

**VIDEO MESSAGE OF CARDINAL-DESIGNATE CHRISTOPHE PIERRE
COUNCIL OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS (CMSWR)
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023**

Dear Sisters, and all who are participating in this year's National Assembly: Greetings in Christ! Even though I am not able to attend your assembly in person, I want to assure you that the Holy Father is spiritually close to you, and that I prayerfully accompany you and your work.

Your theme, *Pathway to Eucharistic Revival: Starting Afresh from Christ*, indicates what we need in the Church today: a renewed encounter with the person of Jesus, who "gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction".¹ Our Church needs this "newness", for each of us must rediscover what the Eucharist is, *in all its fullness*. It is the presence of Christ, given to us. It is his life, death, and resurrection. It is an offer of relationship. Jesus comes to us in the Eucharist so that we, by partaking of his life in communion, can recognize him in our midst, and thus have the "compass" that we need to discern a pathway forward as Church.

Dear Sisters, I know how much you love the Eucharist. How central the Blessed Sacrament is to your individual and communal piety. Pope Francis said recently, "Only in adoration, only in the presence of the Lord, do we truly rediscover our taste and passion for evangelization."² And this is the point. If we adore the Lord's presence in the Blessed Eucharist, then our eyes should be opened so that we are amazed at his presence in our own lives and the lives of those around us. It is only then that we have apprehended the full meaning of the Eucharist!

The Eucharist is about relationship, it's about God-with-us, it's about the interconnection of the natural and the supernatural. It is a gift that has been given, which is ours to receive and to share. And the gift is the real presence of Jesus among us, showing us the way to walk together.

When we ground ourselves in this ample understanding of the Eucharist, we find that we have the "compass" we need to discern together our way forward as a community, as a Church. Our compass is not an ideology, nor is it our own particular preference. Rather, the compass is Christ himself; and we must be led by the Holy Spirit on our journey to the Father.

You, women religious, are so important to this synodal journey. We admire your call, your fidelity, your docility to Christ and his Spirit. We are attracted by your joy, which is clearly a fruit of the same Holy Spirit. *We want what you have!* And so, please continue to show us the fruits that are produced when you, as women, open yourselves to Christ each day to receive his fullness, and when you offer your whole self to him in return. As women, you have a beautiful way of showing us how to receive and to give love.

Finally, you have another gift that Pope Francis remarked on when he addressed the Major Superiors of Italy in April. He said that women are good at facing the question – *What must we do?* – because "they know how to create new paths, they know how to give... they are brave."³ Dear Sisters, as the fruit of your adoration and celebration of the Eucharistic mystery, as the fruit of your experience of receiving the Lord's sacred body and blood and spending time in his presence, show us the new paths that

we must walk. Show us how to give and how to receive. Show us how to be united. Show us how to be brave.

May God bless your time together and make fruitful the work of your Assembly.

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, December 25, 2005, 1.

² Pope Francis, 37th World Youth Day, Homily at Vespers with Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Consecrated Persons, Seminarians and Pastoral Workers, August 2, 2023.

³ Pope Francis, Address to Participants in the General Assembly of the Union of Major Superiors of Italy, April 13, 2023.