

*Homily of Charles G. Palmer-Buckle,
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MAGYAR SZENTEK TEMPLOMA

MARY – MODEL OF THE EUCHARIST, OF THE EUCHARISTIC
ADORATION AND OF EUCHARISTIC COMMUNION

1. “*And Mary kept all these things in her heart and pondered over them*”
(Lk 2:19; 51)

My dearly beloved in Christ Jesus, I am very excited to share a reflection with you at this 52nd International Eucharistic Congress. My excitement stems from the fact that I have been given such an opportunity to preside over this Holy Mass in English at this Church of the Hungarian Martyrs, and, even more so, on this September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

May the Hungarian Martyrs continue to intercede for the Church here in Hungary and all over the world!

2. Now, celebrating the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is one of the oldest and deeply Catholic traditions of both the Latin and the Eastern Church/Rites, and it is inseparable from our faith in Christ Jesus, our Eucharistic Lord and Saviour, and our understanding of who the Blessed Virgin Mary is in God’s plan for human salvation.

Our Catholic faith as precisely expressed in the *Angelus Domini* prayer proclaims thus: “*Et Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis!*” (in English, “*And the Word became flesh; and dwelt among us!*”) (Jn 1:14a). This is the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, the *Emmanuel-God is with us*, which took place historically in the womb of Mary the Virgin of Nazareth by the power of the Holy Spirit (see today’s Gospel of St. Matthew 1:18-23; esp. 1:20b).

This mystery of the Incarnation in the virginal womb of Mary, and her indispensable role in the history of human salvation is what our Catholic

faith professes and our Church honours in this Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated every September 8.

3. According to the Sacred Tradition of the Church and also with the Holy Scriptures, God in his own eternal wisdom planned human salvation to come about through the “seed of the woman” in order to heal the world of the sin of Adam and Eve, our first parents. God himself proclaimed the *proto-evangelion* (the first good news to humanity), and thus pronounced to the devil his ultimate defeat in Gn 3:15: “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.*”

The woman, whose offspring or seed crushed the head of Satan, is the Blessed Virgin Mary (see Rv 12:1ff). It is this promise of human victory over the evil one that we celebrate at the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, honouring her birth as the beginning of God’s fulfillment of his promise made in Gn 3:15, and which in Gal 4:4 St. Paul teaches that: “*...when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman...*”

This is the woman we honour today, September 8 in the calendar of the Church, because her birth was truly prophesied in Gn 3:15 by God himself, and repeated with emphasis by Isaiah 7:14, which St. Matthew in today’s Gospel declares fulfilled in Mary “*the betrothed*” of Joseph.

Yes, as St. Paul proclaims in today’s First Reading (see Rom 8:28-30), please permit me to make the following biblical reflection and application:

- God so loved Mary the Virgin of Nazareth, and *called her for his (singular) purpose*;
- God “*chose her especially long ago and intended (her) to become true image(s) of His Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers (and sisters)*”;
- God *called those he intended for this*; and God *justified them*;
- And “*...with those he justified, God shared his glory*”.

Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus, this is what we in the Church profess in our faith and see fulfilled most especially in Mary the Virgin of Nazareth, our Mother in the order of grace.

4. My dearly beloved, now let me conclude my reflection with reference to the purpose for which we are all gathered at this International Eucharistic Congress, namely to promote the Eucharistic Adoration of Jesus Christ, as our Lord and Saviour.

For me personally and for the Church universal, Mary is the true and perfect model of *Eucharistic adoration*. In fact, Mary is a *Eucharistic person*, and she embodied the spirituality of the Eucharist, as we are all called to do in our lives.

Twice in St. Luke's Gospel, we read: "...*Mary kept all these things and pondered over them in her heart*" (Lk 2:19; 51). This powerful statement of St. Luke is not just reporting something that only happened, but from the teachings of the Church and the testimony of the saints, Mary lived her life always in adoration and in contemplation of the mystery of Christ, at once her Son in the flesh and her Saviour in the order of grace.

Her Eucharistic life of adoration of the mystery of Christ Jesus started with her *fiat* to the Angel Gabriel when she exclaimed: "*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to your word!*" (Lk 1:38). In line with Eucharistic spirituality, Mary made of herself an oblation for the Lord our God in union with Christ her Son, even before his birth.

This Eucharistic adoration continued in her beautiful song of praise and adoration, the *Magnificat*, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, where she contemplates the great things of God the Holy One in "*the lowliness of his handmaid...*" (see Lk 1:48).

Mary the Blessed Virgin of Nazareth followed her Son and Saviour Jesus Christ throughout his earthly life, always having to renew and reaffirm her faith that her Son in the flesh was truly God the Redeemer of humanity.

Even when on the cross, he said to her "*Woman, behold your son...*" (Jn 19:26b), according to Pope St. John Paul II, Mary contemplating her dying Son, saw and accepted all followers of her Son as her children thanks to the atoning grace of his salvific death (see *Redemptoris Mater* #42).

And finally, according to Holy Scriptures, Mary the mother of Jesus was also in the Upper Room in Jerusalem with the apostles and disciples,

as they prayed for the coming of the Holy Spirit, which was fulfilled on Pentecost Sunday (see Acts 1:14). Literally, Mary the Virgin of Nazareth received the Holy Spirit twice, first to conceive the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and then to conceive the Church, the Body of Christ.

These mysteries are what underpin the Church's celebration of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yes, "*...when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman...*"

5. Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus our Eucharistic king, may Mary the Blessed Virgin of Nazareth, she who knew Jesus Christ first in the order of grace and of faith, and then in the flesh, from his incarnation through his earthly life, by his passion and death, and in his resurrection, intercede for us to become truly a Eucharistic community, the Mystical Body of Christ!

May St. Joseph, her Spouse most chaste, whom we honour this Year of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, intercede for us to become truly a Eucharistic communion!

May the Hungarian Martyrs also pray for us and for the success of this 52nd International Eucharistic Congress! Amen.