu City last January 20–31, 2016, has provided a rare opportunity—not only for the thousands of people who participated in it, but also for millions of people who watched it on TV, YouTube, or social media—to reflect on the profound significance of the Eucharist for contemporary society. Speakers from various parts of the world shared their theological insights and personal testimonies about this great gift which the Lord Jesus Christ has given to his Church.

The Papal Legate, Charles Maung Cardinal Bo, S.D.B., stressed the social dimension of the Eucharist. In his homily at the opening Mass, he said:

> The Eucharist of the disciple continues with the streets as altar. Christ died in the street, [was] dragged on the streets, proclaimed his good news on the streets, and affirmed the human dignity in the streets. His altar was the world; he broke the bread of healing, he broke the bread of feeding, he broke the bread of reconciling, he broke the bread of Good News. His disciples carried on the task.[1]

Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., focused on the virtue of hope expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist. He said:

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[1]Charles Maung Bo, "Opening Mass Homily," 51st International Eucharistic Congress (Cebu City, Philippines: January 24, 2016), https://youtu.be/jxhqTATV3Qg (accessed May 1, 2016).

> Our hope is that our God remains with us; and so we show our hope by remaining, by abiding, not running away .... To remain is a sign of trust in the Lord who remains with us. I wonder if many of you have seen that wonderful film *Des hommes et des dieux* (Of Gods and Men). It's a story of a little Trappist community in Algeria who lived in the middle of this Muslim country. They see the growth of violence and they have to decide: will they go or will they stay? And one of the monks says to his Muslim neighbors, "we're like birds on the branch, birds who don't know whether they will fly away or stay on the branch." And the villagers reply, "we are the birds, you are the branch; if you leave, we lose our footing." So they stay and they die. They stay because that's the sign of God's fidelity to us .... When I visited our brothers and sisters in Baghdad and Syria, we celebrated the Eucharist together in the middle of the war zone and that is a sacrament of hope.[2]

Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle tackled the problem of the culture of individualism and alienation in the modern world. He recalled how Jesus hosted and participated in meals by calling together all sorts of people to a community to become his family, his body. To illustrate this, Cardinal Tagle tells us this story:

> When I was a parish priest in the 1990s, I invited some of the youth, the sick, the women, the people with disabilities, and the unknowns to come up to the altar so that their feet could be washed at the commemoration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. That particular Holy Thursday, we invited the poor girl who regularly sold flowers and candles at the church grounds to be one of the Twelve. This girl had polio; she had to walk on crutches. Many people must have bought from her candles and flowers without seeing her, without [them] knowing her. But that evening, to commemorate the Supper of the Lord, she processed to the altar, bearing the pains and sufferings of the poor and the lame. I will never forget how it felt, to hold, to wash, and to kiss her foot—her limped and shriveled foot. It would be forever etched in my memory. And I understood what Jesus meant when Peter

[2]Timothy Radcliffe, "The Christian Virtue of Hope," 51st International Eucharistic Congress (Cebu City, Philippines: January 20, 2006), https://youtu.be/-PJ3D4RzXTU (accessed May 1, 2016).

> refused to be washed. Washing the shriveled foot of this girl, I felt she has become part of me, and I have become part of her. And her broken body has found its proper place within this family called the Body of Christ. And a few hours after the Mass, she came to me exuberant with the good news: "Father, people flocked to me after the Mass and they bought my flowers and candles." Then she asked me, "Will you wash again my feet next year?" She is no longer just a polio stricken flower and candle vendor. She has entered the community. The wall of alienation has been torn down at the Supper of the Lord.[3]

These are just a few examples of the profound thoughts and personal witness shared by some of the congress speakers. Credit for the inspiring catechesis on the meaning of the Eucharist belongs partly to the local Theological Commission that drew up a list of themes for the IEC 2016. The overall theme chosen for the congress, "Christ in You, Our Hope of Glory," was drawn from Colossians 1:27.

In a speech he gave at the National Orientation on the Catechism of IEC 2016, Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J. ("*Christus in Vobis, Spes Gloriae:* The Eucharist, 'Missionary Event,' *Fons et Finis* of Mission") explains the theological significance of Col. 1:24–29. He notes that this scripture passage is a "missionary text" which deals with St. Paul's tireless effort to bring the redeeming and elevating presence of Christ to the people of Colossae. Paul reminds the Christian community there that Christ—"in whom all the fullness of divinity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9)—is already in them and among them. He is the hope of glory (*kavodh*)—the manifestation of God's presence (*shekinah*) long awaited by the Jews to return to the Temple but now residing in the Body of Christ, the New Temple (cf. John 2:19–21). Arévalo notes that "applying this theology of 'Christ in/among you' directly to the Eucharist would not really be difficult for us who accept in

[3]Luis Antonio G. Tagle, "The Eucharist and the Dialogue with Cultures," 51st International Eucharistic Congress (Cebu City, Philippines: January 28, 2006), https://youtu.be/78_pgAkJeaE (accessed May 1, 2016).

faith the mystery of the Eucharist" (9). We believe that in the Eucharist, the Paschal mystery of Christ, his saving deed, is made present in the community and in the world—"the event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life" (CCC 1085). For this reason, the evangelizing mission of the Church draws its efficacy from the Eucharist and culminates in its celebration of our communion with God (*fons et finis* of mission).

In a lecture delivered on October 17, 2013 at the First Philippine Congress on New Evangelization held at the University of Santo Tomás, Manila, Timoteo J. M. Ofrasio, S.J. ("Liturgy and the Eucharist in Light of the New Evangelization") dealt with the question of how the Eucharist can be an effective vehicle of new evangelization in a secularized world where religion has lost much of its influence. Indeed, how can the Eucharist convey the real presence of Christ to people who have lost the sense of the sacred and have become oblivious to spiritual values? While there are many factors that contribute to a dignified celebration of the Mass, Ofrasio finds the internal disposition of the priest and the congregation as most important of all. He notes that the "*ars celebrandi*, the proper celebration of the liturgical rites, is greatly affected by the interior disposition of the priest" (25). This involves not just proper decorum at Mass but understanding *what* and *why* we celebrate the Eucharist. For this reason, there is need for a liturgical catechesis so people will be able to appreciate the Eucharist and somehow grasp the unfolding Paschal Mystery of Christ in the Mass.

Although the Eucharist and the other sacraments that flow from it are the primary channels of grace, the Church recognizes other ways by which people reach out to God and partake of his blessings. James H. Kroeger, M.M. ("Discovering the Rich Treasures of Popular Piety: Theological-Pastoral-Missiological Insights") bears testimony to the invaluable contribution of traditional Catholic religious practices such as processions, novenas, litanies, *via crucis*, passion plays, and others in propagating, nourishing, and

preserving the Christian faith. He said: "popular forms of piety should be welcomed as tools of evangelization because dramatics, pageantry, socio-religious rituals, and festivity can often constitute, in themselves, an actual proclamation of biblical faith!" (33). Kroeger's article answers questions often asked regarding such folk religious practices, and he concludes that, indeed, "popular piety remains a potent resource that necessarily must be at the service of a renewed evangelization for future generations of believers .... [It] should thus figure prominently in all effective programs of the 'new evangelization,' especially for the youth" (49).

In Asia, where only seven percent of the population are Christians, the Church needs to engage in dialogue with people of different faiths. Jojo M. Fung, S.J. ("An Emerging Mystic Theology of Sustainability amidst Rapid Changes for an Indigenous Church of Asia") proposes a new way of being Church among the indigenous peoples of Asia—by dialoguing with them in everyday interaction, accompaniment, and religious experience, with the latter achieved only by means of "experiential participation" in their religious rituals so as to discover their religious and moral values that resonate with the Christian faith. In addition to this form of dialogue at the level of religious experience, Fung also sees the need to engage in what he calls "dialogue of liberative struggle," i.e., identification with the indigenous people's struggle against all forms of oppression: political, social, economic, ecological, etc. "In this way," Fung says, "the Church of Asia is truly inculturated from within to become a truly indigenous way of being the Church of Asia in the tribal ancestral homeland" (73).

Interfaith dialogue is possible because God reveals himself in a direct and personal way to people regardless of their religion. Earl Allyson P. Valdez ("Henri de Lubac's Theology of Revelation: From Distance to Mystery") provides an insight on how such an experience of the divine mystery, which transcends the God we know from reason (and theologizing!), "opens up the human heart towards a greater and richer affirmation of God ... [and] summons

the human person to a new life and a new way of living" (100–101). According to Valdez, de Lubac's theology of revelation has negative and positive affirmations. On the one hand, de Lubac affirms the incomprehensibility of God, thus placing him at a distance from human reason; he cannot be reduced to the god that the human mind creates for itself. On the other hand, de Lubac points out that God reveals himself to the human person in a more direct, immediate, and inter-subjective way—as a *Thou* who encounters the subject at his innermost core. Spiritual writers in the ancient and the medieval Church have tried to describe this ineffable experience of the mystery of God through words and images that are extraordinary, yet convincingly honest and real. This way of understanding divine revelation shows the human creature to be essentially linked to the Creator as his final end. In and through Jesus Christ, God draws the human person to himself in a communion that is analogous to the union of the human and divine natures in Christ.

Amado T. Tumbali, Jr., S.J. ("Maritain's 'Rights': A Heritage of Neo-Thomism in the Twentieth Century") explains Maritain's contribution to the development of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Using the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas and the neo-scholastics, he staunchly defended a natural law ethics. He regarded moral norms as intrinsically bound to human nature. Unlike other philosophers who regarded human rights as the product of a sociological form of rule setting, or a reasoned agreement of people to accept norms imposed by a legitimate authority in exchange for security and economic benefit (cf. John Rawls' *Law of Peoples*), Maritain traced the underlying basis of the concept of human rights to natural law, particularly to human nature. For Maritain, these rights are known primarily through what he calls *connaturality* or *congeniality* which develops in human persons as they grow in moral experience and maturity. Maritain's way of philosophizing on human rights has thus laid a more stable foundation for the universal and immutable character of these rights.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J. ("Are the Allusions to Jacob and Moses in Hosea 12 Late Insertions?") notes that the one and only evidence we have that some of the stories of Jacob and Moses already existed in the second half of the eighth century BCE is Hosea 12. Various attempts to invalidate this evidence on the basis of poetic structure, vocabulary, grammar, typology of ideas, etc. prove to be unsatisfactory. On the contrary, the use of the binomial *Israel/Jacob* in eighth century prophetic writings as well as the gentilics *Isaac* and *Joseph* in Amos presumes the existence of patriarchal stories that explain the connection of these names to the northern kingdom. Moreover, Hosea's allusion to an incident in Jacob's life not found in Genesis may attest to an early period before the fixing of the patriarchal traditions in late Judean history. Hosea's allusions to both patriarchal and Mosaic traditions may thus give us a good indication that the epic legend of Israel's salvation history narrated in Genesis-Exodus was already beginning to take shape during his prophetic ministry in the eighth century.

Felipe Fruto Ll. Ramirez, S.J.