

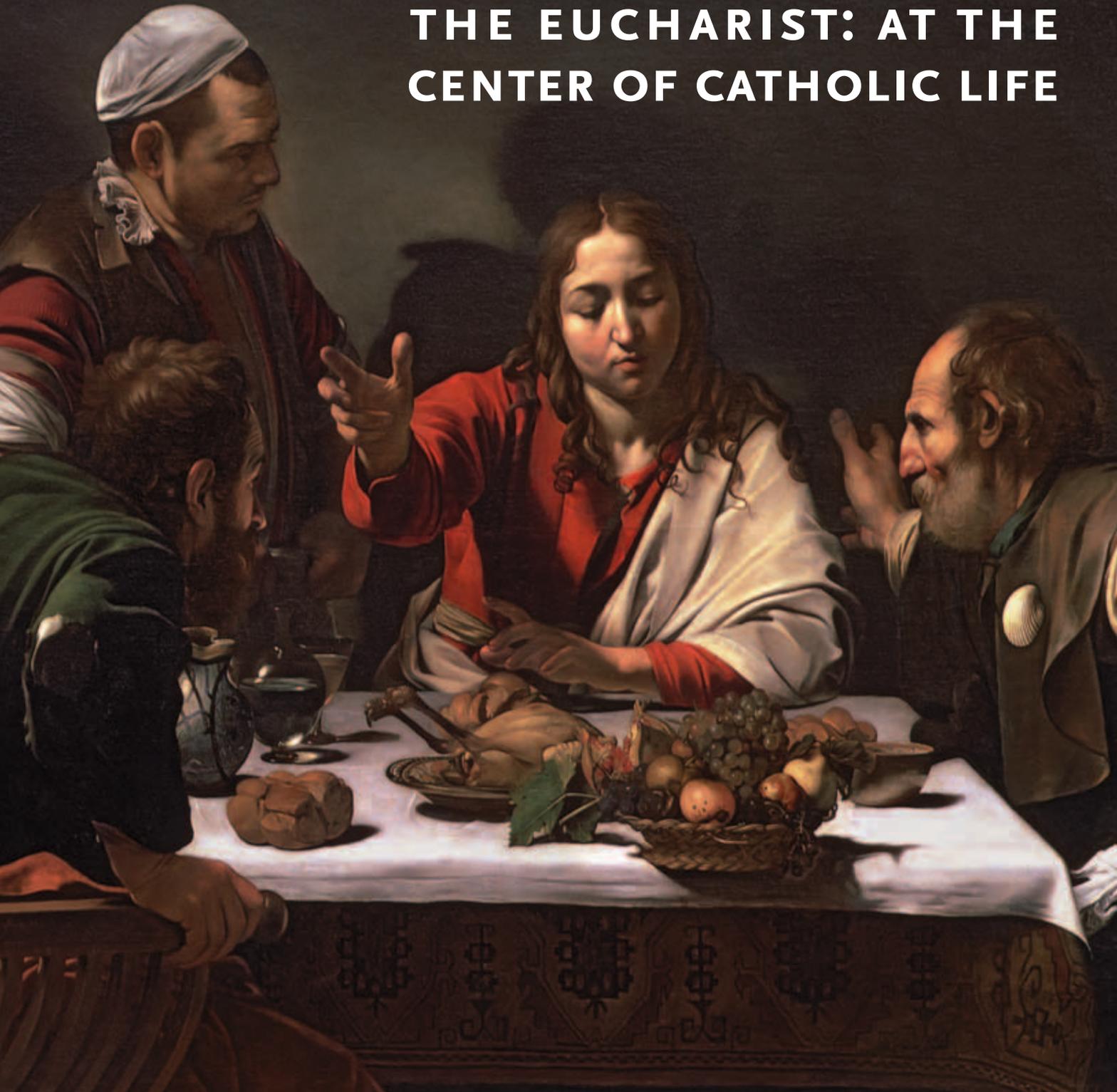
the CHURCH in the 21ST CENTURY CENTER BOSTON COLLEGE

C2I Resources

FALL 2011

A CATALYST AND RESOURCE FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE EUCHARIST: AT THE CENTER OF CATHOLIC LIFE





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The Church in the 21st Century Center serves as a catalyst and a resource for the renewal of the Catholic Church in the United States.

FROM THE C21 CENTER DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Boston College is excited to bring you this fall issue of *C21 Resources* focusing on what all Catholics experience as the very center of their faith: the Eucharist. Our spring issue will continue this theme and explore “Catholics as a sacramental people.”

We are fortunate to have John Baldovin, S.J., professor of historical and liturgical theology at the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, as the distinguished guest editor for both the fall and spring issues.

Paralleling this issue we will bring to campus a series of noted scholars who will develop the many facets of the Eucharist presented in the articles that follow. For those unable to come to campus, the date on which a video-streamed version of each program will be available on the C21C website (www.bc.edu/church21) is noted on the schedule you will find at the center of this issue.

C21 Resources has been a prominent feature of the Church in the 21st Century Center since 2003 and is currently being mailed to more than 160,000 households. All past issues can be found at www.bc.edu/church21/publications/c21resources.

Let me end by thanking you for your continuing interest in the C21 Center and support of its mission to be a catalyst and resource for the renewal of the Church.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Newton
Interim Director, Church in the 21st Century Center
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THE EUCHARIST: AT THE CENTER OF CATHOLIC LIFE

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ON THE COVER

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's *The Supper at Emmaus*, unusual for its depiction of Christ without a beard, was commissioned by the Roman nobleman Ciriaco Mattei in 1601 and later purchased by Cardinal Scipione Borghese. It is now a part of the permanent collection at the National Gallery in London.

Eucharist: The Many-Faceted Jewel

JOHN F. BALDOVIN, S.J.

*O sacred banquet!
in which Christ is received,
the memory of his Passion is renewed,
the mind is filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory to us is given.*

Alleluia

— *Antiphon for the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ*

With these beautiful poetic words the great medieval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas summed up the centrality of the Eucharist for us Christians. The Eucharist is indeed the center of our lives quite simply because Christ himself is the center of our lives—not only the Lord Jesus who lived, taught, healed, was crucified and raised from the dead 2,000 years ago, not only the Christ whose saving and self-giving sacrifice we are mysteriously attached to every time we celebrate, not only the Christ whose bodily presence sustains us week by week (or even day by day), but also the Christ who beckons us forth to our ultimate vocation, living with him in the glory of the Father and the Holy Spirit.

For Catholics, and indeed for a great many Christians, the Eucharist is one of the most important and vital aspects of the faith. There is a story told of Christians on trial in an early third-century persecution of the Church in North Africa (at Abitina). The judges clearly thought the Christians were out of their minds since they were willing to die for what they believed in, but they showed that they weren't dying for a set of ideas as much as for the Lord himself when they responded, "But we cannot live without what we do on the Lord's Day." In other words, "we cannot live without our weekly celebration of the Eucharist."

We clearly need to regain a sense of the importance and centrality of the Eucharist today, especially when so many Catholics regard the Sunday Eucharist as an option rather than a matter of life or death. Hence this issue of *C21 Resources*. It is appearing just prior to the implementation of a new translation of the Mass. This is an ideal time for us to renew our understanding and our sense of the importance of the Eucharist and its centrality for us.

The following selections are mainly by Roman Catholics, but I think it's important to recognize how significant the Eucharist is for so many Christians: Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant. The ecumenical importance of the Eucharist can be discerned in a very important convergence (not yet consensus!) document published by the Faith and

Order Commission of the World Council of Churches almost 30 years ago: *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM, Lima, 1982). That document lays out a remarkable amount of agreement achieved by Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant scholars. (The commission included Avery Dulles, S.J., and Jean-Marie Tillard, O.P. The main architect of the document was Professor Geoffrey Wainwright of Duke University, a British Methodist.)

As I often say in teaching a course on the theology of the Eucharist, the Eucharist is like a precious jewel. You cannot appreciate it by looking at it from only one angle or in only one light. You need to turn it now this way, now that, now in this light and then another to begin to comprehend its true beauty. I would add that in order to appreciate it fully you need to celebrate it well, in faith-filled communities with good pastoral leadership. I would add further that the poetry and art that are included in this issue are not afterthoughts but instead very important ways of appreciating a symbolic reality that cannot be captured in prose alone but needs to be experienced in all sorts of ways. BEM deals with the Eucharist under five headings:

1. Thanksgiving to the Father
2. Memorial of the Son
3. Invocation of the Holy Spirit
4. Communion of the Faithful
5. Meal of the Kingdom

As all of our eucharistic prayers reveal, the main verb governing what we do at Mass is "to give thanks." Gratitude for what God has done for us in making us (creation) and saving us (redemption) is always at the forefront in our worship. That's why we can make "Eucharist" even when we celebrate a funeral. Formal Christian prayer has traditionally been directed to the Father, but it is done through Christ, because in the Eucharist (as well as all of our liturgical prayer) it is Christ's living, dying, and rising (the Paschal Mystery) that gives us access to the one he called "Abba." Memorial means that we act out the pattern of Christ's person and acting for us as we repeat his actions at the Last Supper:

- Taking — Presentation of the gifts
- Blessing — Eucharistic prayer
- Breaking — Fraction
- Giving — Communion

But the "we" has to be qualified by the fact that we can do nothing of worth without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. That is why in all of our eucharistic prayers since Vatican II the invocation (or epiclesis) of the Holy Spirit has been made explicit: "Therefore, O Lord, we humbly

implore you: By the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, of your Son our Lord Jesus that they may become the Body and Blood of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.” And so BEM alerts us to the fact that all three Persons of the Holy Trinity are involved in our Eucharist. And as the Body of Christ the Church is involved as well. We often forget that the ultimate purpose of the Eucharist is not only the transformation of the bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of the Lord but also *our transformation* into his one Body, the Church. BEM also reminds us that the Eucharist is the foretaste of the meal of God’s Kingdom. This generous self-giving and sharing of the Lord with us looks forward to the Kingdom—to the final realization of God’s plan. And so the Eucharist has profound ecclesial and ethical implications.

Perhaps you will be as struck as I have been in putting the pieces that follow together by how rich the Eucharist is. It encompasses so many facets of our Christian lives: the

sense that God is truly with us, the challenge to participate in his self offering, the growth and true nourishment of our children, the awesome challenge to make gratitude (thanksgiving, *Eucharist*) the most significant element in our lives, the call to act morally and justly in our world, the invitation to let Christ break down the barriers that divide us and to become what we truly are, as St. Augustine so wonderfully says, the Body of Christ. Each of our authors or selections from official Church documents gives us a glimpse of a different aspect of the Eucharist. Thus the Eucharist is like a precious jewel that must be viewed from many angles and perspectives in order to be appreciated. If in some small way this issue of *C21 Resources* helps in that effort, it will have achieved its goal.

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Endnotes

JOHN F. BALDOVIN, S.J., is the editor of this issue of *C21 Resources*.

DRAW US IN THE SPIRIT’S TETHER

*Draw us in the Spirit’s tether,
for when humbly in your name
two or three are met together,
you are in the midst of them.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Touch we now your garment’s hem.*

*As disciples used to gather
in the name of Christ to sup,
then with thanks to God the giver
break the bread and bless the cup.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
So now bind our friendship up.*

*All our meals and all our living
make as sacraments of you,
that by caring, helping, giving,
we may be disciples true.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
We will serve with faith anew.*

—Percy Dearmer (1867–1936)



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Why Go to Mass?

JOHN F. BALDOVIN, S.J.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus invites his followers to “come and see.” Nowhere is that invitation from the Lord clearer than in the invitation to share in the celebration of the Mass.

Not every Mass is going to be a great and deeply moving experience, not for the vast majority of us anyway. But there is a great deal to be said for simple fidelity to our worship. St. Ignatius Loyola says in the *Spiritual Exercises* that the person who is experiencing some desolation (dryness, “downness”) in prayer can be helped by remembering times of consolation in the past. I think that is true not only of individual prayer but of communal, liturgical prayer as well. In any case, the Mass may not always be a deeply emotional experience, but it is always an experience of the Lord giving himself to us in his word and his sacramental presence and calling forth our self-giving in return.

Why bother? Why bother going to Mass at all when we can worship God anywhere?

1. *Participation in the salvation of the world.* The most important reason for participating in the Eucharist is that God has invited us to share in the experience of the world’s salvation in the death and resurrection of the Lord every time we celebrate. We are invited to participate in God’s redeeming act each time we participate in the Eucharist and thereby commit ourselves to working for God’s reign.

2. *Experiencing the glory of God.* St. Irenaeus, a second-century Christian theologian and martyr, wrote that the glory of God is the human being fully alive, and that the human being fully alive is the one who is in Christ Jesus. The Mass is where we experience sacramentally our destiny as members incorporated into the body of Christ. This is what God wants the world to

look like: human beings who give of themselves to others in faith, hope, and love.

3. *Discipline of faith.* A third reason to bother is the formation of the habit of worshipping and glorifying God. Human beings ordinarily develop by forming habits, some good and some bad. These are patterns that shape our lives. The discipline of worshipping God helps us to grow into being habitual “adorers of God,” even when we do not feel like it.

4. *Hearing the Scriptures communally.* The Bible is the word of God, but let’s face it, individualistic and idiosyncratic readings of the Bible

have led to some pretty wacky and even destructive interpretations. We need to experience the Scriptures both alone and in community. This is what Christians mean by tradition: the way we have learned throughout history as a Church to interpret the Scriptures together. Hearing the Scriptures in community is a way of deepening as well as safeguarding our experience of God’s communication with us.

5. *Developing the moral life.* If the basic structure of the Eucharist is taking, blessing, breaking, and giving in imitation of the Lord’s passion, death, and resurrection, then the habit of weekly (or even more frequent) celebration of the Mass ought to help us in our development as moral human beings. If we celebrate faithfully, we ought to be conforming more and more, as individuals and as a



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications

community, to the image of generosity and love of the one into whom we were baptized. The final test of whether the Mass “works” is: “By their fruits shall you know them.”

6. *Companionship with Christ.* If I believe that Christ is the savior of the world, God incarnate, who has given his very self for me, then I want to share in the most intimate experience of self-giving—holy Communion—and I also want to recognize him in the brothers and sisters with whom I am sharing the act of self-giving. We have a vital human need for both food and meaning. The word “companionship” is derived from the Latin *cum* (with) and *panis* (bread). We find companionship in sharing food with others. There is no companionship without sharing what our bodies need. There is no companionship with Christ except by sharing in his body—sacrament and Church.

7. *Focusing my needs.* From the earliest days of Christianity, men and women have brought their deepest needs and desires to the table of the Lord, confident that they can be joined to Christ’s great act of intercession before the Father (Heb 7:25, 10:1-22). This is why we pray for the dead at Mass; we place them before the merciful and compassionate God in the midst of this great work of our redemption. I can bring my deepest desires to the table of the Lord, confident that I will be heard.

8. *Praying for the world.* Of course, we bring not only our own personal needs but the state of the world to the celebration of the Eucharist. There is a kind of cosmic dimension to every celebration in which the realities of our world (bread, wine, men, and women) are transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The world with all of its needs, joys, and struggles is present every time we celebrate the Eucharist together, and our consciousness of the world helps to make the Mass the experience of Christian life in a concentrated way.

9. *Welcoming the kingdom.* If the Eucharist is the celebration of how God wants the world to look, then

every time we celebrate, we anticipate the banquet of God’s kingdom “when every tear will be wiped away.” In other words, the reign of God looks like human beings who, recognizing their sinfulness, know that God’s mercy is far greater. The reign of God looks like people who are gathered to receive his word gratefully. The reign of God looks like people who allow God’s Holy Spirit to form them into a community that accepts life from God, blesses God with everything that is in them, are broken and poured out for others in imitation of the Lord Jesus who has given us this pattern. The reign of God looks like people who share the most unimaginably precious gifts freely because they know that all is gift in Christ. The reign of God looks like people who are sent forth to do the works of faith, hope, and love with courage.

10. *Pure joy.* A final reason for celebrating the Eucharist is that here God invites us to the deepest peace and joy that is possible—sharing in his own divine life. St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*: “O God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” The Mass is a foretaste of that perfectly joyful rest. The Mass is an obligation to be sure, but it is an obligation that comes not so much from the outside as from the nature of what it means to enjoy Christian fellowship. We are who we are because of our sharing with our brothers and sisters. And what we share is Jesus Christ himself. How could that not be the cause of pure joy?

In the Gospel of John, Jesus invites his followers to “come and see.” Nowhere is that invitation from the Lord clearer than in the invitation to share in the celebration of the Mass.

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Endnotes

JOHN F. BALDOVIN, “Why Go to Mass?” *America* 190 (May 10, 2004).

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THE VAST OCEAN BEGINS JUST OUTSIDE OUR CHURCH: THE EUCHARIST

*Something has happened
to the bread
and the wine.*

*They have been blessed.
What now?
The body leans forward*

*to receive the gift
from the priest’s hand,
then the chalice.*

*They are something else now
from what they were
before this began.*

*I want
to see Jesus,
maybe in the clouds*

*or on the shore,
just walking,
beautiful man*

*and clearly
someone else
besides.*

*On the hard days
I ask myself
if I ever will.*

*Also there are times
my body whispers to me
that I have.*

— MARY OLIVER

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Sacrosanctum Concilium

VATICAN II

The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist

14. Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people” (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else; for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit; and therefore pastors of souls must zealously strive to achieve it, by means of the necessary instruction, in all their pastoral work.

47. At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity,³⁶ a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.³⁷

48. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion

and full collaboration. They should be instructed by God’s word and be nourished at the table of the Lord’s body; they should give thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with him, they should learn also to offer themselves; through Christ the Mediator,³⁸ they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.

49. For this reason the sacred Council, having in mind those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the faithful, especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation, has made the following decrees in order that the sacrifice of the Mass, even in the ritual forms of its celebration, may become pastorally efficacious to the fullest degree.

50. The rite of the Mass is to be revised in such a way that the intrinsic nature and purpose of its several parts, as also the connection between them, may be more clearly manifested, and that devout and active participation by the faithful may be more easily achieved.

For this purpose the rites are to be simplified, due care being taken to preserve their substance; elements which, with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage, are now to be discarded; other elements which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary.

51. The treasures of the Bible are to be opened up more lavishly, so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God’s word. In

this way a more representative portion of the holy Scriptures will be read to the people in the course of a prescribed number of years.

52. By means of the homily the mysteries of the faith and the guiding principles of the Christian life are expounded from the sacred text, during the course of the liturgical year; the homily, therefore, is to be highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason.

53. Especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation there is to be restored, after the Gospel and the homily, “the common prayer” or “the prayer of the faithful.” By this prayer, in which the people are to take part, intercession will be made for the holy Church, for the civil authorities, for those oppressed by various needs, for all mankind, and for the salvation of the entire world.³⁹

54. In Masses which are celebrated with the people, a suitable place may be allotted to their mother tongue. This is to apply in the first place to the readings and “the common prayer,” but also, as local conditions may warrant, to those parts which pertain to the people. Nevertheless, steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or to sing together in Latin those parts of the Ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them.

And wherever a more extended use of the mother tongue within the Mass appears desirable, the regulation laid down in Art. 40 of this Constitution is to be observed.

55. That more perfect form of participation in the Mass whereby the faithful, after the priest’s communion,

receive the Lord's body from the same sacrifice, is strongly commended.

56. The two parts which, in a certain sense, go to make up the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they

form but one single act of worship. Accordingly, this sacred Synod strongly urges pastors of souls that, when instructing the faithful, they insistently teach them to take their part in the entire Mass, especially on Sundays and feasts of obligation.

Endnotes

Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Paul VI, December 4, 1963.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/>

The Sacrament of Real Presence

ROBERT IMBELLI

At a time when so many experience an absence of meaning and hope in their lives, Christians, nourished by the Eucharist, are sent forth to be heralds and stewards of Christ's healing presence.

William Butler Yeats's "The Second Coming" contains what are, perhaps, the most-quoted lines of 20th-century poetry. "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." Written in 1920, the poem not only summed up the horror of the still young century, it seemed prescient of horrors yet to come.

Postmodernity may be, to some degree, a pretentious academic fad. But its soil is undoubtedly the collapse of an authoritative, life-giving center and the ensuing fragmentation experienced daily in culture, politics, and individual lives.

One result is the emergence of the "protean self," imaginatively portrayed in Woody Allen's film *Zelig*. Here is the self without a center, blending effortlessly into the most disparate situations and bound by no ultimate and lasting commitments—but also quite capable of murderous rage.

Brooding over the 21st century is no longer the specter of Marx, but that of Nietzsche. The "death of God" leads to an abyss of nothingness. While many strive to fill the emptiness with the ever-changing trinkets of consumerism or the endless titillations of the media, a few do so by indulging an unfettered will to power. And absence, not presence, seems to reign.

Faced with this cultural situation (one that Pope John Paul II called a "culture of death"), where is the Christian believer to find, in the words of another poet, T.S. Eliot, "the still point of the turning world"? Ultimately, in the Eucharist, the flaming center of the world, the sacrament of real Presence.

At the central point of the celebration of the Eucharist, the priest announces to the congregation: "The mystery of faith." And the congregation exclaims: "We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection until you come again." In doing so, we trace the temporal coordinates of the new world of faith.

"We proclaim your death." The Eucharist celebrates, remembers, re-presents the once and for all sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. Christ descended into the abyss of death, the void of absence. He attained new and everlasting life not despite death, but by transforming death. Thus Christ's followers are schooled, in the Eucharist, not to deny death in its many forms, such as disappointment, hardship, failure; but, in company with Christ, to transform the power of death.

For "we profess your resurrection." The Christ present in the Eucharist is the living Jesus and the disciples live through him and with him and in him. He is not a dim

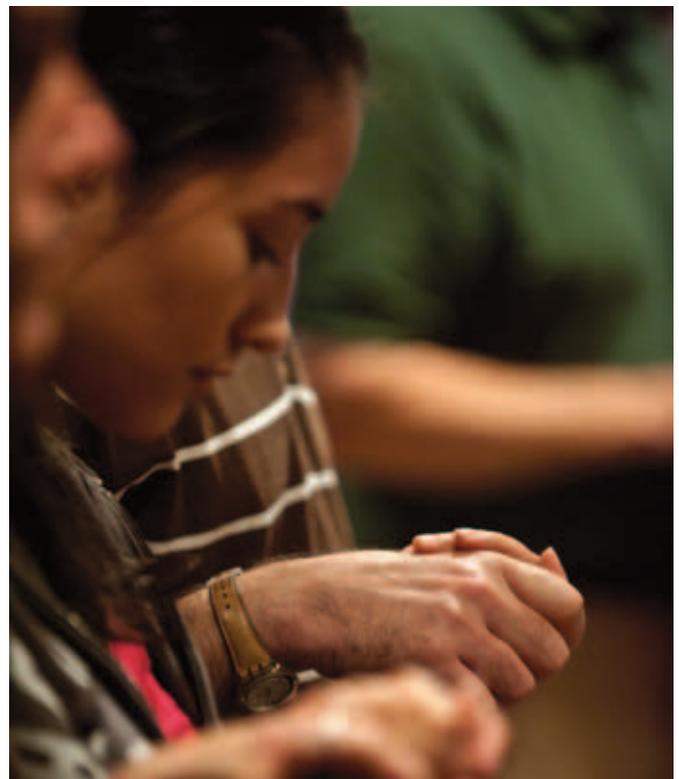


Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications

figure of the past to be studied at a distance, but the living one encountered in the today of faith. He declares: "I am the first and the last, the living One. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I hold the keys of death's dominion" (Revelation 1:17 and 18). In the Eucharist we do not learn about Christ, but from him.

Still his presence remains hidden under sacramental signs. It is a real Presence that is not yet fully manifest. And so faith confesses: "Christ will come again" to sum up all things in himself, to "judge the living and the dead." Only then will he complete the work of creation and redemption; and "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

The Eucharist opens to faith a new world of persons in relation whose form and substance is the person of Jesus Christ. And it also calls forth the new personhood of the participants, their gradual transformation into living members of Christ's body. "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11).

The whole thrust of the Eucharist is to nurture a movement from fragmentation to integration: The broken bread becomes the salvific means for the gathering in of the many, the blood outpoured achieves the at-one-ment of the world. What is de-centered finds its center in Eucharist. Those who despair of meaning can find here God's meaning and purpose.

The Eucharist, then, is pure gift, grace. God so loves the world that he gives his only Son. And the Son so loves us that he continues to give himself for the world's salvation, nowhere more tangibly than in the Eucharist.

But the Eucharist is also imperative, task. It calls believers to allow the presence of Christ to transform both themselves and their world. In place of the protean, rootless self of postmodernity, the Eucharist fosters a

centered self, free to give generously as he or she has so generously received.

What better name for this self emerging from the encounter with Christ in the Eucharist than a "eucharistic self," one whose native language is thanksgiving? For as Paul writes to the Colossians: "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (3:17).

The deeds that flow from such a eucharistic self are deeds of service, in solidarity with the most needy members of Christ's body. The participants in the Eucharist are sent forth to undertake works of justice and peace that help provide the human conditions for genuine thanksgiving. The eminently practical Epistle of James warns: "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" (2:15 and 16). The Eucharist both nourishes a eucharistic self and promotes a eucharistic ethic.

As is well known, the account of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John does not contain a narrative of the institution of the Eucharist, as the other gospels do. In its place we find, instead, Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and instructing them: "I have given you an example: as I have done to you, you also must do" (13:15). Therefore, the injunction of Christ, "do this in memory of me," repeated at every celebration of the Eucharist, embraces both the breaking of the bread and the ongoing service of others. Both these eucharistic actions are performed for the life of the world, for the fuller realization of Christ's Presence in all.

—

Endnotes

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Parents and Communion: “Lifting the Veil”

THOMAS GROOME

A deep conviction within the tradition of Celtic spirituality is that there is only a thin veil between the transcendent and immanent, between the sacred and secular, between the Creator and creation, between God and ourselves. Of course, this is a common sentiment throughout the Bible and Christian tradition. For the Psalmist, all of creation proclaims the greatness of God (e.g., Ps 148); Paul was convinced that God is “never far from any one of us” (Acts 17:27); and Ignatius of Loyola insisted that with a little discernment and the eyes of faith, we can “come to see God in all things.”

The old Celts were also convinced that there are special moments when the veil is lifted or becomes gossamer thin, when our encounter with God becomes palpable, immediate, more than mediated. Again, the mystics of Christian tradition have said as much. The Christian Celts insisted, however, that the veil is at its thinnest, if not entirely lifted, when we celebrate and receive Eucharist. They saw Eucharist as the most mystical of moments—this side of eternity.

As a parent, I so wanted our little boy Teddy to come to this mystical appreciation of Eucharist. I wished that he could have a sense of awe, of reverence, of wonder at it all. I wanted him to be deeply convinced that here he encounters the real presence of his Friend Jesus, who himself was God among us as one of ourselves. I hoped that Eucharist could become a spiritual anchor to his life, tethering him, in the imagery of the poet Yeats, to a “center that holds” even when “things fall apart.” I wanted it to be a center point to which he could come to celebrate the happiest of moments and have his joy heightened, come at the worst of moments and have his burdens lightened. In that Eucharist can be a climactic moment that gathers up and symbolizes all of Christian faith—akin to good lovemaking in a happy marriage—I wanted Teddy to experience “holy communion” with God in this moment and renew his commitment to the greatest commandment, to love God, neighbor, and himself. But how?

Our Responsibility

I knew Teddy would be well prepared for First Holy Communion at his Catholic school, and in the parish program in which we enrolled him. And sure enough, when we’d inquire, he could tell us that this was the real presence of Jesus, the very body of Christ. We followed many of the good suggestions from our parish program for parents to help prepare their children for First Communion. We modeled a family commitment to Sunday Mass, no matter what. We baked bread together and talked about how this echoes Eucharist; we made sure he knew the traditional prayers; we practiced the ritual of receiving; we made arrangements for a

grand celebration with family and friends. But would all this bring him to a deep spirituality of Eucharist, to where the veil is gossamer thin, if there at all.

The commission to parents in the ritual of the baptism should have been ringing in my ears: “You will be the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith”—and by “first” I think the Church means most influential. Also, I should have remembered Vatican II telling me that we, the parents, are “the first and foremost educators” of our children in the faith (“Declaration on Christian Education,” #3). Well, those directives may have been at work in my subconscious, but what really moved me to action was the memory of what my mother said to me as I prepared for my own First Holy Communion. Though now almost 60 years ago, that conversation is still with me and shapes how I celebrate and receive Eucharist to this very day.

Mom sat me down and said something like, “Tom, when you receive Jesus, know for sure that he is *really* present with you, right there in your body. So you can talk to him, heart to heart. First, thank him a thousand times for coming to you, and then talk about whatever you like. You can chat with him like your very best friend.” After a pause, she asked, “So what are you going to talk about to Jesus?” I remember asking, somewhat skeptical, “Mom, can I really tell him about Dusty?”—my dog that was sick at the time. She said, “Absolutely! Dusty is exactly what you two should talk about.” After a pause, she added, “Before you finish your chat, try to figure out what Jesus wants you to do because you’re *his* good friend.” I took my mother at her word. Years later, I’ve dressed up her advice along the lines below. Teachers and catechists can follow it, of course, but most effective of all will be parents.

The Spiritual as Integrating Life and Faith

The Second Vatican Council said that the “split” that Christians manage to maintain between the faith we profess and our daily lives “deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age” (“Constitution on Church in Modern World,” #43). This is a rather amazing statement. Speaking in 1965, you’d think the Council would name communism, or materialism, or secularism, and so on; but no, the worst of errors is the gap we Christians maintain between the lives we live and the faith we profess.

Conversely, to integrate our lives and faith into lived Christian faith is surely the clue to our religion becoming a spirituality. Parenthetically and especially in Catholic tradition, spirituality is about putting faith to work in the everyday of life. To this end, Eucharist can be the touchstone of a “practical mysticism” (a favorite phrase of the mystical

writer Evelyn Underhill) that helps to catalyze the everyday integration of life and faith. That requires, however, that we remove all traces of a “wall of separation” between Eucharist and daily life. Instead of isolation apart from life in some sacred realm, we must approach the celebration and reception of Eucharist as a “thin veil” moment in the midst of the ordinary and everyday. We are most likely to embrace the spiritual and mystical potential of Eucharist when it functions for us as the tip of the iceberg that is the sacramentality of life in the world.

That is what my mom was trying to achieve in having me talk to Jesus about whatever was going on in my life and to decide how to live as a friend of Jesus. Though Mom didn’t quote from his “last discourse” in John’s Gospel, at least four times there Jesus repeats, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” So, Eucharist must arise from and return to life, with the commitment to live as disciples. Surely, that is what Vatican II meant when it said that the liturgy should be the “summit and source” of Christian faith (“Constitution on Liturgy,” #10).

Life to Eucharist to Life

Many older Catholics grew up with the spiritual practices of making a “preparation” and a “thanksgiving” around receiving Eucharist. We seem to have downplayed these of late. The emphasis now is on singing together as a community throughout the reception of Communion. But surely we don’t all need to be singing all the time (and music ministers might well choose something more meditative as the communion hymn). Meanwhile, I think there is much wisdom in those traditional practices that we can well share with our children, and encourage them to craft their preparation and thanksgiving in ways that bring their lives to the Eucharist and the Eucharist to their lives.

The *preparation* can be any pause or prayer (if only in the communion line) to ready our hearts to welcome Jesus. Here I add the spin, much as my mom did, that you might ask your child in preparation, “Have you figured out what you’re going to talk about to Jesus?” This is another way of inviting, “What is going on in your life that you need to bring to the Eucharist?” Also, reassure them often that they can bring all their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, questions and concerns to Jesus and chat with him in their hearts.

For many traditional Catholics like myself, the *thanksgiving* after receiving Eucharist can approximate a weekly mystical moment. This thin veil time should bring us to all the foundational sentiments of prayer: adoration, thanksgiving, repentance, petition, and resolve. Again, we can well encourage our children in this good practice, with an emphasis on bringing Eucharist back to their lives.

This means encouraging them to figure out how they should live now that they’ve celebrated and received Eucharist. Here, raising good questions may be more effective than giving directives. So, consider asking, where and how is Jesus inviting you? How are you to reach out with love and care for others, to share your Eucharist with the world? What might you try to do or change in your life? While Jesus is your best



“Holy Communion” © P. Delis / CC0/0NC/Colong/Corbis

friend, how will you be numbered among the best friends—disciples—of Jesus?

At the time of my First Holy Communion, I learned a pattern to follow in making a *thanksgiving*. It’s a little mnemonic that prompts the sentiments I might express to Jesus. Amazingly, for almost 60 years now I’ve followed it every time I receive Eucharist. I don’t think it was my mom who taught me, so it must have been Miss Geraghty, my second grade teacher. It is easy to remember—around the word ALTAR. So, as a *thanksgiving* after receiving communion, and with a view to their own lives, you might encourage your child to express these sentiments.

Adoration: Pause to be in awe and amazement at this moment of divine/human encounter; welcome Jesus and thank him for coming to you in the Eucharist;

Love: Tell Jesus you love him and ask him to kindle the same spark of love in your heart that is so aflame in his for us all;

Talk: Talk to Jesus about your life, about what you’re “up to” and whatever is “going on” there;

Ask: Recognize the help and blessings you need in your life at this time and ask for them;

Repent/Resolve: Ask forgiveness as needed and make resolutions about how you will try to live as a disciple of Jesus, placing your life in his hands.

There is no simple formula to foster in children the spirituality of Eucharist, to enable them to experience its celebration and reception as a mystical moment. But we can well share with them the old practices of *preparation* and *thanksgiving*, with the spin that they bring their lives to Eucharist and Eucharist to their lives. For Catholic Christians especially, Eucharist is our most ready-at-hand encounter with Emmanuel, God-with-us (Matthew 1:23). Let it be a mystical moment, and for our children as well.

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Endnotes

Thomas Groome is a professor of theology and religious education at Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry, where he also chairs the Department of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry.

St. Augustine's Sermon 272

What you behold now on the altar of God you saw there last night as well. But you have not yet heard what it is, what it means, and of how great a reality is the sacrament. What you see, then, is bread and a cup. This is what your eyes report to you. But your faith has need to be taught that the bread is the body of Christ, the cup the blood of Christ. Perhaps this rather brief statement might be sufficient for belief, but belief requires instruction, for the Prophet says: "Unless you believe, you will not understand" (Is 7:9). So now you can say to me: "You have taught us to believe. Explain, so we may understand."

For the following thought may arise in anyone's mind. "We know whence our Lord Jesus Christ took flesh, from the Virgin Mary. As an infant He was nursed. He was brought up. He grew. He attained manhood. He suffered persecution from the Jews. He has hanged on the wood, He was killed on the wood, He was taken down from the wood. He was buried. He rose on the third day. When He willed, He ascended into heaven; to there He lifted up His body. Thence will he come to judge the living and dead. Now He is there, enthroned at the right hand of the Father. How is the bread His body? And the cup, or what is in the cup, how is that His blood?"

These things, my brothers, are called sacraments for the reason that in them one thing is seen, but another is understood. That which is seen has physical appearance, that which is understood has spiritual fruit. If, then, you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle as he says to the faithful "You are the body of Christ, and His members" (1 Cor 12:27). If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and His members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord's table, you receive your mystery. You reply "Amen" to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear "The Body of Christ," and you reply "Amen." Be a member of the body of Christ so that your "Amen" may be true.

But why in bread? I provide nothing of my own at this point, rather let us listen together to the Apostle who said, when he was speaking about this sacrament, "We, though many, are one bread, one body" (1 Cor 10:17). Understand and rejoice. Unity! Verity! Piety! Charity! "One bread." What is this one bread? "Many... one body." Remember that bread is not made from one grain, but from many. When you were exorcised you were, after a fashion, milled. When you were baptized you were moistened. When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit you were baked. Be what you see, and receive what you are.

That is what the Apostle said about the bread, and he has already indicated quite well what we are to understand of the cup, even though he did not say it. For just as in

the preparation of the bread which you see, many grains were moistened into a unity, as if there were taking place what Holy Scripture says about the faithful, "They had one mind, one heart toward God" (Act 4:32), so also in the case of the wine. Brothers, recall whence wine comes. Many grapes hang in the cluster, but the liquid of the grapes is mixed in unity. So also did Christ the Lord portray us. He willed that we belong to Him. He consecrated the mystery of our peace and unity upon His table. He who receives the mystery of unity and does not hold fast to the bond of peace, receives not a mystery for himself, but testimony against himself.

Turned toward the Lord God, the Almighty Father, with a pure heart, let us render great and true thanks to Him, as much as our incapacity can. With all our soul, let us beg His singular gentleness that He may deign to hear our prayers with favor, that He may also drive the enemy from our actions and thoughts by His power, that He may increase our faith, guide our minds, grant us a spiritual way of thinking, and bring us to His blessedness, through Jesus Christ His Son. Amen.

LOVE BADE ME WELCOME

*Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd anything.*

*"A guest," I answer'd, "worthy to be here";
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee."
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"*

*"Truth, Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.*

—George Herbert

What Everyone Needs to Know about Sacramental Real Presence

RODICA STOICOIU

Made you look! A short column like this one possibly won't carry out the entire promise of this title, but it can go a long way toward providing some basic concepts helpful in understanding sacramental real presence. I will do so by looking at four areas: the understanding of the Eucharist in the earliest New Testament writings, how symbols are to be approached as the language of sacrament, the place of mystery in this expression of Christ's presence, and the role of transubstantiation in the explanation of sacramental real presence. And why go to all this trouble? Well, remember that the celebration of the Eucharist is the most radical act we as Catholics can do. It is the symbol of our unity with God and one another. It is the fullest expression of our identity, born in the waters of baptism and most wholly expressed around the table. Through it we make known that we are the Body of Christ, a communion of persons—radically, socially, in the image of God. And through all of this we claim that Christ is truly, fully, really present. But what do we mean by this presence? This question is important on many levels—for catechesis, for the faith of all who celebrate the eucharistic liturgy, for ecumenical dialogue, just to name a few. Hence it would seem a credible project to more deeply understand the meaning behind this presence.

First, the place to begin is, of course, the New Testament. The earliest account of the Eucharist is that of Paul in First Corinthians. In this text he describes a eucharistic liturgy and gives a theology that challenges his community to live as Christ lived. Paul notes that he is passing on a tradition that he himself received and he is asking the community at Corinth to make

this tradition their own. “For I receive from the Lord what I also handed on to you” (1 Cor 11:23). He is asking them through repeated celebrations of the Eucharist to appropriate its meaning and to make this meaning a part of their own lives, “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Cor 11:29). He is asking them to live what they celebrate, a life focused on caring for the poor and the needy, a life of inclusivity and radical egalitarianism (Mitchell 1998, 74). Paul does not make a distinction between event (action) and object; it is all Eucharist, and Christ is present in it. That Christ was present was a given for Paul; how Christ was present is a question that would not have occurred to him (Mitchell 1998, 75). His concern was on the Eucharist as an action of the community, one that forms it into the Body of Christ through constant repetition. His focus was to make sure they celebrated well if it was truly to form and transform them into the Church, the ecclesial body. From this we can say that there is a relation for Paul between the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the presence of Christ in the ecclesial body, the Church (Mitchell 1998, 77). Paul's concerns are also our concerns. It is only in repeating the celebration of the Eucharist over and over again that we come to inculcate its meaning into our lives. It is only through repeated encounters with the Eucharist that we, too, make the connections between celebration, presence, and the Church. As David Power notes, “It is significant and needs to be signified that Jesus is present to his community in every action of word, prayer, and mutual

charity, and in every exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. The ultimate symbolic expression of ecclesial being...is the reality of the body of the Lord around the communion table” (Power 2008, 326).

Second, the sacramental real presence of Christ is communicated to us through symbols. You can think of symbols as the language that conveys sacrament. Always keep in mind that our eucharistic celebrations are part of a symbolic order, rooted in a culture of specific symbols and rituals that sacramentally express the real presence of Christ. As is noted in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, there are four modes of the presence of Christ in the eucharistic celebration: in the community celebrating, in the word proclaimed, in the priest presiding, and in a special way in the bread and the wine (7). All four of these modes communicate Christ's presence symbolically. But not everyone understands symbols the same way. Many are suspicious of symbols. They see them as something superficial, holding little to no meaning. You've probably heard the expression, “It's not real, it's just a symbol.” The implication here is that symbols are the opposite of reality. This is not true. Since the reforms of Vatican II, we have been retrieving an understanding of symbol as that which is complex and multivocal, that is, with many levels of meaning. Symbols mediate and interpret our reality. They invite us to participate and enter into a deeper reality. They call us to become involved emotionally, intellectually, and morally. Symbols point us to the “other” encountered in the celebration of the sacraments (Mitchell 1998, 99). They are multivalent, ambiguous,

and very real. It is through repeated exposure to them that we come to a deeper experience of Christ's presence.

Our third concept is mystery. Indeed, the term sacrament (*sacramentum*) translates the Greek word *mysterion*, mystery, at the heart of which is the basic symbol of Christian life, the touchstone from which all other symbols are to be interpreted: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and our lives therein, the paschal mystery. Mystery and symbol are intimately connected. The ability of symbols to open us to the "other" allows us to enter into the mystery of sacramental real presence. This is possible because there is both a divine presence in these encounters but also a divine absence. We come to experience the mystery at the heart of sacrament through symbols because they point to, yet cannot contain, the realities they communicate. There is always something absent in the indications symbols provide. This is their power. Nathan Mitchell argues that "the Catholic tradition has thus maintained (for nearly two millennia) that 'sacrament' both comforts us with presence and confronts us with an absence, an irreducible 'otherness,' a mystery" (1998, 99). Hence our eucharistic symbols (word, action, event, object) are invitations into an experience of the transcendent. And there is a deeply relational dimension to this experience. Power presents this relational element as follows: "When Christ is present to his people through the sacramental gift of his body and blood, the sacramental representation of this gift is the offer to a community, and includes the response to invitation, which is the communal eating and drinking at the one table, of the one loaf and the one cup" (2008, 302). In the experience of sacramental real presence the community moves in relationship into the presence of Christ through the Spirit. Through the experience of the eating and the drinking we are drawn into the mystery of Christ, which itself as mystery can "redefine matter and reconfigure perception" (Mitchell

1998, 99). Sacramental real presence is truly mystery because it points to that which is both truly present but also truly absent, the divine mystery, the triune God.

Fourth, we need to know where transubstantiation fits into the picture. There was a time in our history when we emphasized an overly physical understanding of real presence. This happens when the relational, multivalent power of symbol is lost and replaced by allegory. When this occurs we move from "ambiguity to clarity...from revelation to explanation" (Mitchell 1982, 148). In so doing, we rob the symbol of its ability to communicate mystery. But we know that we are dealing not with the physical flesh of Christ "eaten

Sacramental real presence encompasses word, event, and object. It is fundamentally relational, an event that draws us more and more fully into the mystery of God.

by Christians, broken by the priest's hands," but with the sacramental real presence of Christ (Mitchell 1982, 148). Transubstantiation is understood as a change in the substance of bread and wine, a change in the "definitive reality of what is present and presented in the sacrament" and this happens as a "result of the liturgical or sacramental action" (Power 1992, 256). The bread and wine act within a symbolic construct, revealing a deeper reality. Does the concept of transubstantiation go far enough in explaining sacramental real presence today? It is one possible explanation that certainly counters the intensely physical realism of an earlier age but it is limited. As Mitchell has stated, "Eucharistic real presence is not transubstantiation" (1998, 114). Transubstantiation specifically focuses on the objects of bread and wine. "The body of Christ offered to Christians

in consecrated bread and wine is not *something* but *someone*. In the Eucharist Christ is present not as an object to be admired but as a real person" (Mitchell 2006, 176). To speak of sacramental real presence is to encompass the full mystery of sacrament as event through word, action, and object. Ultimately, sacramental real presence must be understood as a totality of all of those.

From the early Church to today we can understand that "the presence of Christ is given to the Church through the medium of narrative, blessing, bread and wine, eating and drinking, within a community of service" (Power 1992, 319). Sacramental real presence encompasses word, event, and object. It is fundamentally relational, an event that draws us more and more fully into the mystery of God. "The body of Christ is not only *on* the table but *at* the table" (Mitchell 2006, 176). In the end we will be the ones who are changed through this sacramental encounter. We will, in the words of St. Augustine, "become what we see, receive what we are." What are we? The Body of Christ, the Spirit-filled people of God.

Endnotes

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C2I UPDATE

FALL 2011

THE EUCHARIST: AT THE CENTER OF CATHOLIC LIFE

SEPTEMBER

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2011 LECTURE

How Is the Eucharist the Center of Catholic Life? **PRESENTER:** Thomas Groome, professor, School of Theology and Ministry **LOCATION/TIME:** Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, School of Theology and Ministry, BC Alumni Association **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** September 26, 2011

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2011 LECTURE

Cultural Identity and Interreligious Dialogue **PRESENTER:** Peter Phan, Ellacuria Chair of Catholic Social Thought, Georgetown University **LOCATION/TIME:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:00 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, BC Theology Department, School of Theology and Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 6, 2011

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2011 LECTURE

The Eucharist from the Last Supper to Benedict XVI: How It Has Changed Yet Remained Unchanged **PRESENTER:** John Baldwin, S.J., professor, School of Theology and Ministry **LOCATION/TIME:** Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and School of Theology and Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 11, 2011

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2011 LECTURE

Will There Be Faith? **PRESENTER:** Thomas Groome, professor, School of Theology and Ministry **LOCATION/TIME:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and School of Theology and Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 12, 2011

OCTOBER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2011 LECTURE

The Eucharist and Social Justice **PRESENTERS:** Thomas Massaro, S.J., professor, School of Theology and Ministry **LOCATION/TIME:** Gasson Hall, Room 100, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, School of Theology and Ministry, BC Alumni Association **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 20, 2011

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2011 LUNCHEON LECTURE

The Eucharist: The Center of Family Life **PRESENTER:** Ernest Colamatti, professor of theology, Regis College **LOCATION/TIME:** O'Neill Library, Reserves Room, 12:00 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and the Office of Employee Development **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 25, 2011

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2011 PANEL

Hey, Did I See You at Mass? Student Panel **MODERATOR:** Kerry Cronin, associate director, Lonergan Institute, Philosophy Department **LOCATION/TIME:** Gasson Hall Room 100, 6:00 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and BC Campus Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** October 31, 2011

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2011 LECTURE

The Eucharist in the Early Church **PRESENTER:** Daniel Harrington, S.J., professor, School of Theology and Ministry **LOCATION/TIME:** School of Theology and Ministry, 9 Lake Street, Room 100, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and School of Theology and Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 3, 2011

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2011 EPISCOPAL VISITOR

The Eucharist: The Center of Catholic Life **PRESENTER:** Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley, O.F.M. Cap. **LOCATION/TIME:** Murray Function Room, Yawkey Center, Lower Campus, 4:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, BC Theology Department, School of Theology and Ministry, BC Alumni Association **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 8, 2011

NOVEMBER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2011 LECTURE

Catechesis on the Eucharist: New Testament Models **PRESENTER:** Margaret Nutting Ralph, Ph.D., Lexington Theological Seminary **LOCATION/TIME:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, BC Theology Department, School of Theology and Ministry **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 15, 2011

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2011 SYMPOSIUM

American Catholics: Persisting and Changing **MODERATOR:** Tom Roberts, editor-at-large, *National Catholic Reporter* **PRESENTERS:** William V. D'Antonio, The Catholic University of America; Rev. Anthony J. Pogorelc, S.S., M.Div., The Catholic University of America; Michele Dillon, professor, University of New Hampshire; and others. **LOCATION/TIME:** Gasson Hall, Room 100, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center and the BC Theology Department **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 16, 2011

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2011 INTERVIEW

Revitalizing the Catholic Intellectual Tradition on Catholic University Campuses: A Conversation with Charles Taylor **PRESENTER:** Charles Taylor, professor emeritus, McGill University **LOCATION/TIME:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 4:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, BC Philosophy Department, BC Alumni Association **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 24, 2011

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2011 LECTURE

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament **PRESENTER:** Rev. Msgr. Kevin W. Irwin, M.Div., S.T.D., School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America **LOCATION/TIME:** Heights Room, Corcoran Commons, 5:30 p.m. **SPONSORS:** The C2I Center, BC Theology Department, BC Alumni Association **WEBCAST AVAILABLE:** November 29, 2011

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2011

LECTURE

Between Heaven and Mirth **PRESENTER:** James Martin, S.J., author and culture editor, *America* magazine **LOCATION/TIME:** Robsham Theater, 6:30 p.m.

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Ecclesia de Eucharistia

BLESSED JOHN PAUL II

In his 2003 encyclical letter, Pope John Paul II discusses the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church.

35. The celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection. The sacrament is an expression of this bond of communion both in its invisible dimension, which, in Christ and through the working of the Holy Spirit, unites us to the Father and among ourselves, and in its *visible* dimension, which entails communion in the teaching of the apostles, in the sacraments, and in the Church's hierarchical order. The profound relationship between the invisible and the visible elements of ecclesial communion is constitutive of the Church as the sacrament of salvation.⁷¹ Only in this context can there be a legitimate celebration of the Eucharist and true participation in it. Consequently, it is an intrinsic requirement of the Eucharist that it should be celebrated in communion, and specifically maintaining the various bonds of that communion intact.

36. Invisible communion, though by its nature always growing, presupposes the life of grace, by which we become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4), and the practice of the virtues of faith, hope, and love. Only in this way do we have true communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nor is faith sufficient; we must persevere in sanctifying grace and love, remaining within the Church "bodily" as well as "in our heart;"⁷² what is required, in the words of St. Paul, is "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6).

Keeping these invisible bonds intact is a specific moral duty incumbent upon

Christians who wish to participate fully in the Eucharist by receiving the body and blood of Christ. The apostle Paul appeals to this duty when he warns: "Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Cor 11:28). St. John Chrysostom, with his stirring eloquence, exhorted the faithful: "I too raise my voice, I beseech, beg, and implore that no one draw near to this sacred table with a sullied and corrupt conscience. Such an act, in fact, can never be called 'communion,' not even were we to touch the Lord's body a thousand times over, but 'condemnation,' 'torment,' and 'increase of punishment.'⁷³

Along these same lines, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* rightly stipulates that "anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion."⁷⁴ I therefore desire to reaffirm that in the Church there remains in force, now and in the future, the rule by which the Council of Trent gave concrete expression to the apostle Paul's stern warning when it affirmed that, in order to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner, "one must first confess one's sins, when one is aware of mortal sin."⁷⁵

38. Ecclesial communion, as I have said, is likewise *visible*, and finds expression in the series of "bonds" listed by the Council when it teaches: "They are fully incorporated into the society of the Church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept her whole structure and all the means of salvation established within her, and within her visible framework are united to Christ, who governs her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops, by

the bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government, and communion."⁷⁷

The Eucharist, as the supreme sacramental manifestation of communion in the Church, demands to be celebrated in *a context where the outward bonds of communion are also intact*. In a special way, since the Eucharist is "as it were the summit of the spiritual life and the goal of all the sacraments,"⁷⁸ it requires that the bonds of communion in the sacraments, particularly in baptism and in priestly orders, be real. It is not possible to give communion to a person who is not baptized or to one who rejects the full truth of the faith regarding the eucharistic mystery. Christ is the truth and he bears witness to the truth (cf. Jn 14:6; 18:37); the sacrament of his body and blood does not permit duplicity.

40. The Eucharist *creates communion and fosters communion*. St. Paul wrote to the faithful of Corinth explaining how their divisions, reflected in their eucharistic gatherings, contradicted what they were celebrating, the Lord's Supper. The apostle then urged them to reflect on the true reality of the Eucharist in order to return to the spirit of fraternal communion (cf. 1 Cor 11:17–34). St. Augustine effectively echoed this call when, in recalling the apostle's words: "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12: 27), he went on to say: "If you are his body and members of him, then you will find set on the Lord's table your own mystery. Yes, you receive your own mystery."⁸⁴ And from this observation he concludes: "Christ the Lord... hallowed at his table the mystery of our peace and unity. Whoever receives the mystery of unity without preserving the bonds of peace receives not a mystery for his benefit but evidence against himself."⁸⁵

43. In considering the Eucharist as the sacrament of ecclesial communion, there is one subject which, due to its importance, must not be overlooked: I am referring to the *relationship of the Eucharist to ecumenical activity*. We should all give thanks to the Blessed Trinity for the many members of the faithful throughout the world who in recent decades have felt an ardent desire for unity among all Christians. The Second Vatican Council, at the beginning of its Decree on Ecumenism, sees this as a special gift of God.⁸⁹ It was an efficacious grace which inspired us, the sons and daughters of the Catholic Church and our brothers and sisters from other churches and ecclesial communities, to set forth on the path of ecumenism.

Our longing for the goal of unity prompts us to turn to the Eucharist, which is the supreme sacrament of the unity of the People of God, in as much as it is the apt expression and the unsurpassable source of that unity.⁹⁰ In the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice the Church prays that God, the Father of mercies, will grant his children the fullness of the Holy Spirit so that they may become one body and one spirit in Christ.⁹¹ In raising this prayer to the Father of lights, from whom comes every good endowment and every perfect gift (cf. Jas 1:17), the Church believes that she will be heard, for she prays in union with Christ her Head and Spouse, who takes up this plea of his Bride and joins it to that of his own redemptive sacrifice.

44. Precisely because the Church's unity, which the Eucharist brings about through the Lord's sacrifice and by communion in his body and blood, absolutely requires full communion in the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance, it is not possible to celebrate together the same eucharistic liturgy until those bonds are fully re-established. Any such concelebration would not be a valid means, and might well prove instead to be *an obstacle, to the attainment of*

full communion, by weakening the sense of how far we remain from this goal and by introducing or exacerbating ambiguities with regard to one or another truth of the faith. The path toward full unity can only be undertaken in truth. In this area, the prohibitions of Church law leave no room for uncertainty,⁹² in fidelity to the moral norm laid down by the Second Vatican Council.⁹³

I would like nonetheless to reaffirm what I said in my encyclical letter *Ut Unum Sint* after having acknowledged the impossibility of eucharistic sharing: "And yet we do have a burning desire to join in celebrating the one Eucharist of the Lord, and this desire itself is already a common prayer of praise, a single supplication. Together we speak to the Father and increasingly we do so 'with one heart.'"⁹⁴

Our longing for the goal of unity prompts us to turn to the Eucharist, which is the supreme sacrament of the unity of the People of God.

46. In my encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* I expressed my own appreciation of these norms, which make it possible to provide for the salvation of souls with proper discernment: "It is a source of joy to note that Catholic ministers are able, in certain particular cases, to administer the sacraments of the Eucharist, penance, and anointing of the sick to Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church but who greatly desire to receive these sacraments, freely request them, and manifest the faith which the Catholic Church professes with regard to these sacraments. Conversely, in specific cases and in particular circumstances, Catholics too can request these same sacraments from ministers of Churches in which these sacraments are valid."⁹⁷

These conditions, from which no dispensation can be given, must be carefully respected, even though they deal with specific individual cases, because the denial of one or more truths of the faith regarding these sacraments and, among these, the truth regarding the need of the ministerial priesthood for their validity, renders the person asking improperly disposed to legitimately receiving them. And the opposite is also true: Catholics may not receive communion in those communities which lack a valid sacrament of orders.⁹⁸

The faithful observance of the body of norms established in this area⁹⁹ is a manifestation and, at the same time, a guarantee of our love for Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, for our brothers and sisters of different Christian confessions—who have a right to our witness to the truth—and for the cause itself of the promotion of unity.

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Endnotes

Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. John Paul II, April 17, 2003.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/>

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Sacrifice: The Way to Enter The Paschal Mystery

ROBERT J. DALY, S.J.

The Christian understanding of sacrifice begins with the central belief of Christianity, the mystery of the Trinity, and with the central act of Christianity, the Eucharist.

The Trinitarian View of Sacrifice

Christian sacrifice has three interconnected “moments.” It begins not with us, but with the self-offering of God the Father in the gift of the Son. The second moment is the totally free, totally loving response of the Son in his humanity. The third moment—and only here does Christian sacrifice become real—takes place when the rest of humanity, in the Spirit, begins to be taken up into that self-offering, self-giving relationship of Father and Son.

This is the essence of Christian sacrifice; it is as close as we can come to a definition of it. Everything else is details. But since the love of God is in the details, let us look more closely.

The first moment is the *self-offering of the Father*. We cannot remind ourselves too often that nothing begins with us; everything begins with God (see 1 Jn 4:10: “not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son”). But what begins with God is the Father’s self-offering initiative in the gift of the Son. It is the Father giving himself; it is not the Father “giving up what he loves;” and above all, it is not something that the Father does *to* the Son. And since all Christian sacrifice begins here, sacrifice is never just giving up something, and above all never something that somebody does to somebody else. If it is, it is simply not Christian. What happens between the Father and the Son is totally free, totally loving, totally mutual self-giving. Thus, when women reject “sacrifice” because patriarchal cultures have preached it in order to keep women subservient, it is definitely not Christian sacrifice that they are rightly rejecting.

The second moment is the *self-offering “response” of the Son* in his humanity and in the power of the Holy Spirit. I write “response” in quotation marks to call attention to the way language can veil as well as unveil. For “response” suggests at least a slight sense of opposition or challenge. But there is nothing of that in the totally self-communicating, mutual relationship of Father and Son. We know that from our experience of human love, even if only vicariously through film and literature. For whenever authentic human love approaches fulfillment, all sense of opposition or challenge fades as, more and more, two become one. The words “in his humanity” remind us of the scholastic teaching that the human life of Jesus is the instrumental cause, or “hinge,” of

our salvation. This, of course, includes Christ’s resurrection and sending of the Spirit. But since Christians usually see the sacrifice of Christ as referring especially to his passion and death on the cross, we must look at that more closely.

At this point the temptation is strong to approach things backward: that is, to allow non-Christian sacrifice with its emphasis on destruction of a victim to interpret, and thus veil, the deeper meaning of the sacrifice of Christ. For one can easily find in the death of Christ many of the common characteristics of sacrifice in other religions—for example, its material, its agents, and its recipients.

Looked at in this backward way, i.e., focusing first on the gift that is destroyed, the sacrificial material is the body of Jesus tortured to death. But seen from within, as a Trinitarian event, the primary sacrificial material (the word is used here only analogously) is the perfectly free, responsive, self-giving, self-communicating, en-Spirited love of the Son to the Father and also to and for us. This is the ultimate and central meaning of the sacrifice of Christ; it is something that traditional theology tries to express when speaking of unbloody sacrifice or sacramental presence in the Eucharist.

In the same way, the *agents* of the sacrifice of the cross would seem, at least outwardly, to be some Roman and Jewish officials, or perhaps even Jesus staging his own death, or the Father who “did not spare his own Son” (Rom 8:32). And the agents of the sacrifice of the Mass would seem to be its ritual ministers (including, with liturgical reform, the assembly). But, again, looked at from within as a Trinitarian event, the agents are, first, the persons of the Trinity, and then the liturgical assembly as a concrete historical realization, in this particular time and place, of the body of Christ now, in the power of the Spirit, ratifying its covenantal, marital relationship with God.

Finally, who would be the *recipients* of the sacrificial action? More than 2,000 years ago, Greek religious philosophy pointed out the absurdity of trying to offer something to God. And when we see the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Mass as a Trinitarian event, we see that, strictly speaking, there are no recipients. Nothing—i.e., no thing—is being given to anyone. In other words, as both the liturgical theologian Edward Kilmartin, S.J., and the anthropologist René Girard have pointed out, sacrifice, in this ordinary, history-of-religions sense of

the word, was done away with by what God was doing in Jesus Christ.

The third moment is the *self-offering of the faithful*. Only with this moment does Christian sacrifice (as distinct from the sacrifice of Christ, from which, of course, it cannot be separated) become real. Here again, words veil as well as unveil. For strictly speaking, this is not something that the faithful do. Rather, it is what happens when, in the power of the same Spirit that was in Jesus, we are taken up into the totally free, totally loving, totally self-communicating, mutual love of Father, Son, and Spirit. This is also what happens in human love. For we do not experience falling in love as something that we do, but as something that happens to us, that lifts us out of ourselves and transports us, however fleetingly, to a place of supreme fulfillment—a foretaste of heaven.

Sacrifice and the Eucharist

To understand the Eucharist, the sacrifice of the Mass, we should, as Edward Kilmartin suggests, see it as a marriage ceremony. We attend to what the Church is saying and doing at this moment of intimate contact that takes place between the Church and her divine covenant partner. Seeing the Eucharist as a marriage ceremony also helps us make the connection between the Eucharist and the rest of our lives. For just as a marriage that stops with the ceremony never becomes a real marriage, so too a Eucharist that stops with the celebration in church never becomes a real Eucharist.

Unfortunately, many actual celebrations of the Eucharist veil as much as they unveil the mystery that is, or should be, taking place. So, here too, we must examine the details.

In all the classical eucharistic prayers (from the dialogue preface to the Great Amen) that come from antiquity and still shape what we do today, it is clear that the primary ritual agent of what is being said and done is the liturgical assembly. The presider never speaks in his own voice, never as one apart from the assembly and never as a mediator between God and the assembly.

In this prayer the assembly addresses God the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. It begins by giving praise and thanks for the gifts of creation, covenant, and redemption in a crescendo that leads to the presider quoting the words of Jesus instituting the Eucharist the night before he died. It is critically important to note that these words are not performative. What is taking place is not happening “by the action of the priest,” as a popular hymn used to put it, but by the action of the Holy Spirit.

So what actually is happening, not just here at the quoting of Jesus’ words of institution, but throughout the prayer and action of the Eucharist?

Two interlocking transformations are taking place. The assembly prays for the Holy Spirit to come and sanctify both the gifts of bread and wine and the assembly itself. Confident that this transformation of the assembly is at least *beginning* to take place—it will be complete only at the end of time—

the assembly prays for the needs of the Church and the world, and then prepares to approach and, as St. Augustine put it, to receive what it already is, the body of Christ.

When we ask *why* these transformations are taking place, it becomes strikingly clear that the transformation of the bread and wine into the body of Christ is not for its own sake but for the sake of the transformation of the assembly into the true and living body of Christ. The whole purpose of what is taking place is not simply that the eucharistic body of Christ be made present on this or that altar. The purpose is for the assembly to become more fully transformed into the ecclesial body of Christ, or, as we have been arguing here, to be taken up more completely into the totally free, totally loving, and totally self-communicating, mutual love of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Take this away, and eucharistic presence becomes meaningless.

A Pastoral Suggestion

If Christian sacrifice means being taken up into the totally free, perfectly self-communicating, mutual love of Father, Son, and Spirit, should we use a word, sacrifice, that is so freighted with negative connotations that it effectively veils this marvelous reality? On the other hand, we do not have the option of totally eliminating the word. David N. Power, O.M.I., among others, pointed this out to us decades ago. My suggestion is to begin with people’s actual experiences of true Christian sacrifice and only then, if ever, use the word itself.

Anyone who has had some experience of self-giving love—whether from parents or caregivers, spouses, teachers, or friends—can at least begin to imagine what the self-giving love of God is. If we begin with these experiences, the experiences that make us human and give us an inkling of ultimate human fulfillment, we are pointing out to people, without using the word, that Christian sacrifice is already present in their lives. They already know, without anyone having to tell them, that this is the most beautiful thing in their lives, the most beautiful thing that they can hope for. From that awareness—for suffering passes while love remains—they will more easily put into perspective the difficult and painful things that generally accompany self-giving love. They will see that it is the self-giving love and not the suffering that accompanies it that is the essence of the sacrifice of Christ. They will be able to see that it is the self-giving love that they share with others that is the essence of their own sacrifice. Sacrifice will have been unveiled.

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Endnotes

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Robert J. Daly, “Sacrifice: the Way to Enter the Paschal Mystery,” *America* 188 (May 12, 2003).

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How the Eucharist Proclaims Social Justice

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J.

The Eucharist Is the Memorial of the Death of Jesus

The meal, and the sacrifice, is also a memorial. We commemorate Christ's death and resurrection. We remember why Jesus was put to death—precisely because of the challenging message he preached and lived. Jesus tells people not to look to their own desires, but to regard the needs of others first, being especially concerned about those most in need. In preaching the kingdom, Jesus bids his followers to be concerned at all times with trying to accomplish the will of God in their lives and social interactions, trusting that, thereby, all other needs would be met. He asks us to judge others more by what they do than by their social status. Jesus steadfastly refuses to defend his own rights by any resort to violence (let those who live by the sword die by it, he tells Peter). Instead, Jesus relies on an appeal to conscience. Jesus teaches that, instead of taking revenge, we are to break down the rule of violence by embodying in our behavior an alternative style of life. We are to pattern our relationships on love—tough love, perhaps—but love, not competition, not humiliation, not triumphalism. We are to be in the world as those who serve. In John 13, the evangelist makes service the very heart of the Last Supper.

Jesus taught his followers to live simply, not to enrich themselves, since possessions do not increase happiness. He urged us not to be worried about saving our lives but to be always ready to give them up. Jesus told his disciples not to seek honors, titles, or high positions, nor to be impressed by these in others. He pronounced a blessing on those persecuted, despised,

and ridiculed for righteousness' sake. Jesus also assumed that his followers should be ever ready to practice civil disobedience if need be (rending “to God what belongs to God and not to Caesar”). These are the teachings that led to Jesus' death.

We who remember the death of Jesus at every Eucharist should recall the deep meaning of Christ's crucifixion. Jesus who is hoisted on a tree outside the city becomes the quintessential despised outsider: “Jesus crucified is above all representative of the margined, despised, and oppressed, of those who ‘don't count’ and are kept out of sight (socially invisible), of those who are outsiders and have no rights. It is not possible to be one with Jesus in the moment of this death and yet ignore the poor and suffering of the world,” writes Monika Hellwig.

This is the heart of the meaning of Jesus' redemptive death. As Paul tells us, to neglect the nexus between Jesus' death and the proclamation of justice

is a kind of “trifling with the death of Christ” (I Cor 12:29).

Eucharist Is the Body of Christ

Catholics remain faithful to the truth of Jesus' real presence in the elements. The Eucharist is truly the body of Christ. “My flesh,” Jesus tells us, “is food indeed and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him” (Jn 6:55-57). This understanding of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist is broader than his real presence in the elements. Christ is also present in the Scriptures we proclaim as we break open the word. As the fathers of the Church always insisted, it is Christ who speaks to us through the Scripture and who preaches. He is also present in the assembly, which becomes, no less, his body. The symbol of the body of Christ is a metaphor for the real transformation of elements, human words, and community. It also is a potent symbol of a social justice of inclusiveness. The body, though composed of many parts, is,



“AIDS Patient Receiving Communion” © Joel Stetterheim/CORBIS

nonetheless, one. Some of the parts that seem weakest and least important are really the most necessary and cannot be despised. If one part of the body is hurt, all parts feel the pain (I Cor 12:12-30). This body image takes us squarely into the arena of social justice. Hear for a moment the meditation of St. John Chrysostom on the body of Christ:

Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not despise him when he is naked. Do not honor him here in the church building with silks, only to neglect him outside, when he is suffering from cold and nakedness. For he who said, "This is my Body" is the same who said: "You saw me, a hungry man, and you did not give me to eat." Of what use is it to load the table of Christ? Feed the hungry and then come and decorate the table. You are making a golden chalice and you do not give a cup of cold water? The temple of your afflicted brother's body is more precious than this temple (the church). The Body of Christ becomes for you an altar. It is more holy than the altar of stone on which you celebrate the holy sacrifice. You are able to contemplate this altar everywhere, in the street and in the open squares.

There is a deep theological point at issue, then, in the dispute between Mother Angelica and Cardinal Roger Mahony. The television nun accused the cardinal of downplaying the real presence because he insisted that the assembly, too, becomes the body of Christ. By her one-sided emphasis on the real presence of Jesus in the bread and wine to the exclusion of his presence in word and community, Mother Angelica disconnects the Eucharist from concerns for social justice and the transformation of the

world. Is this trifling with the death of the Lord, to use St. Paul's phrase?

Eucharist Is a Rite of Forgiveness

The Eucharist begins with a penitential rite, a solemn declaration of our sinfulness and need for God's mercy. The Church has always assumed that the Eucharist is food for healing, a gathering where our sins are forgiven. At every Eucharist, we pray these words from the Our Father: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." We not only ask for forgiveness and empowerment toward new life for ourselves but pledge to become, ourselves, forgivers. Social justice, which is about "righting wrongs," entails forgiveness predicated on conversion and firm purpose of amendment. Perhaps the key arena for social justice in our contemporary world (think of Northern Ireland, for example, or Kosovo, the Middle East, or the racial tensions in our own society) lies in this possibility of reconciliation. Past iniquities are forgiven, here is the chance for a new start. But forgiveness does not come cheap. It is given in response to recompense for wrongs done, to sincere confession of failure, and a reliance on God's blessing to empower a new start.

As Jesus from the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them," he called us to a socially just reconciliation before we offer our gifts at the altar. Can you hear the Eucharistic resonance to Jesus' words: "If you are standing before the altar in the temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him and then come and offer your sacrifice to God" (Mt 5:23-24)? Jesus reconciles and forgives on the cross first, then by his death, he becomes a pleasing sacrifice to God for us.

Eucharist Is the Eschatological Banquet and Community

The Eucharist that is a memorial is also a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Jesus' parables speak of the heavenly

banquet where *all* are invited, even from the highways and byways. Since we recall the death of the Lord until he comes again, we also anticipate—like the wise virgins of the parable—Christ's return by celebrating the Eucharist as the eschatological banquet and community. In the symbolism of the eschatological banquet, absolutely no one goes hungry! Inexorably, the Eucharist takes us to the world of hunger in our midst. As Gandhi once trenchantly put it: "There are so many hungry people in this world that they can look for God only in a hunk of bread." To take part in the messianic banquet of the Eucharist is to celebrate profoundly countercultural values that stand in judgment on our settled social arrangements.

Eucharist Is Blessing

The Eucharist is a solemn act of thanksgiving by which we receive God's blessing and bless God in return. Jewish liturgical rites, which gave rise to our earliest Christian forms of liturgy, take the form of blessings. A blessing pronounces God as the sovereign source of all that is already good. It invokes the continuation of all existing good and its increase into abundance. Blessings are both proclamations and performatives, that is, they effect what they proclaim and signify. As a sacrament, the Eucharist also effects what it signifies: covenant; communion with God through Christ and with one another; and Christ's real and transforming presence that transfigures us into the body of Christ, making us God's temple and children of God's Holy Spirit.

Endnotes

JOHN A. COLEMAN, S.J., is the Casassa Professor of Social Values at Loyola Marymount University.

John A. Coleman, S.J. "How the Eucharist Proclaims Social Justice," Part One, *Church Magazine* (Winter 2000): 5-9.

Remain with Us Lord

Mane Nobiscum Domine

BLESSED JOHN PAUL II

The Eucharist, Principle, and Plan of “Mission”

“*They set out immediately*” (cf. Lk 24:33)

24. The two disciples of Emmaus, upon recognizing the Lord, “set out immediately” (cf. Lk 24:33), in order to report what they had seen and heard. Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking of his body and blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The encounter with Christ, constantly intensified and deepened in the Eucharist, issues in the Church and in every Christian *an urgent summons to testimony and evangelization*. I wished to emphasize this in my homily announcing the *Year of the Eucharist*, based on the words of St. Paul: “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26). The apostle closely relates meal and proclamation: Entering into communion with Christ in the memorial of his Pasch also means sensing the duty to be a missionary of the event made present in that rite.²² The dismissal at the end of each Mass is a *charge* given to Christians, inviting them to work for the spread of the Gospel and the imbuing of society with Christian values.

25. The Eucharist not only provides the interior strength needed for this mission, but is also—in some sense—*its plan*. For the Eucharist is a mode of being, which passes from Jesus into each Christian, through whose testimony it is meant to spread throughout society and culture. For this to happen, each member of the faithful must assimilate, through personal and communal meditation, the values which the Eucharist expresses, the attitudes it inspires, the resolutions to which it

gives rise. Can we not see here a *special charge* which could emerge from this Year of the Eucharist?

Giving thanks

26. One fundamental element of this *plan* is found in the very meaning of the word “Eucharist:” thanksgiving. In Jesus, in his sacrifice, in his unconditional “yes” to the will of the Father, is contained the “yes,” the “thank you,” and the “amen” of all humanity. The Church is called to remind men and women of this great truth. This is especially urgent in the context of our secularized culture, characterized as it is by a forgetfulness of God and a vain pursuit of human self-sufficiency. Incarnating the eucharistic “plan” in daily life, wherever people live and work—in families, schools, the workplace, in all of life’s settings—means bearing witness that *human reality cannot be justified without reference to the Creator*: “Without the Creator the creature would disappear.”²³

The way of solidarity

27. The Eucharist is not merely an expression of communion in the Church’s life; it is also a *project of solidarity* for all of humanity. In the celebration of the Eucharist the Church constantly renews her awareness of being a “sign and instrument” not only of intimate union with God but also of the unity of the whole human race.²⁵ Each Mass, even when celebrated in obscurity or in isolation, always has a universal character. The Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a *promoter of communion, peace, and solidarity* in every situation. More than ever, our troubled world, which began the new millennium with the specter of terrorism and the tragedy of war, demands that Christians learn

to experience the Eucharist as a *great school of peace*, forming men and women who, at various levels of responsibility in social, cultural, and political life, can become promoters of dialogue and communion.

At the service of the least

28. There is one other point which I would like to emphasize, since it significantly affects the authenticity of our communal sharing in the Eucharist. It is the impulse which the Eucharist gives to the community for a *practical commitment to building a more just and fraternal society*. In the Eucharist our God has shown love in the extreme, overturning all those criteria of power which too often govern human relations and radically affirming the criterion of service: “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all” (Mc 9:35). It is not by chance that the Gospel of John contains no account of the institution of the Eucharist, but instead relates the “washing of feet” (cf. Jn 13:1–20): by bending down to wash the feet of his disciples, Jesus explains the meaning of the Eucharist unequivocally. St. Paul vigorously reaffirms the impropriety of a eucharistic celebration lacking charity expressed by practical sharing with the poor (cf. 1 Cor 11:17–22, 27–34).

Can we not make this *Year of the Eucharist* an occasion for diocesan and parish communities to commit themselves in a particular way to responding with fraternal solicitude to one of the many forms of poverty present in our world? I think, for example, of the tragedy of hunger, which plagues hundreds of millions of human beings, the diseases which afflict developing countries, the

loneliness of the elderly, the hardships faced by the unemployed, the struggles of immigrants. These are evils which are present—albeit to a different degree—even in areas of immense wealth. We cannot delude ourselves: by

our mutual love and, in particular, by our concern for those in need we will be recognized as true followers of Christ (cf. Jn 13:35; Mt 25:31–46). This will be the criterion by which the authenticity of our eucharistic celebrations is judged.

Endnotes

Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*. John Paul II, October 7, 2004.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/>

Praying the Text: The Eucharistic Prayer in the Assembly

GERARD MOORE

How should we pray the eucharistic prayer? How can the principles of participation and pastoral application be applied to the eucharistic prayer?

Primary Theological Considerations

There are four primary theological considerations that have been obscured by the constricted understanding of the eucharistic prayer that history has passed on to us. The first is that the Eucharist is a prayer developed for the Sunday worship of the Church. It is many centuries before Mass on weekdays other than Sunday becomes acceptable, even normal. Sunday is not simply a convenient part of the week. Rather, as can be seen as early as the New Testament resurrection narratives, it is an organizing principle in which are set the key tenets of faith: the resurrection, the messianic meal, the ascension, the sending of the Spirit, the missionary mandate, Thomas' confession of faith, to name a few.¹⁸ The Sunday eucharistic liturgy is the principal manifestation of the nature and being of the Church in any community. The eucharistic prayer is the prayer that proclaims the resurrection faith of the Church, and in so doing embodies and emboldens that assembly as the presence of the kingdom in that place and time, amongst those people.

Our second point is that the Christian response to the resurrection is praise and thanksgiving.¹⁹ The purpose at the heart of every eucharistic prayer is to give thanks to God for all that has been accomplished in the life,

death, and resurrection of Jesus, and our consequent life in the Spirit. As such, the prayer is the most public and unequivocal pronouncement of our baptismal faith. We bless the triune God without reservation because we have been saved. The point is developed elsewhere in this book,²⁰ especially with reference to lament, tragedy, and justice. The eucharistic prayer simultaneously expresses, symbolizes, and deepens the faith of the fragile, all too human community that is praying it. The Trinitarian nature of the prayer is central. Currently, our focus is powerfully riveted onto Christ. We need to supplement this with added attention to the God and Father of Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit. In the end, it is God who has acted, and continues to act, not us.

Third, it is important to realize that the liturgy of the Mass, taken as a whole, leads to this prayer. Our conscious participation in the anaphora presupposes preparation and enlightenment through our full activity in all the preceding parts of the liturgy. We are still too conditioned to see the Mass as divided up into pieces, without too much connection. Yet the eucharistic prayer cannot be separated from the assembly, nor from the liturgy of the word. The *General Instruction* is most emphatic on this point:

The Mass is made up as it were of the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist, two parts so closely connected that they form but one single act of worship. For in the Mass the table of God's word and of Christ's body is laid for the people of God to receive from it instruction and food (GIRM2 §8).

Metaphorically, there is only one "table." Engagement with the eucharistic prayer, whether by presider, deacon, concelebrant, or assembly, is deficient without full, active, and conscious participation in the word and the gathering.

The paragraph from the *General Instruction* alludes to our fourth point. The endpoint of the blessing prayer over bread and cup is communion. The pinnacle of the entire celebration is to enter into communion with Christ, and with each other, so as to be transformed into a single body, to show forth the reign of God, and to experience a foretaste of the eternal banquet.²¹

The Particular Context of Each Assembly

As living expressions of an embodied faith, the way we pray the eucharistic prayer cannot be reduced to the literary

work itself. Every prayer is set within a context determined by three factors: posture, roles, and occasion. These condition the way we take up the prayer, offering modes of participation that are active and conscious, though respectful of the genre of the text.

Multiple roles

Questions of posture lead our discussion into plurality of roles. By the time of the counter-reformation the diversity of roles in the Roman Canon, and in the eucharistic tradition, was virtually lost. The new, post-Trent, standard ritual book of the Mass, the *Missale Romanum* of Pius V (1570) indicated that the Roman Canon commenced after the Preface and Holy, Holy, Holy. The closing Amen remained the only response, mainly the preserve of the server. The participative nature of the prayer, however, has deeper roots.

A dialogue heralds that the prayer has begun:

C: The Lord be with you.

P: And also with you.

C: Lift up your hearts.

P: We lift them up to the Lord.

C: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P: It is right to give thanks and praise.

The most ancient sources, and now the current Roman Missal, begin the prayer in this manner.²⁸ The presence of this dialogue indicates that the prayer is an act of the whole assembly, presider and people united in giving thanks and praise. The entire prayer is spoken in the first person plural, “we,” with one notable exception where direct Scriptural words are inferred. The Holy, Holy, Holy, the great Amen, and the more recent memorial acclamation are all integral parts of the prayer.²⁹ This does not imply that the parts of the celebrant and the gathered are interchangeable. It does mean that we have paid mere lip service to the importance of all the roles in the oration. The celebrant can continue with the prayer only if the assembly agrees that

indeed “it is right to give thanks and praise.” On a side note, acclamations make more sense, posture-wise, when those who make them are standing rather than kneeling.

Praying the Eucharistic Prayer

How then do we pray the eucharistic prayer? An initial step is to choose a prayer, along with Preface and Acclamation, that suits the pastoral and spiritual needs of the assembly. Different prayers, and certainly the variety of prefaces, were written with diverse situations in mind. The *General Instruction* provides norms guiding the choice of the eucharistic prayer.⁴³ The eucharistic prayer(s) for Masses of Reconciliation, originally intended



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for use in the Holy Year of 1975, are seen as suitable for special celebrations with the theme of reconciliation and penance, especially during Lent or occasions of pilgrimage. In Masses for children, or where children are the predominant group, the eucharistic prayers for children have their place.⁴⁴ *The Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions* has a range of applications, set out in the Introduction to that text.⁴⁵

The second step is to come to the eucharistic prayer fully cognizant of the expectations the form and structure have for the assembly that stands and prays it. It is a prayer of the local Church, in union with the bishop, on the day of the resurrection.

The praise and thanksgiving offered are the community’s lived baptismal faith that all things come together in Christ. Consequently, the community comes fully aware of its needs, current situation, local saints, and the needs and condition of God’s world. They approach the table nourished already by the Word that has just been proclaimed. They enter the prayer with the desire of communion, in the Body and Blood of Christ, and into the body of Christ. The various roles and parts reflect the diversity of the body and its unity through cooperation.

The presider leads the prayer. It is not his alone, both because it is a prayer of the Church, and because all worship is an act of the Spirit. Presiding involves far more than the recitation of the words in the text, and the carrying out of its prescribed actions. The presider prays the text. In doing so he gives voice and body to the praise, thanksgiving, memorial, and petition of the assembly. This cannot be done without authentic, ecclesial authorization. He ought to celebrate in such a way that the faithful are able to engage in these movements, and to make them their own. To do this well requires a sense of the assembly gathered, the prayer itself, and its place in the liturgy as a whole, baptismal thanksgiving, and the complexities and contradictions in our current practice. This last is significant. Currently our eucharistic religious imagination is quite mixed. Proficient presiding means keeping these perspectives in balance, always attentive to the primary symbol of praise and thanksgiving over bread and cup, which leads to communion in the Body and Blood of Christ.

The place of the faithful is not to mimic or repeat the words of the presiding celebrant. Those gathered celebrate the prayer through making it their own. Obviously included here is responding wholeheartedly in the dialogues and acclamations. Active participation also means praying through, about, and with the proclaimed text. It involves allowing the prayer to provoke our own baptismal praise, memorial, and petition. Concurrently,

we bring our particular thanksgiving and needs to the assembly, joining them to all present through the efforts of the presider. Ultimately, this participation is the Spirit-inspired prayer of the adopted daughters and sons of God, coheirs with Christ. It is the manifestation of the reign of God in our time.

Endnotes

GERARD MOORE is a lecturer in worship and practical theology at United Theological College in Australia.

Gerard Moore, "Praying the Text: The Eucharistic Prayer in the Assembly" in *The Eucharist: Faith and Worship*, ed. Margaret Press (Strathfield: St. Paul's Press, 2001).

18. See Gerard Moore, "Justice without Worship? The God of the Sabbath or the God of Sunday: A Response to John Dominic Crossan,"

Colloquium 31, 2/1999, pp 111–117.

19. "Eucharist" is from the Greek verb for giving thanks. Early Latin texts use the expression *gratias agreee*.

20. See the chapter "The Justice Dimensions in the Eucharist."

21. The *General Instruction* promotes as desirable that the faithful receive the Body of the Lord from bread consecrated at that Mass, and permits a sharing in the chalice, GIRM2 §56h.

28. For two early third-century sources, see the eucharistic prayer of Hippolytus, and that of the Liturgy of Saints Addai and Mari, in Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, p 34, p 46, respectively. It is similarly present in early sources of the Roman Canon; see C. Mohlberg et al., *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli, Cod Vat Reg lat, 316, Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Series Maior, Fontes IV*, Roma: Herder, 1960, V 1242. A minor consequence of opening with the dialogue is that the term preface needs investigation. It does not

mean something that goes before the prayer itself, as does the preface to a book.

29. The responses in the current Roman prayers remain weak, perhaps with the exception of some of the eucharistic prayers for children, in comparison to ancient and contemporary prayers from the Eastern tradition. They often have responses and acclamations for deacons as well as the people.

43. For eucharistic prayers I to IV see GIRM2 §322.

44. "Appendix IV: Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children and for Masses of Reconciliation, Forward," in *The Sacramentary*, revised according to the second typical edition of the *Missale Romanum*, 1975, 1 March 1985, for use in the dioceses of the United States of America, New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1985, p 1097.

45. *Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasions*, p 12.

ADORE TE DEVOTE

*With all the powers my poor Heart hath
Of humble love and loyal Faith,
Thus low (my hidden life!) I bow to Thee
Whom too much love hath bowed more low for me.
Down down, proud sense! Discourses die!
Keep close, my soul's inquiring eye!
Nor touch nor taste must look for more
But each sit still in his own Door.*

*Your ports are all superfluous here,
Save that which lets in faith, the ear.
Faith is my skill. Faith can believe
As fast as love new laws can give.
Faith is my force. Faith strength affords
To keep pace with those powerful words.
And words more sure, more sweet, than they,
Love could not think, truth could not say.*

*O let Thy wretch find that relief
Thou didst afford the faithful thief.
Plead for me, love! Allege and show
That faith has farther, here, to go,
And less to lean on. Because then
Though hid as GOD, wounds writ Thee man.
Thomas might touch; none but might see
At least the suffering side of Thee;
And that too was Thy self which Thee did cover,
But here even that's hid too which hides the other.*

*Sweet, consider then, that I
Though allowed nor hand nor eye
To reach at Thy loved face; nor can*

*Taste Thee GOD, or touch Thee MAN,
Both yet believe; and witness Thee
My LORD too and my GOD, as loud as He.
Help, Lord, my faith, my hope increase;
And fill my portion in Thy peace.
Give love for life; nor let my days
Grow, but in new powers to Thy name and praise.*

*O dear memorial of that death
Which lives still, and allows us breath!
Rich, royal food! Bountiful BREAD!
Whose use denies us to the dead;
Whose vital gust [taste] alone can give
The same leave both to eat and live;
Live ever Bread of loves, and be
My life, my soul, my surer self to me.*

*O soft self-wounding Pelican!
Whose breast weeps Balm for wounded man.
Ah this way bend Thy benign flood
To a bleeding Heart that gasps for blood:
That blood, whose least drops sovereign be
To wash my worlds of sins from me.*

*Come love! Come LORD! and that long day
For which I languish, come away;
When this dry soul those eyes shall see,
And drink the unsealed source of Thee,
When glory's sun faith's shades shall chase,
And for Thy veil give me Thy FACE. Amen.*

—Richard Crashaw (1613–1649)

A Mother Hands on the Eucharist

KAREN KIEFER

We were running late. After gingerly negotiating the baby's car seat and oversized diaper bag through the narrow backdoor of St. Mary's Chapel, we found our way into an empty wooden pew at the back of the church; the noon Mass had already begun. This was our first stop on the way home from the hospital, after giving birth to our first baby daughter, and a chance for us to express our profound gratitude to God.

It had been an emotional 72 hours, and I really needed some God time. What I didn't know was that God needed some time with me, too.

As I settled our newborn into my arms, everything felt different. I had been to this chapel hundreds of times before, praying for the moment when I would sit in front of His altar with a baby in my arms and my husband by my side. I couldn't believe I was living my dream, and now everything was different. I was a mother and we were a family; a Catholic family, celebrating the gift of the Eucharist together for the first time.

Before I could finish that thought, my eyes were dripping wet. Shocked by the abruptness and intensity of my tears, even embarrassed by them, I tried quickly to brush them away without disturbing the baby or drawing attention to myself. I remember wondering how tears of joy could be so overpowering. But there was more to these tears, these were tears of revelation and the revelations were just as overpowering:

The Holy Spirit was with me. The Holy Spirit wishes to move the Church forward through us and through our child in a very human way. The Catholic faith that my parents had passed on to me and that my husband's parents had passed on to him would be passed on to our daughter by us. It was our time, our turn, and our privilege to be her Eucharistic minister. I was not only this child's mother but I was a Catholic mother and responsible to keep His Eucharist alive in her heart and offer her bread for her journey. That was my sacramental promise. That was the expectation. That was the hope of the Holy Spirit.

Time stood still, but the revelations continued. It was clear that I was on a new faith journey and it was already proving to be transformative. I felt a paradigm shift so incredibly powerful regarding my role in our Church, from receiver of the Eucharist to bestower of the Eucharist. I was now moving His bread forward into a new generation.

Suddenly, I remember being startled when people were already filing out of the pews for communion. I was still so

filled with emotion and His grace, I wondered how I could make it up the aisle. I wasn't ready, and yet I also knew that not going to communion was not an option. I needed Holy Communion. I needed to receive the Eucharist for the first time as a new mother with my baby in my arms. I needed to thank God and I needed to let Him know that I understood and that I would honor His hopes as best I could.

As I made my way up the side aisle, I tried to cradle the baby with my head down, again hoping no one would notice the emotion on my face. The revelations just kept coming.

There I was, standing there with all my flaws, holding the most perfect gift ever and about to receive His most perfect gift, the Eucharist. The communion of those gifts was magnificent.

I heard the priest say, "The Body of Christ." I looked up, fearing that if I uttered "Amen" a wail so loud, so tender, so powerful might escape, so I nodded. But I nodded with conviction, and everything about that silent gesture was profound. It was as if I renewed all of my sacramental vows: baptism, reconciliation, first communion, confirmation, and marriage in this one moment.

Honestly, I wasn't convinced that I could do what God was asking me to do. But I was convinced that He thought I could. I knew that from that moment forward, each time I received the Eucharist, I would forever be reminded that He was with me on this journey, that He trusts me and that He believes in me. By receiving the Eucharist, I was also acknowledging and honoring my promise to Him that



Photo courtesy of BC Office of Marketing Communications.

we would continue to hand on our Catholic faith and my actions and examples would bring the Eucharist to life for our children, His children.

Over the next five years we would return to St. Mary's Chapel on the way home from the hospital three more times, after giving birth to three more daughters. Each time the tears flowed, but I understood their presence, His presence, and I was prepared enough to bring tissues. With each visit we grew stronger in our faith and more confident in our sacramental convictions as parents to share with our children the gift of our faith, hoping that one day our daughters would do the same if they had children.

As our girls have grown, we have tried to help them see the Eucharist as a source of spiritual nourishment and strength. One of our daughters calls the Eucharist her "Jesus vitamin" while another (our daughter with the sweet tooth) calls it her "Lord cookie." Those words tell us that they view the Eucharist with great affection and that they understand in their own way its power. But it is harder for

them fully to understand that they can find the gifts of the Eucharist in friendship, compassion, forgiveness, and sacrifice. Or that as God reveals Himself to us through the Eucharist and through His radiant light we become our best selves. These revelations will take time and that is all part of their journey.

Sure, there are many times when I find myself wondering if we are doing enough to teach our children all that they should know about the Eucharist and our Catholic faith, but those are also the times that I am comforted by the revelation that some of the most profound and lasting lessons our children will learn will be from the Holy Spirit and through their personal faith experiences in their own life feast.

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Endnotes

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"THE MASS ON THE WORLD" FROM *HYMN OF THE UNIVERSE*

Since once again, Lord—though this time not in the forests of the Aisne, but in the steppes of Asia—I have neither bread nor wine, nor altar, I will raise myself beyond these symbols, up to the pure majesty of the real itself; I your priest, will make the whole earth my altar and on it will offer you all the labors and sufferings of the world.... My paten and my chalice are the depths of a soul laid widely open to all the forces which in a moment will rise up from every corner of the earth and converge upon the Spirit. Grant me the remembrance and the mystic presence of all those whom the light is now awakening to a new day.

One by one, Lord, I see and love all those who you have given me to sustain and charm my life. One by one, also I number all those who make up that other beloved family which has gradually surrounded me, its unity fashioned out of the most disparate elements, with affinities of the heart, of scientific research, and of thought. And again, one by one—more vaguely it is true, yet all inclusively—I call before me the whole vast anonymous army of living humanity; those who surround me and support me though I do not know them; those who come and those who go; above all, those who in office, laboratory, and factory, through their vision of truth or despite their error, truly believe in the progress of earthly reality and who today will take up again their impassioned pursuit of the light.... This bread, our toil, is of itself, I know, but an immense fragmentation: This wine, our pain, is no more than a draught that dissolves. Yet in the very depths of this formless mass you have implanted—and this I am sure of, for I sense it—a desire, irresistible, hallowing, which makes us cry out, believer and unbeliever alike: "Lord, make us one."

...I know that we cannot forestall, still less dictate to you, even the smallest of your actions; from you alone comes all initiative—and this applies in the first place to my prayer.

Radiant Word, blazing Power, you who mold the manifold so as to breathe your life into it; I pray you, lay on us those your hands—powerful, considerate, omnipresent, those hands which do not (like our human hands) touch now here, now there, but which plunge into the depths and the totality, present and past, of things so as to reach us simultaneously through all that is most immense and most inward within us and around us.

...Do you now, therefore, speaking through my lips, pronounce over this earthly travail your twofold efficacious: Word, the word without which all that our wisdom and our experience have built up must totter and crumble—the word through which our most far-reaching speculations and our encounter with the universe are come together into a unity. Over every living thing which is to spring up, to grow, to flower, to ripen during this day say again the words: This is my Body. And over every death-force which waits in readiness to corrode, to wither, to cut down, speak again your commanding words, which express the supreme mystery of faith: This is my Blood.

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Endnotes

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, S.J., was a French philosopher and Jesuit priest who trained as a paleontologist and geologist.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

The Sacrament of Charity

Sacramentum Caritatis

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Adoration and Eucharistic Devotion

The intrinsic relationship between celebration and adoration

66. One of the most moving moments of the Synod came when we gathered in St. Peter's Basilica, together with a great number of the faithful, for eucharistic adoration. In this act of prayer, and not just in words, the assembly of bishops wanted to point out the intrinsic relationship between eucharistic celebration and eucharistic adoration. A growing appreciation of this significant aspect of the Church's faith has been an important part of our experience in the years following the liturgical renewal desired by the Second Vatican Council. During the early phases of the reform, the inherent relationship between Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was not always perceived with sufficient clarity. For example, an objection that was widespread at the time argued that the eucharistic bread was given to us not to be looked at, but to be eaten. In the light of the Church's experience of prayer, however, this was seen to be a false dichotomy. As St. Augustine put it: "*nemo autem illam carnem manducat, nisi prius adoraverit; peccemus non adorando*"—"no one eats that flesh without first adoring it; we should sin were we not to adore it."¹⁹¹ In the Eucharist, the Son of God comes to meet us and desires to become one with us; eucharistic adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration, which is itself the Church's supreme act of adoration.¹⁹² Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him, and are given, as it were, a foretaste of the beauty of the heavenly liturgy. The act of adoration outside Mass prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical

celebration itself. Indeed, "only in adoration can a profound and genuine reception mature. And it is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another."¹⁹³

The practice of eucharistic adoration

67. With the Synod Assembly, therefore, I heartily recommend to the Church's pastors and to the People of God the practice of eucharistic adoration, both individually and in community.¹⁹⁴ Great benefit would ensue from a suitable catechesis explaining the importance of this act of worship, which enables the faithful to experience the liturgical celebration more fully and more fruitfully. Wherever possible, it would be appropriate, especially in densely populated areas, to set aside specific churches or oratories for perpetual adoration. I also recommend that, in their catechetical training, and especially in their preparation for first Holy Communion, children be taught the meaning and the beauty of spending time with Jesus, and helped to cultivate a sense of awe before his presence in the Eucharist.

Here I would like to express appreciation and support for all those Institutes of Consecrated Life whose members dedicate a significant amount of time to eucharistic adoration. In this way they give us an example of lives shaped by the Lord's real presence. I would also like to encourage those associations of the faithful and confraternities specifically devoted to eucharistic adoration; they serve as a leaven of contemplation for the whole

Church and a summons to individuals and communities to place Christ at the center of their lives.

Forms of eucharistic devotion

68. The personal relationship which the individual believer establishes with Jesus present in the Eucharist constantly points beyond itself to the whole communion of the Church and nourishes a fuller sense of membership in the Body of Christ. For this reason, besides encouraging individual believers to make time for personal prayer before the Sacrament of the Altar, I feel obliged to urge parishes and other church groups to set aside times for collective adoration. Naturally, already existing forms of eucharistic piety retain their full value. I am thinking, for example, of processions with the Blessed Sacrament, especially the traditional procession on the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*, the 40 Hours devotion, local, national, and international Eucharistic Congresses, and other similar initiatives. If suitably updated and adapted to local circumstances, these forms of devotion are still worthy of being practiced today.¹⁹⁵

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Endnotes

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*. Benedict XVI, February 22, 2007.

Full text and references can be accessed at the Vatican website at <http://www.vatican.va/>

An Experience of Adoration

AARON PIDEL, S.J.

+AMDG+

I suppose my experience of eucharistic adoration is fairly typical of devout Catholics of my generation. Being now only 32 years old, I have no personal memory of those features of pre-conciliar piety that ritualized the sacredness of the Eucharist: 40 hours devotions, Corpus Christi processions, stringent fasting requirements, a strictly demarcated sanctuary, and the exclusively priestly handling of the sacred species and vessels. There being so little sense of privileged transgression at the prospect of drawing close to the Eucharist, my parents had little success inducing me to serve as an acolyte at my home parish.

When I first encountered eucharistic adoration, however, I remember stepping into a spiritual atmosphere distinct from what I had known before. To the best of my recollection, this encounter took place when I was a junior in high school, working as a counselor at a summer camp run by the Missionaries of Charity. Occasionally, my fellow counselors and I would stop by the sisters' convent to ask some question or offer some service, only to discover that we were interrupting their afternoon Holy Hour. Before we could excuse ourselves, we would be coaxed into an oppressively hot chapel, noiseless except for the gentle hum of an oscillating fan. There we would find the sisters kneeling on the hard wooden floor, their gaze fixed intently upon a monstrance. We hesitantly followed suit. I, of course, initially resented the imposition. However, in the rich silence of that chapel, resentment slowly gave way—first to bemused acceptance, and finally to what I would now call gentle consolation. There was something about the exposed Eucharist, to which the sisters attended with so much concentration, that called for reverent silence; and there was something about the reverent silence that evoked God's nearness. Borrowing a sociological term from Max Weber, I would say that these periods of reverent adoration formed the basis of my eucharistic “re-enchantment.”

In the years that followed, I noticed the spread of adoration. This was true in the Catholic South. A parish in North Augusta, South Carolina, began offering perpetual adoration, and was imitated after a few years by a parish in my hometown of Augusta, Georgia. Even parishes too small to support perpetual adoration, such as my home parish, began to offer solemn benedictions and to resurrect their annual Corpus Christi processions. When I returned a few summers later to work with the Missionaries of Charity—this time in the South Bronx—I found a similar trend in the North. The Missionaries once again “invited” us to attend a Youth 2000 retreat on the grounds of St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, New York. Activities included all-night adoration under a

tent, eucharistic processions accompanied by Taizé chants, and even a eucharistic healing session. In this latter event, a priest donned a cope and humeral veil, while the gospel of the hemorrhaging woman, healed by contact with the fringe of Jesus' garment, was read aloud. The priest then processed with the monstrance, giving each retreatant an opportunity to touch the humeral veil as he passed by. I remember that the silence was punctuated only by adolescent sobbing. Though I never had much of a taste for the dramatic, the experience of a community silently united around a common object of adoration stayed with me. The “re-enchantment” continued apace.

By the time I got to college, I was ready, with the encouragement of some college friends, to commit to a weekly adoration slot. The daunting prospect of filling a contiguous hour with silent prayer sent me searching for devotional booklets, rosaries, and—finally—to somewhat randomly selected spiritual writings. These ranged from the esoteric allure of St. John of the Cross to the florid Marian meditations of St. Alphonsus Liguori. These were perhaps my first regular attempts at meditative prayer. In hindsight, I can see that the very structure of eucharistic adoration provided a sound pedagogy of prayer, or what *Sacramentum Caritatis* would call a “mystagogy.” The weekly commitment of an hour helped me to persevere in dryness and discouragement. The sense of Presence radiating from the monstrance encouraged a conversational prayer style and helped correct some of my natural tendencies to introspection and self-absorption.

Not coincidentally, it was here that the initially terrifying prospect of becoming a priest, the person I instinctively associated with the Eucharist, began to intrude unbidden into my thoughts. My adoration periods became grist for the mill of vocational discernment and a source of missionary motivation. And though I then tried my best to swat away those unsettling “what-if” questions, I see in hindsight that the “re-enchantment” of the priesthood began with the “re-enchantment” of the Eucharist.

It is doubtlessly because of many experiences such as my own that not a few highly placed Catholics welcome the growing popularity of eucharistic adoration. In his 2005 Christmas Address to the Roman Curia, Benedict reported,

It is moving for me to see how everywhere in the Church the joy of eucharistic adoration is reawakening and being fruitful. In the period of liturgical reform, Mass and adoration outside it were often seen as in opposition to one another: It was thought that the eucharistic bread had not been

given to us to be contemplated, but to be eaten, as a widespread objection claimed at that time.

Benedict goes on to describe the opposition between Mass and adoration, alleged by certain liturgical scholars, as “nonsensical.” Especially in the case of the Eucharist, eating always implies both spiritual and biological assimilation. Benedict cites Augustine’s *Enarrationes in psalmos* to this effect: “No one should eat this flesh without first adoring it... we should sin were we not to adore it.” Benedict concludes that adoration is therefore “the most consistent consequence of the eucharistic mystery itself.”

In addition to being doctrinally sound, however, Benedict sees it as speaking powerfully to the youth of the Church. In the same Christmas address, Benedict recalls a personal highlight from World Youth Day in Cologne: “For all those

who were present the intense silence of that million young people remains unforgettable, a silence that united and uplifted us all when the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament was placed on the altar.” In his sensitivity to moments such as these, I find Benedict very much in touch with the sensibilities and yearnings of post-conciliar, Western Catholics. Though reactions among those million youth assembled in Cologne surely varied, there were doubtlessly not a few for whom that period of adoration was the beginning of a re-enchantment—much like my first reluctant meditation in that balmy adoration chapel of the Missionaries of Charity.

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Endnotes

AARON PIDEL, S.J., is a Jesuit from Augusta, Georgia, who recently completed his studies at the School of Theology and Ministry at Boston College.

A Graced Moment: Welcoming the New Roman Missal

CARDINAL ROGER M. MAHONY

“A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter.... A faithful friend is beyond price.” These words from the Book of Sirach (6:15-16) resonate with all who know the joy of friendship. A good friend is someone I know well, someone who knows me well. A faithful friend is a trusted companion who enriches my life, as I do for my friend.

For Catholics, the Mass is where our relationship with the Lord, who is much more than a true friend, is nurtured and strengthened. The Mass itself is a “faithful friend” because we know it well, and our participation draws us ever deeper into the grace of the Lord. Later this year we will be introduced to a new translation of the prayers of the Mass in the new Roman Missal. Some are wary of this change—perhaps the most significant change in the liturgy since the reformed liturgy was first introduced after the Second Vatican Council. Such change is never easy, but perhaps a better approach might be to welcome the new translation as a new friend about to lead us to a new moment of grace.

The revised Roman Missal will be introduced in parishes on November 27, 2011, the First Sunday of Advent. The occasion offers an unprecedented opportunity for in-depth preparation and thorough catechesis. The new translation reflects more fully the power of the prayers of the Mass, both when we are celebrating Eucharist and also when we are sent forth to “go in peace glorifying the Lord” with our lives.

Over these past 36 years as a priest and bishop, I have celebrated Mass not only in English but also in Spanish and Italian. Often I have been struck by the accuracy of those translations in contrast to our English version. I can appreciate the work that went into the new English translation, knowing that no one translation can completely serve every English-speaking nation. Am I satisfied with every single change in word or phrase? No. But since we will be using an English-language missal that must serve many English-speaking countries around the world, it is helpful to be mindful of the great diversity and nuances of the

English language. Indeed, the subtle differences in English usage in the United States are a good indication of the fact that there is no such thing as a single, perfect English translation.

A Eucharistic Church

The Catholic Church is a eucharistic Church. The coming months will be a time to consider again how and why this is so and to come to a new appreciation of the Mass and its prayers. From the very first days when the disciples gathered, “they devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Acts 2:42). “Breaking of the bread” refers, of course, to the celebration of the Eucharist. It was probably not until the third and fourth centuries that ritual texts, or formularies, were used for the celebration of Mass. Eucharistic Prayer II (once attributed to St. Hippolytus) probably emerged in the third century, and what we commonly call Eucharistic Prayer I (or the Roman Canon) more than likely emerged in the mid-fourth century. Over the following

centuries, local bishops approved set formularies for Mass texts, and many of those texts found their way into the precursors of the Roman Missal for use by the Latin Church.

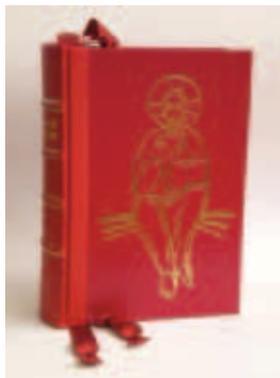
Recent polls suggest that many Catholics do not fully understand the truth that the Eucharist is the sacrament that gives us the real body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ. The newly revised Missal provides an opportunity to consider this and other truths of the Catholic faith.

The timing is propitious. When the Sacramentary was first published in English some 40 years ago, there were fewer ways to communicate instantly than there are today with smart phones, tablets, and a plethora of computers. This development puts us far along the path in helping to prepare better for the reception of the newly revised Roman Missal. During the time of liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council, catechesis was inconsistent and not always sufficient to prepare the Church for what was being introduced. Today, catechesis is not limited to the Sunday homily or faith formation classes. Two outstanding websites offer excellent resources online, through download or for purchase.

The first site is that of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, (USCCB) one of the very best: www.usccb.org/romanmissal. In addition to sample texts, commentaries, and explanations, it provides a wide variety of resources useful for parish communities making final preparations for implementation. Seeing the current and the new texts side by side will help illustrate the richness of the language in the new translation. The second resource is the website of the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions: www.fdlc.org. Included among its many offerings are audio recordings of many of the prayers of the Missal. These will be particularly helpful for priests in learning the style and cadence of the new texts, so they can effectively proclaim them.

Parishes would be wise to make a special effort to involve catechumens

and, most important, Catholic children and young people in understanding the new translation and, in turn, the importance of the Eucharist in their lives. Perhaps there could be materials online just for young people: for first Communion children and for young people preparing for confirmation. YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites are ideal vehicles for reaching out to this audience. USCCB resources are available through all of these media.



From Translation to Understanding

This preparation period for the newly revised Roman Missal is a way to inform and catechize Catholics more deeply. Over the years, for example, the priest has proclaimed, “The Lord be with you.” And the congregation has responded, “And also with you.” But the Latin text should have been translated, “And with your spirit.” The response “And also with you” does not capture the Christian meaning of the Latin, *Et cum spiritu tuo*. One of the earliest exchanges invoking reciprocal blessings from God and God’s spirit is found in the Book of Ruth (2:4): “...The LORD be with you!” and they replied, “The LORD bless you!”

The early Christians who were baptized into the body of Christ had also received the Holy Spirit. They honored the presence of the Lord in one another’s lives through this greeting and response (*Dominus vobiscum/Et cum spiritu tuo*), understood as a mutual salutation and a sign of their union. The power of this greeting and response is far greater than “And also with you.”

Many of the newly translated texts allow all people to understand more

deeply God’s saving work in and through the eucharistic mysteries. The newly revised Roman Missal is not simply an exercise in finding different words; rather, it is a fountain of new insights into Catholic teaching and praying.

To be sure, the transition to the new translation will be a logistical challenge. Both the priest and the congregation will need to rely upon a variety of participation aids. Because there are word changes from the very beginning of the Mass until the dismissal, priests will need to have the Roman Missal in front of them throughout the Mass; the congregation will depend on pew cards, hand missals, and hymnals. Initially this might feel awkward because we are accustomed to praying and participating by heart, but we need to welcome the Roman Missal, in a sense, as a new friend. It will take time to become fully acquainted with the Missal, and only through practice will that happen. Openness to this new experience will lead to hidden riches, where Catholics learn something more about their faith and find new ways to express their devotion and love for the Lord. To ignore this invitation to friendship would be to deprive ourselves of new opportunities and new riches in our liturgy.

I am convinced that the introduction of the newly revised Roman Missal next November will be an inspiring moment in the life of the Church in our country and in other English-speaking countries. The new words will invite a fresh perspective as we pray, as though viewing a work of art in a new light. This is a moment to enter more deeply into the greatest mystery of our faith, the Eucharist.

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Endnotes

CARDINAL ROGER M. MAHONY is the retired archbishop of Los Angeles.

Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, “A Graced Moment: Welcoming the New Roman Missal,” *America* 204 (May 23, 2011).

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Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom

Priest: Let us stand well. Let us stand in awe. Let us be attentive, that we may present the holy offering in peace.

People: Mercy and peace, a sacrifice of praise.

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us lift up our hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

People: It is proper and right.

Priest (in a low voice): It is proper and right to sing to You, bless You, praise You, thank You, and worship You in all places of Your dominion; for You are God ineffable, beyond comprehension, invisible, beyond understanding, existing forever and always the same; You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. You brought us into being out of nothing, and when we fell, You raised us up again. You did not cease doing everything until You led us to heaven and granted us Your kingdom to come. For all these things we thank You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit; for all things that we know and do not know, for blessings seen and unseen that have been bestowed upon us. We also thank You for this liturgy which You are pleased to accept from our hands, even though You are surrounded by thousands of Archangels and tens of thousands of Angels, by the Cherubim and Seraphim, six-winged, many-eyed, soaring with their wings,

Priest: Singing the victory hymn, proclaiming, crying out, and saying:

People: Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He who comes in

the name of the Lord. Hosanna to God in the highest.

Priest (in a low voice): Together with these blessed powers, merciful Master, we also proclaim and say: You are holy and most holy, You and Your only begotten Son and Your Holy Spirit. You are holy and most holy, and sublime is Your glory. You so loved Your world that You gave Your only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. He came and fulfilled the divine plan for us. On the night when He was betrayed, or rather when He gave Himself up for the life of the world, He took bread in His holy, pure, and blameless hands, gave thanks, blessed, sanctified, broke, and gave it to His holy disciples and apostles saying:

Priest: Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins.

People: Amen.

Priest (in a low voice): Likewise, after supper, He took the cup, saying:

Priest: Drink of it all of you; this is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

People: Amen.

Priest (in a low voice): Remembering, therefore, this command of the Savior, and all that came to pass for our sake, the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven, the enthronement at the right hand of the Father, and the second, glorious coming.

Priest: We offer to You these gifts from Your own gifts in all and for all.

People: We praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You, and we pray to You, Lord our God.

Priest (in a low voice): Once again we offer to You this spiritual worship without the shedding of blood, and we

ask, pray, and entreat You: Send down Your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts here presented.

Priest: And make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ.

Amen.

Priest: And that which is in this cup the precious Blood of Your Christ.

Amen.

Priest: Changing them by Your Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Priest: So that they may be to those who partake of them for vigilance of soul, forgiveness of sins, communion of Your Holy Spirit, fulfillment of the kingdom of heaven, confidence before You, and not in judgment or condemnation. Again, we offer this spiritual worship for those who repose in the faith, forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics, and for every righteous spirit made perfect in faith.

Priest: Especially for our most holy, pure, blessed, and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever virgin Mary.

People: It is truly right to bless you, Theotokos, ever blessed, most pure, and mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.

Priest (in a low voice): For St. John the prophet, forerunner, and Baptist; for the holy glorious and most honorable Apostles, for Saint(s) (Name(s)) whose memory we commemorate today; and for all Your saints, through whose supplications, O God, bless us. Remember also all who have fallen asleep in the hope of resurrection unto eternal life. (Here the priest commemorates the names of the deceased.) And grant them rest, our God, where the light of Your countenance shines. Again, we ask You,

Lord, remember all Orthodox bishops who rightly teach the word of Your truth, all presbyters, all deacons in the service of Christ, and every one in holy orders. We also offer to You this spiritual worship for the whole world, for the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and for those living in purity and holiness. And for all those in public service; permit them, Lord, to serve and govern in peace that through the faithful conduct of their duties we may live peaceful and serene lives in all piety and holiness.

Priest: Above all, remember, Lord, our Archbishop (Name): Grant that he may serve Your holy churches in peace. Keep him safe, honorable, and healthy for many years, rightly teaching the word of Your truth.

Priest: Remember also, Lord, those whom each of us calls to mind and all your people.

People: And all Your people.

Priest (in a low voice): Remember, Lord, the city in which we live, every city and country, and the faithful who dwell in them. Remember, Lord, the travelers, the sick, the suffering, and the captives, granting them protection

and salvation. Remember, Lord, those who do charitable work, who serve in Your holy churches, and who care for the poor. And send Your mercy upon us all.

Priest: And grant that with one voice and one heart we may glorify and praise Your most honored and majestic name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

People: Amen.

Priest: The mercy of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ be with all of you.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Having remembered all the saints, let us again in peace pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For the precious Gifts offered and consecrated, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: That our loving God who has received them at His holy, heavenly, and spiritual altar as an offering of spiritual fragrance may in return send upon us divine grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, let us pray.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Having prayed for the unity of the faith and for the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us commit ourselves, and one another, and our whole life to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest (in a low voice): We entrust to You, loving Master, our whole life and hope, and we ask, pray, and entreat: Make us worthy to partake of your heavenly and awesome Mysteries from this holy and spiritual Table with a clear conscience; for the remission of sins, forgiveness of transgressions, communion of the Holy Spirit, inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, confidence before You, and not in judgment or condemnation.

Priest: And make us worthy, Master, with confidence and without fear of condemnation, to dare call You, the heavenly God, FATHER, and to say:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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Endnotes

Accessed from http://www.goarch.org/chapel/liturgical_texts/liturgy_hhc. July 24, 2011

THE SHAPE OF THE LITURGY

Was ever another command so obeyed? For century after century, spreading slowly to every continent and country and among every race on earth, this action has been done, in every conceivable human circumstance, for every conceivable human need from infancy and before it to extreme old age and after it, from the pinnacles of earthly greatness to the refuge of fugitives in the caves and dens of the earth. Men have found no better thing than this to do for kings at their crowning and for criminals going to the scaffold; for armies in triumph or for a bride and bridegroom in a little country church; for the proclamation of a dogma or for a good crop of wheat; for the wisdom of the Parliament of a mighty nation or for a sick old woman afraid to die; for a schoolboy sitting an examination or for Columbus setting out to discover America; for the famine of whole provinces or for the soul of a dead lover; in thankfulness because my father did not die of pneumonia; for a village headman much tempted to return to *fetich* because the yams had failed; because the Turk was at the gates of Vienna; for the repentance of Margaret; for the

settlement of a strike; for a son for a barren woman; for Captain so-and-so, wounded and prisoner of war; while the lions roared in the nearby amphitheatre; on the beach at Dunkirk; while the hiss of scythes in the thick June grass came faintly through the windows of the church; tremulously, by an old monk on the 50th anniversary of his vows; furtively, by an exiled bishop who had hewn timber all day in a prison camp near Murmansk; gorgeously, for the canonization of St. Joan of Arc—one could fill many pages with the reasons why men have done this, and not tell a hundredth part of them. And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unflinching, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to *make the plebs sancta Dei*—the holy common people of God.

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Endnotes

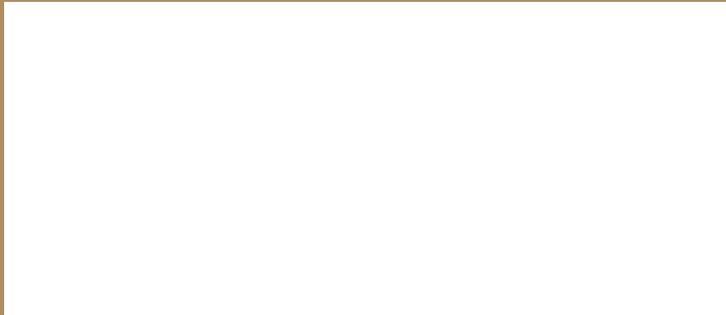
GREGORY DIX, an Anglican Benedictine monk.

Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Continuum Press, 2005).



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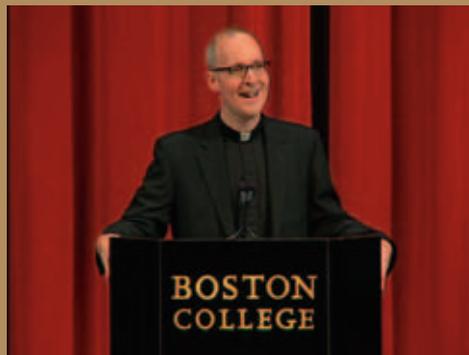
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 vice president for University Mission and Ministry, and
 Jeremy Zipple, S.J., student panel, Fr. Michael Himes, BC
 professor of theology, Tom Groome, professor, BC School
 of Theology and Ministry CENTER: James Martin, S.J.,
 BELOW: Nancy Pineda-Madrid, assistant professor, BC
 School of Theology and Ministry and Susan Abraham,
 assistant professor, Harvard Divinity School



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