**20 April**

**Javier Alvarez**

In this final Eucharist the CEVIM meeting, allow me a brief consideration on the proclaimed readings, readings that are very suggestive, as you may have already seen. John's gospel begins and ends up by placing Jesus in “the mountain.” We already know that in the theology of the Bible, the mountain was the point of meeting between heaven and earth, the place where one worships God. This was the theology of the Ancient Testament. That of the New Testament, that of Jesus himself says that one does not have to go up any mountain to meet Him. Jesus modified radically the way of giving worship to God. As the proclaimed text tells us, as “the Pasch was drawing close,” the central religious feast of the Ancient Testament, when the Jews were going up the holy mountain of Jerusalem and were coming to the Temple, Jesus organizes an “alternative Pasch,” which is no longer a sacred ritual in the sanctuary, but a meal shared in the field. That is to say, Jesus turns the religious and sacred worship into a human, lay and profane experience.

It is a question of the experience of a shared meal. Health and nourishment are two things that we human beings most appreciate and need. The narrative starts by speaking of the healing of the sick and ends by saying that all were satisfied with the meal. With gestures such as this, Jesus points to a new model of religion: no longer the religion of the Temple, of the altar, of holocausts, of the priests with their rituals … It is a religion that expresses itself in the basic symbols of life: of health and meal. And all this lived in communion, in harmony with nature, in the joy of meeting the others. How well did St. Vincent understand that Christian faith cannot remain shut up in the Temple, but it has to concretize itself in the meal, in social justice, in health and in fraternal embrace! And if it does not get to to this, religion is empty and the worship of God, a hypocrisy.

In another different sense, history can remind us of something that we have to keep present when we speak of evangelization or of the new evangelization, as we have done in this meeting. When we look squarely at evangelization that we are called to do in Europe, it is not strange that we see and feel like dwarfs before a real giant, very much like what Philip, Andrew and the other disciples of Jesus felt before the challenge of feeding 5000 persons with five loaves of barley and a pair of fish. And yet the feast, the miracle, took place: everyone was filled and even a few baskets of bread remained. Thus, God can multiply by a thousand and by a million the poor human efforts. The story is an invitation to evangelize with confidence, when immediate results are not seen. As the wise Gamaliel said, which we heard from the reading of the Acts, if the new evangelization is a work willed by God, He will know how to complete it through our determination and our collaboration, through our five loaves of bread and two fish.