

NINE DAYS WITH SAINT JOHN PAUL II

NOVENA FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

with

Meditations on the Teachings of Saint John Paul II

INTRODUCTION TO THE NOVENA

Through his intercession and teachings, St. John Paul II accompanies us in these nine days of prayer for the New Evangelization. We pray on our own behalf and on behalf of our Catholic brothers and sisters including those who “have lost a living sense of the faith or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church.” (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*). May we gaze on the glory of God in the Luminous mysteries and even more, in the Paschal Mystery which the Church celebrates in the Sacraments. The daily meditations are direct quotes from the teachings of St. John Paul II. On Days five through nine, they are from *Ecclesia de Eucharistia--The Church from the Eucharist*, an encyclical by Pope John Paul II the purpose of which is “to rekindle this Eucharistic amazement.” Pondering the mysteries in hearts yielded to the Spirit, may we experience God’s love and mercy ever more profoundly in the celebration of the Sacraments, and most especially in the Eucharist.

PRAYING FOR THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

“I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission ad gentes. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples” (St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 3).

"Look to the future with commitment to a New Evangelization, one that is new in its

ardor, new in its methods, and new in its expression." (St. John Paul II, *Address to the Latin American Bishops*)

"Now is the time for each local Church to assess its fervor and find fresh enthusiasm for its spiritual and pastoral responsibilities, by reflecting on what the Spirit has been saying to the People of God..." (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 3)

DAILY MEDITATION ON THE SACRAMENTS

"The call to holiness is rooted in Baptism and proposed anew in the other Sacraments, principally in the Eucharist. Since Christians are re-clothed in Christ Jesus and refreshed by his Spirit, they are 'holy'. They therefore have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do. The apostle Paul never tires of admonishing all Christians to live 'as is fitting among saints' (Eph 5:3)." (Blessed John Paul II; *Christifideles laici*, 16)

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES (One decade of the Rosary on days 1 to 5 as Opening Prayer)

"Moving on from the infancy and the hidden life in Nazareth to the public life of Jesus, our contemplation brings us to those mysteries which may be called in a special way "mysteries of light". Certainly the whole mystery of Christ is a mystery of light. He is the "light of the world" (Jn 8:12). Yet this truth emerges in a special way during the years of his public life, when he proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom.... Each of these mysteries is a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus." (Pope John Paul II)

CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY (Opening Prayer on days 6 to 9)

"The Message of Divine Mercy has always been near and dear to me... which I took with me to the See of Peter and which it in a sense forms the image of this Pontificate...Where, if not in the Divine Mercy, can the world find refuge and the light of hope?" Pope John Paul II, *Regina Caeli* talk, April 23, 1995,

FIRST DAY

OPENING PRAYER: One decade of the Rosary

The First Luminous Mystery—THE BAPTISM IN THE JORDAN

MEDITATION ON THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST AND OUR BAPTISM

“Here, as Christ descends into the waters, the innocent one who became 'sin' for our sake (cf. 2Cor 5:21), the heavens open wide and the voice of the Father declares him the beloved Son (cf. Mt 3:17 and parallels), while the Spirit descends on him to invest him with the mission which he is to carry out.” (John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 2002)

“In spirit let us return to the banks of the Jordan where John the Baptist administered a Baptism of repentance, exhorting to conversion. Coming up to the Precursor is Jesus, and with his presence he transformed that gesture of repentance into a solemn manifestation of his divinity. A voice suddenly comes from heaven: “*You are my beloved Son; in you I am well pleased*” (Mk 1,11) and, in the form of a dove, the Spirit descends upon Jesus...

“In Baptism every Christian personally meets him; he is inserted into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and receives a new life, which is the life of God. What a great gift and what a great responsibility!” (Homily of John Paul II on the **Feast of the Baptism of our Lord**, 2003)

“...since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: “Do you wish to receive Baptism?” means at the same time to ask them: “Do you wish to become holy?” It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* 31)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Loving Father, thank you for making us your beloved sons and daughters through our Baptism. Your word tells us that all who have been baptized have died and been buried with Christ. As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so are all the baptized. Grant that all of us, Catholics, renew our Baptismal promises that we might walk in newness of life. Immerse us each day in your love and mercy. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, may our hearts be transformed, our minds be

renewed and all our thoughts, words and actions be holy--centered on Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

St. John Paul II, pray for us

SECOND DAY

OPENING PRAYER: One decade of the Rosary

The Second Luminous Mystery— THE WEDDING FEAST OF CANA

MEDITATION ON THE WEDDING FEAST OF CANA AND THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

"The first of the signs, given at Cana (cf. Jn 2:1- 12), when Christ changes water into wine and opens the hearts of the disciples to faith, thanks to the intervention of Mary, the first among believers." (John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 2002)

"The wedding banquet at Cana leads us to think about marriage, whose mystery includes the presence of Christ. May it not be legitimate to see the presence of the Son of God at that wedding feast as an indication that marriage should be an effective sign of his presence?" (John Paul II, homily, World Meeting of Families on October 4, 1997)

"Christian marriage, like the other sacraments, "whose purpose is to sanctify people, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God," is in itself a liturgical action glorifying God in Jesus Christ and in the Church"

"Thus the little domestic Church, like the greater Church, needs to be constantly and intensely evangelized: hence its duty regarding permanent education in the faith...the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates...the future of evangelization depends in great part on the Church of the home"

"I wish to invoke the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth...it is therefore the prototype and example for all Christian families...St. Joseph was a "just man" ...may he always guard, protect and enlighten families. May the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of the Church, also be the Mother of "the Church of the home" ...May Christ the Lord, the Universal King, the King of Families, be present in every Christian home as He was at Cana, bestowing light, joy, serenity, and strength"

Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual gift, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family - a domestic church." (Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Dear Jesus, your presence at Cana tells us that marriage should be a sign of your presence. We pray that men and women called to enter into the marriage covenant be fully aware of its supernatural significance. Preserve the sanctity of marriage, Lord. Let every Catholic family be truly a domestic church patterned after the Holy Family. Enthroned yourself, Lord Jesus, in every Catholic home. Bless Catholic families with all they need to be light in this world. Amen.

St. John Paul II, pray for us

THIRD DAY

OPENING PRAYER: One decade of the Rosary

The Third Luminous Mystery— THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

MEDITATION ON JESUS' PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS OF CONFIRMATION AND HOLY ORDERS

"The preaching by which Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. Mk 1:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. Mk 2:3-13; Lk 7:47- 48): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world... (John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 2002)

The Church cannot elude Christ's explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women of the "Good News" about their being loved and saved by God. "Evangelization will always contain-as the foundation, center and at the same time the summit of its dynamism-a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ...salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God's grace and mercy." (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* 44)

"As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, 'it [Confirmation] perfects baptismal grace; it ... gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the

Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds'... Through the seal of the Spirit conferred by Confirmation, the Christian attains his full identity and becomes aware of his mission in the Church and the world". (John Paul II, General audience September 30, 1998)

"The priestly vocation is essentially a call to sanctity, in the form that derives from the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Sanctity is intimacy with God; it is the imitation of Christ, poor, chaste and humble; it is unreserved love for souls and self-giving to their true good; it is love for the church which is holy and wants us to be holy, because such is the mission that Christ has entrusted to it" (St. John Paul II- Rome, Italy, October 9, 1984)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Heavenly Father, thank you for creating us in love for relationship with you. Sin separated us from you but you sent your Son to reconcile us. Thank you, Jesus for saving us by your passion and death! Come, Holy Spirit, empower priests and deacons for anointed proclamation of the Good News of salvation! May their preaching effectively invite Catholics into sweet surrender to and personal relationship with God in Christ. Jesus, be the center of our lives. We accept you as our Lord and Savior. May we, who have been confirmed, live lives of intentional discipleship committed to the mission of evangelization for which you established your Church. In your name we pray. Amen. St. John Paul II, pray for us.

FOURTH DAY

OPENING PRAYER: One decade of the Rosary

The Fourth Luminous Mystery—THE TRANSFIGURATION

MEDITATION ON THE TRANSFIGURATION OF CHRIST AND THE SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

"The mystery of light par excellence is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to 'listen to him' (cf. Lk 9:35 and parallels) and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit." (John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*)

“The goal of our existence is therefore as shining as the transfigured countenance of the Messiah: in him is salvation, happiness, glory, unlimited love of God... It takes into consideration the physical and spiritual limitations of our person and of our daily social relationships, unfortunately marred by selfishness and sin, which make our spiritual journey taxing.” (John Paul II homily, March 15, 1992)

"In faithfully observing the centuries-old practice of the Sacrament of Penance - the practice of individual confession with a personal act of sorrow and the intention to amend and make satisfaction - the Church is therefore defending the human soul's individual right : man's right to a more personal encounter with the crucified forgiving Christ, with Christ saying, through the minister of the sacrament of Reconciliation : 'Your sins are forgiven' ; 'Go, and do not sin again' ". Because of Christ's love and mercy, there is no sin that is too great to be forgiven; there is no sinner who will be rejected. Every person who repents will be received by Jesus Christ with forgiveness and immense love.” (John Paul II, Homily during Mass at the Phoenix Park, Dublin, September 29th, 1979)

“Finally, the anointing of the sick in the trial of illness and old age and especially at the Christian's final hour is a sign of definitive conversion to the Lord and of total acceptance of suffering and death as a penance for sins. And in this is accomplished supreme reconciliation with the Father.” (John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church today*)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Heavenly Father, the lives of your people are marred by selfishness and sin. Forgive us, Lord. Heal the wounded Body of Christ. , Open the eyes of our hearts to behold your glory. Dispel our darkness and transfigure us, O Lord. Cleanse us of our sins and let your glory shine through us. May our parishes radiate the love and mercy of Christ to all. Let Millennial Catholics and all who have been away from the Church find themselves at home with a welcoming family and receive your healing love in our parishes. Amen. St. John Paul II, pray for us.

FIFTH DAY

OPENING PRAYER: One decade of the Rosary

The Fifth Luminous Mystery—THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

MEDITATION ON THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

11. “The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed” (1 Cor 11:23) instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his body and his blood. The words of the Apostle Paul bring us back to the dramatic setting in which the Eucharist was born. The Eucharist is indelibly marked by the event of the Lord's passion and death, of which it is not only a reminder but the sacramental re-presentation. It is the sacrifice of the Cross perpetuated down the ages.⁹ This truth is well expressed by the words with which the assembly in the Latin rite responds to the priest's proclamation of the “Mystery of Faith”: “*We announce your death, O Lord*”.

The Church has received the Eucharist from Christ her Lord not as one gift – however precious – among so many others, but as *the gift par excellence*, for it is the gift of himself, of his person in his sacred humanity, as well as the gift of his saving work. Nor does it remain confined to the past, since “all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times”.¹⁰

When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the memorial of her Lord's death and resurrection, this central event of salvation becomes really present and “the work of our redemption is carried out”.¹¹ This sacrifice is so decisive for the salvation of the human race that Jesus Christ offered it and returned to the Father only *after he had left us a means of sharing in it* as if we had been present there. Each member of the faithful can thus take part in it and inexhaustibly gain its fruits. This is the faith from which generations of Christians down the ages have lived. The Church's Magisterium has constantly reaffirmed this faith with joyful gratitude for its inestimable gift.¹² I wish once more to recall this truth and to join you, my dear brothers and sisters, in adoration before this mystery: a great mystery, a mystery of mercy. What more could Jesus have done for us? Truly, in the Eucharist, he shows us a love which goes “to the end” (cf. Jn 13:1), a love which knows no measure. (John Paul II *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #11)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Lord Jesus, thank you for giving your Church the gift of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is beyond all gifts, for it is the gift of yourself—your very person-- and of your saving work. Awaken in all of us, Catholics, a deep gratitude for your sacrifice—your passion and death-- for our salvation. Thank you, Lord, for making this sacrifice-- which transcends all time-- really present in the Eucharist, carrying out the work of our redemption! Lord, each Sunday, let your people come to Church with humble and repentant hearts, eager to receive the grace made available by your sacrifice. Having participated in the sacred mysteries, let everyone leave after Mass

transformed and empowered to live as missionary disciples. We pray this in your most holy name. Amen. St. John Paul II, pray for us

SIXTH DAY

OPENING PRAYER: Chaplet of Divine Mercy

MEDITATION ON THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

12. This aspect of the universal charity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is based on the words of the Saviour himself. In instituting it, he did not merely say: "This is my body", "this is my blood", but went on to add: "which is given for you", "which is poured out for you" (*Lk22:19-20*). Jesus did not simply state that what he was giving them to eat and drink was his body and his blood; he also expressed *its sacrificial meaning* and made sacramentally present his sacrifice which would soon be offered on the Cross for the salvation of all. "The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord's body and blood".¹³

The Church constantly draws her life from the redeeming sacrifice; she approaches it not only through faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since *this sacrifice is made present ever anew*, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister. The Eucharist thus applies to men and women today the reconciliation won once for all by Christ for mankind in every age. "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*".¹⁴ Saint John Chrysostom put it well: "We always offer the same Lamb, not one today and another tomorrow, but always the same one. For this reason the sacrifice is always only one... Even now we offer that victim who was once offered and who will never be consumed".¹⁵

The Mass makes present the sacrifice of the Cross; it does not add to that sacrifice nor does it multiply it.¹⁶ What is repeated is its *memorial* celebration, its "commemorative representation" (*memorialis demonstratio*),¹⁷ which makes Christ's one, definitive redemptive sacrifice always present in time. The sacrificial nature of the Eucharistic mystery cannot therefore be understood as something separate, independent of the Cross or only indirectly referring to the sacrifice of Calvary. (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #12)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, how marvelous is your mercy towards us, sinners! You sacrificed yourself on the cross to redeem us. And at every Mass, your one, definitive redemptive sacrifice is present! Amazing Love! Thank you for our priests who offer this sacrifice at their hands! Bless them with a particular witness of veneration and love towards the Eucharist so that the people too may fully participate in the sacred mysteries. May all priests allow the depth of the Eucharistic mystery to become visible, so that it alone shines forth in people's hearts and minds, through their ministry. Give us all the grace of prayer and the testimony of holiness that we may generate holy and numerous priestly vocations. May the Eucharist continue to be celebrated in every part of the world for the present and future generations. We ask you this in your most holy name. Amen.

St. John Paul II, pray for us

SEVENTH DAY:

OPENING PRAYER: Chaplet of Divine Mercy

MEDITATION ON THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

13. By virtue of its close relationship to the sacrifice of Golgotha, the Eucharist is *a sacrifice in the strict sense*, and not only in a general way, as if it were simply a matter of Christ's offering himself to the faithful as their spiritual food. The gift of his love and obedience to the point of giving his life (cf. *Jn 10:17-18*) is in the first place a gift to his Father. Certainly it is a gift given for our sake, and indeed that of all humanity (cf. *Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; Jn 10:15*), yet it is *first and foremost a gift to the Father*: "a sacrifice that the Father accepted, giving, in return for this total self-giving by his Son, who 'became obedient unto death' (*Phil 2:8*), his own paternal gift, that is to say the grant of new immortal life in the resurrection".¹⁸

In giving his sacrifice to the Church, Christ has also made his own the spiritual sacrifice of the Church, which is called to offer herself in union with the sacrifice of Christ. This is the teaching of the Second Vatican Council concerning all the faithful: "Taking part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is the source and summit of the whole Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God, and offer themselves along with it".¹⁹

14. Christ's passover includes not only his passion and death, but also his resurrection. This is recalled by the assembly's acclamation following the consecration: "*We proclaim your resurrection*". The Eucharistic Sacrifice makes present not only the mystery of the Saviour's passion and death, but also the

mystery of the resurrection, which crowned his sacrifice. It is as the living and risen One that Christ can become, in the Eucharist, the “bread of life” (*Jn*6:35, 48), the “living bread” (*Jn* 6:51). Saint Ambrose reminded the newly-initiated that the Eucharist applies the event of the resurrection to their lives: “Today Christ is yours, yet each day he rises again for you”.²⁰ Saint Cyril of Alexandria also makes clear that sharing in the sacred mysteries “is a true confession and a remembrance that the Lord died and returned to life for us and on our behalf”. (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #13-14)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Jesus, O Jesus, how can we ever thank you enough for the gift of your love and obedience to the point of giving your life? You gave yourself to the Father for our sake. Thank you! Thank you, Jesus! May all of us who take part in the Eucharistic Sacrifice—the source and summit of our entire Christian life—offer ourselves along with your self-offering. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share in the Paschal Mystery—Your Passion, Death and Resurrection. May all the people at every Mass participate interiorly in the Paschal Mystery and be transformed by it. In return for your gift, the Father gave you new immortal life in the resurrection. Resurrected, you are the Bread of Life for us who believe. Thank you, dear Lord, for healing and nourishing our souls with Living Bread! May our parishes become field hospitals for wounded souls searching for your healing love. Amen. St. John Paul II, pray for us

EIGHTH DAY

OPENING PRAYER: Chaplet of Divine Mercy

MEDITATION ON THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

15. The sacramental re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice, crowned by the resurrection, in the Mass involves a most special presence... a mystery which surpasses our understanding and can only be received in faith, as is often brought out in the catechesis of the Church Fathers regarding this divine sacrament: “Do not see – Saint Cyril of Jerusalem exhorts – in the bread and wine merely natural elements, because the Lord has expressly said that they are his body and his blood: faith assures you of this, though your senses suggest otherwise”.²⁴

16. The saving efficacy of the sacrifice is fully realized when the Lord's body and blood are received in communion. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is intrinsically directed

to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through communion; we receive the very One who offered himself for us, we receive his body which he gave up for us on the Cross and his blood which he “poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28). We are reminded of his words: “As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me” (Jn 6:57). Jesus himself reassures us that this union, which he compares to that of the life of the Trinity, is truly realized. *The Eucharist is a true banquet*, in which Christ offers himself as our nourishment...This is no metaphorical food: “My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed” (Jn 6:55).

17. Through our communion in his body and blood, Christ also grants us his Spirit...Thus by the gift of his body and blood Christ increases within us the gift of his Spirit, already poured out in Baptism and bestowed as a “seal” in the sacrament of Confirmation. (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #15-17)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Lord Jesus, we are utterly unworthy to receive you. And yet, you freely give yourself to us—body, blood, soul and divinity-- to nourish us unto eternal life. Thank you, Lord! Thank you for nourishing our hungry souls! We need you, O, we need you, Jesus! Lord, many who have previously received you in communion have left. Bring them home, Lord. Call them back to the Eucharist—Your life-giving banquet. And please, dear Jesus, those who have stayed-- who do receive you in Holy Communion-- make us worthy by the grace of repentance and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. And for those who do not believe in your real presence in the consecrated host and wine, we pray for faith. Open the eyes of their hearts, Lord, so that they might believe and adore you before they receive your body and blood in communion. Grant that your people receive you worthily, Lord, that we may truly be in inward union with you. Let every Catholic ponder your love and saving work and live lives centered on you, ready to share the Good News of your love and salvation with others. In your most holy name, we pray. Amen. St. John Paul II, pray for us

NINTH DAY

OPENING PRAYER: Chaplet of Divine Mercy

MEDITATION ON THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY

18. The acclamation of the assembly following the consecration appropriately ends by expressing the eschatological thrust which marks the celebration of the Eucharist (cf. 1 Cor11:26): “until you come in glory”. The Eucharist is a straining towards the goal, a foretaste of the fullness of joy promised by Christ (cf. Jn 15:11); it is in some

way the anticipation of heaven, the “pledge of future glory”.³⁰ In the Eucharist, everything speaks of confident waiting “in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ”.³¹ Those who feed on Christ in the Eucharist need not wait until the hereafter to receive eternal life: *they already possess it on earth*, as the first-fruits of a future fullness which will embrace man in his totality. For in the Eucharist we also receive the pledge of our bodily resurrection at the end of the world: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (Jn 6:54). This pledge of the future resurrection comes from the fact that the flesh of the Son of Man, given as food, is his body in its glorious state after the resurrection. With the Eucharist we digest, as it were, the “secret” of the resurrection. For this reason Saint Ignatius of Antioch rightly defined the Eucharistic Bread as “a medicine of immortality, an antidote to death”.³²

19. The eschatological tension kindled by the Eucharist *expresses and reinforces our communion with the Church in heaven*. It is not by chance that the Eastern Anaphoras and the Latin Eucharistic Prayers honor Mary, the ever-Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God, the angels, the holy apostles, the glorious martyrs and all the saints. This is an aspect of the Eucharist which merits greater attention: in celebrating the sacrifice of the Lamb, we are united to the heavenly “liturgy” and become part of that great multitude which cries out: “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!” (Rev7:10). The Eucharist is truly a glimpse of heaven appearing on earth. It is a glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem which pierces the clouds of our history and lights up our journey. (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #18-19)

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Thank you, Jesus, for feeding us with your Body and blood that we may possess eternal life right here, right now! And thank you, for our “communion with the Church in heaven! Thank you Jesus for your inestimable gift of the Eucharist! Thank you for giving us “a glimpse of heaven appearing on earth” at every Mass! O Holy Spirit, animate preachers and catechists to preach and to teach with clarity that “in celebrating the sacrifice of the Lamb, we are united to the heavenly ‘liturgy’”. May all Catholics know and experience that the Eucharist is “a glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem which pierces the clouds of our history and lights up our journey.” O Lord, gather your people who have been away from the Eucharist. Bring them back to receive the unlimited graces from the Mass-- Heaven on earth! Amen and Amen!!!

St. John Paul II, pray for us.