



The Holy See

JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE

Wednesday 27 September 2000

1. According to the programme outlined in *Tertio millennio adveniente*, this Jubilee Year, the solemn celebration of the Incarnation, must be an "intensely Eucharistic" year (*Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 55). Therefore, after having fixed our gaze on the glory of the Trinity that shines on man's path, let us begin a catechesis on that great yet humble celebration of divine glory which is the Eucharist. Great, because it is the principal expression of Christ's presence among us "always, to the close of the age" (*Mt 28: 20*); humble, because it is entrusted to the simple, everyday signs of bread and wine, the ordinary food and drink of Jesus' land and of many other regions. In this everyday nourishment, the Eucharist introduces not only the promise but the "pledge" of future glory: "futuræ gloriæ nobis pignus datur" (St Thomas Aquinas, *Officium de festo corporis Christi*). To grasp the greatness of the Eucharistic mystery, let us reflect today on the theme of divine glory and of God's action in the world, now manifested in the great events of salvation, now hidden beneath humble signs which only the eye of faith can perceive.

2. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *kabód* indicates the revelation of divine glory and of God's presence in history and creation. The Lord's glory shines on the summit of Sinai, the place of revelation of the divine Word (cf. *Ex 24: 16*). It is present in the sacred tent and in the liturgy of the People of God on pilgrimage in the desert (cf. *Lv 9: 23*). It dominates in the temple, the place - as the Psalmist says - "where your glory dwells" (*Ps 26: 8*). It surrounds all the chosen people as if in a mantle of light (cf. *Is 60: 1*): Paul himself knows that "they are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants..." (*Rom 9: 4*).

3. This divine glory, which is manifest to Israel in a special way, is present in the whole world, as the prophet Isaiah heard the seraphim proclaim at the moment of receiving his vocation: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (*Is 6: 3*). Indeed, the Lord reveals

his glory to all peoples, as we read in the Psalter: "all the peoples behold his glory" (*Ps* 97: 6). Therefore, the enkindling of the light of glory is universal, so that all humanity can discover the divine presence in the cosmos.

It is especially in Christ that this revelation is fulfilled, because he "reflects the glory" of God (*Heb* 1: 3). It is also fulfilled through his works, as the Evangelist John testifies with regard to the sign of Cana: Christ "manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him" (*Jn* 2: 11). He also radiates divine glory through his word which is divine: "I have given them your word", Jesus says to the Father; "the glory which you have given me, I have given to them" (*Jn* 17: 14, 22). More radically, Christ manifests divine glory through his humanity, assumed in the Incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (*Jn* 1: 14).

4. The earthly revelation of the divine glory reaches its apex in Easter which, especially in the Johannine and Pauline writings, is treated as a glorification of Christ at the right hand of the Father (cf. *Jn* 12: 23; 13: 31; 17: 1; *Phil* 2: 6-11; *Col* 3: 1; 1 *Tm* 3: 16). Now the paschal mystery, in which "God is perfectly glorified" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7), is perpetuated in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection entrusted by Christ to the Church, his beloved Spouse (cf. *ibid.*, n. 47). With the command "Do this in remembrance of me" (*Lk* 22: 19), Jesus assures the presence of his paschal glory in all the Eucharistic celebrations which will mark the flow of human history. "Through the Holy Eucharist the event of Christ's Pasch expands throughout the Church.... By communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, the faithful grow in that mysterious divinization which by the Holy Spirit makes them dwell in the Son as children of the Father" (John Paul II and Moran Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, *Joint Declaration*, 23 June 1984, n. 6: *Enchiridion Vaticanum*, 9, 842).

5. It is certain that today we have the loftiest celebration of divine glory in the liturgy: "Since Christ's death on the Cross and his resurrection constitute the content of the daily life of the Church and the pledge of his eternal Passover, the liturgy has as its first task to lead us untiringly back to the Easter pilgrimage initiated by Christ, in which we accept death in order to enter into life" (Apostolic Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, n. 6). Now, this task is exercised first of all through the Eucharistic celebration which makes present Christ's Passover and communicates its dynamism to the faithful. Thus Christian worship is the most vivid expression of the encounter between divine glory and the glorification which rises from human lips and hearts. The way we "glorify the Lord generously" (*Sir* 35: 8) must correspond to "the glory of the Lord that filled the tabernacle" (cf. *Ex* 40: 34).

6. As St Paul recalls, we must also glorify God in our bodies, that is, in our whole existence, because our bodies are temples of the Spirit who is within us (cf. 1 *Cor* 6: 19, 20). In this light one can also speak of a cosmic celebration of divine glory. The world created, "so often disfigured by selfishness and greed", has in itself a "Eucharistic potential": it is "destined to be assumed in the

Eucharist of the Lord, in his Passover, present in the sacrifice of the altar" (*Oriente lumen*, n. 11). The choral praise of creation will then respond, in harmonious counterpoint, to the breath of the glory of the Lord which is "above the heavens" (*Ps* 113: 4) and shines down on the world in order that "in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!" (1 *Pf* 4: 11).

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I warmly welcome the Jubilee pilgrimages from the Dioceses of Sioux Falls, led by Bishop Robert Carlson; Providence, led by Bishop Louis Gelineau; Trenton, led by Bishop John Smith; and Portland, led by Bishops Joseph Gerry and Michael Cote. Upon all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors, especially those from England, Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Denmark, the Philippines and the United States of America, I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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