

**HOMILY OF HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL CHRISTOPHE PIERRE  
APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
HOLY MASS FOR WEDNESDAY OF THE FIFTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME  
ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CATHOLICS NATIONAL ENCOUNTER  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY-PURDUE UNIVERSITY INDIANAPOLIS  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA  
JULY 17, 2024**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning!

I am happy to join you at your National Encounter on the eve of this country's Eucharistic Congress. It is always my privilege, as Apostolic Nuncio, to convey to you the spiritual closeness of our Holy Father. But you experience his closeness in a particular way at this time, as we anticipate his visit to the people of the Asian and Pacific Islands in September. Please pray for Pope Francis, and for the people of Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Singapore, that his encounter with them will be rich with many graces and fruitful for the work of evangelization and unity in the Church.

*Unity* is a theme that I will speak about this evening at the Eucharistic Congress. It is true that Jesus said, "I have come to bring not peace but the sword."<sup>1</sup> By this he meant that people would be divided on the basis of their decision either to accept or reject his Word. But division is not God's will for those who believe in Christ. On the night before he died, Jesus prayed for his disciples, saying: "I pray that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, Jesus desires unity for his Church. On the first Christian Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples in such a way that the message they preached, and the manner in which they preached it, would unite people from many

---

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew* 10:34.

<sup>2</sup> *John* 17:21.

places and different language groups.<sup>3</sup> The Church was born as a diverse community of people who professed one faith in Christ. Unity is an essential characteristic of the Church. But the Church's unity is not "uniformity". It is, rather, the harmonization of diverse members. This "harmonized diversity" is something which makes the Church more rich and more beautiful than it would be if everyone were simply "the same".

As a quality of the whole Church, this "diverse unity" is something that should also be present in each community *within* the Church. For instance, at the consistory for the creation of new Cardinals last September, Pope Francis told us: "the College of Cardinals is called to resemble a symphony orchestra, representing the harmony and synodality of the Church."<sup>4</sup>

Diverse unity is evident in your community of Asian and Pacific Islander Catholics. This liturgy, which we are celebrating in many languages and with contributions from different cultures, is a vibrant expression of the diversity that exists among you. Such diversity, which is manifest through our sharing of this Eucharist, does not diminish, but enriches our unity. What we are experiencing in this Eucharist is an extension of Pentecost: the Holy Spirit is taking us from all of our diverse backgrounds, and he is making us profoundly one. He is making us the Body of Christ.

How can we accept this call from Christ to be one? How can we seek to fulfill this call? Today's readings give us the answer. As Jesus says, we must become "childlike".<sup>5</sup> God's people in the Old Covenant found themselves chastised when they prided themselves on their achievements and forgot their covenant with God. When God allowed his people to be dominated by a foreign ruler, it was an act of mercy. Realizing how fragmented they became when they forgot the God who formed them, the people would turn back to God, rediscovering their identity as God's children, and enjoying the gift of unity once more.

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Acts* 2:4-11.

<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, Homily at the Ordinary Public Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals, 30 September 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Matthew* 11:25.

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus shows us what it means to be childlike. “My food,” he says, “is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work.”<sup>6</sup> And again: “A son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing.”<sup>7</sup> By constantly remembering his identity as the Father’s beloved Son, Jesus was able to bring back all of God’s scattered children and reunite them in himself. In other words, by being “childlike”, Jesus was leading us to the Kingdom. “Unless you turn and become like children,” he had said, “you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>8</sup>

May we, who have been reborn in Christ, always remember that God is our Father and that we are his children. On that basis, may we express the unity that Christ desires for all who confess him as Lord.

---

<sup>6</sup> *John* 4:34.

<sup>7</sup> *John* 5:19.

<sup>8</sup> *Matthew* 18:3.