

The Most Holy Eucharist

*O sacred Banquet in which
Christ is received:
the memory of his Passion is recalled,
the soul is filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory is given.*

“Allow me, dear brothers and sisters, to share with deep emotion, as a means of accompanying and strengthening your faith, my own testimony of faith in the Most Holy Eucharist. *Ave verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine, vere passum, immolatum, in cruce pro homine!* Here is the Church's treasure, the heart of the world, the pledge of the fulfillment for which each man and woman, even unconsciously, yearns. A great and transcendent mystery, indeed, and one that taxes our mind's ability to pass beyond appearances. Here our senses fail us: *visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur*, in the words of the hymn *Adoro Te Devote*; yet faith alone, rooted in the word of Christ handed down to us by the Apostles, is sufficient for us. Allow me, like Peter at the end of the Eucharistic discourse in John's Gospel, to say once more to Christ, in the name of the whole Church and in the name of each of you: “Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (Jn 6:68) (Pope John Paul II, ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA).

Eucharist as Sacrifice

Genesis 4

1 The man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." 2 Next she bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the soil. 3 **In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil, 4 while Abel, for his part, brought one of the best firstlings of his flock.** The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not. Cain greatly resented this and was crestfallen.

Other Religions:

“It should be noticed that [sacrifice] is a universal phenomenon and that scarcely a religion is known which does not have a sacrificial ritual. The rituals of sacrifice exhibit a basic similarity which is not due to mutual borrowing; the nature of the symbolism of sacrifice and of the ideas from which it arises are the result of the belief in the deity and the desire to worship him” (McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, 754).

Modern difficulties with the idea of sacrifice:

- a) Atheism: no point in offering sacrifice absent God or gods.
- b) Implies a relationship which is obedient.
- c) Evidence indicates idea is innate.

Psalms 50

7 "Listen, my people, I will speak; Israel, I will testify against you; God, your God, am I. 8 Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you, nor for your holocausts, set before me daily. 9 **I need no bullock from your house, no goats from your fold. 10 For every animal of the forest is mine, beasts by the thousands on my mountains. 11 I know every bird of the heavens; the creatures of the field belong to me. 12 Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for mine is the world and all that fills it. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?** 14 Offer praise as your sacrifice to God; fulfill your vows to the Most High. 15 Then call on me in time of distress; I will rescue you, and you shall honor me."

Exodus Chapter 12

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,

³ Tell the whole community of Israel: On the tenth of this month every one of your families must procure for itself a **lamb**, one apiece for each household.

⁵ The lamb must be a year-old male and **without blemish**. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats.

⁶ You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and then, with the **whole assembly of Israel present**, it shall be slaughtered **during the evening twilight**.

⁷ They shall take some of its **blood and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel** of every house in which they partake of the lamb.

⁸ **That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.**

¹⁰ **None of it must be kept beyond the next morning;** whatever is left over in the morning shall be burned up.

¹¹ “This is how you are to eat it: with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand, **you shall eat like those who are in flight**. It is the Passover of the LORD.

¹² For on this same night I will go through Egypt, striking down every first—born of the land, both man and beast, and **executing judgment** on all the gods of Egypt—I, the LORD!

¹³ But the blood will mark the houses where you are. Seeing **the blood**, I will **pass over you**; thus, when I strike the land of Egypt, no destructive blow will come upon you.

¹⁴ “This day shall be a **memorial feast** for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a **perpetual institution**.

¹⁵ For seven days you must eat **unleavened bread**. From the very first day you shall have your houses clear of all leaven. Whoever eats leavened bread from the first day to the seventh shall be cut off from Israel.

²² Then take a bunch of **hyssop**, and dipping it in the blood that is in the basin, sprinkle the lintel and the two doorposts with this blood. But none of you shall go outdoors until morning.

⁴³ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “These are the regulations for the Passover. **No foreigner may partake of it.**

⁴⁴ However, any slave who has been bought for money may partake of it, provided you have first **circumcised** him.

⁴⁶ It must be eaten in one and the same house; you may not take any of its flesh outside the house. You shall not break any of its bones.

John Chapter 19

¹⁴ It was preparation day for **Passover**, and **it was about noon**. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!”

¹⁵ They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “**We have no king but Caesar.**”

¹⁶ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, **but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down.**

²⁴ So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,” in order that the passage of scripture might be fulfilled (that says):

“They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.” This is what the soldiers did.

²⁸ After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.”

²⁹ There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a **sprig of hyssop** and put it up to his mouth.

³⁰ When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

³¹ Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down.

³² So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus.

³³ But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, **they did not break his legs,**

³⁴ but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately **blood and water** flowed out.

³⁵ An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may (come to) believe.

³⁶ For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: “Not a bone of it will be broken.”

I Corinthians 5:7

“For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.”

Hebrews 9

11 “But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that have come to be, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hands, that is, not belonging to this creation, 12 he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. **13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer's ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.”**

I Corinthians 10

14 Therefore, my beloved, avoid idolatry. 15 I am speaking as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I am saying. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a **participation** in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a **participation** in the body of Christ? 17 Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. 18 Look at Israel according to the flesh; are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? 19 So what am I saying? That meat sacrificed to idols is anything? Or that an idol is anything? 20 **No, I mean that what they sacrifice, (they sacrifice) to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to become participants with demons.** 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealous anger? Are we stronger than he?

I Corinthians 10:

25 Eat anything sold in the market, without raising questions on grounds of conscience, 26 for "the earth and its fullness are the Lord's." 27 If an unbeliever invites you and you want to go, eat whatever is placed before you, without raising questions on grounds of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "**This was offered in sacrifice,**" do not eat it on account of the one who called attention to it and on account of conscience; 29 I mean not your own conscience, but the other's. For why should my freedom be determined by someone else's conscience?

Psalms 106:28-29

They joined in the rites of Baal of Peor, ate food sacrificed to dead gods.
They provoked him by their actions, and a plague broke out among them.

Hebrews 10

11 Every priest stands daily at his ministry, offering frequently those same sacrifices that can never take away sins. 12 **But this one [Jesus] offered one sacrifice for sins, and took his seat forever at the right hand of God...**

Malachi Chapter 1

10 Oh, that one among you would shut the temple gates to keep you from kindling fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts; neither will I accept any sacrifice from your hands, 11 **For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations; And everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name, and a pure offering; For great is my name among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.**

Romans 12

1 I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, *to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice*, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

Colossians 1

24 *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church*, 25 of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God, 26 the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1367

The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*: "The victim is one and the same: the same now offers through the ministry of priests, who then offered himself on the cross; **only the manner of offering is different.**" "And since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and offered in an unbloody manner . . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory."

1368

The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire. She unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. **The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value.** Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering.

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"Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. **For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit—indeed even the hardships of life if patiently born—all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. *In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord.*** And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God, everywhere offering worship by the holiness of their lives."

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The Church therefore asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make the lives of the faithful a living sacrifice to God by their spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity.

Tōda

What is tōda? Gese describes it like this: "The thanksgiving sacrifice presupposes a particular *situation*. If a man is saved from death, from fatal illness or from those who seek his life, he celebrates this divine deliverance in a service of thanksgiving which marks an existential new start in his life. In it, he "confesses" (*jd[h]*) God to be his deliverer by celebrating a thankoffering (*tōda*). He invites his friends and associates, provides the

sacrificial animal...and celebrates...together with his invited guests, the inauguration of his new existence...In order to recall God's deliverance and give thanks for it, it is necessary to reflect on one's pilgrimage through suffering, to bring to mind the process of redemption...It is not a mere sacrificial rite; it is a sacrifice in which one professes one's involvement. ...Here we have a unity which embraces a service of the word and ritual meal, praise and sacrifice. The sacrifice cannot be misunderstood as a "gift" to God; rather it is a way of 'honoring' the Deliverer. And the fact that the rescued man is able to celebrate 'life restored' in the sacred meal is itself the gift of God" (117f.). Ratzinger, Joseph, Feast of Faith, Ignatius Press, 1981.

Exodus 24

1 Moses himself was told, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, with Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You shall all worship at some distance, 2 but Moses alone is to come close to the LORD; the others shall not come too near, and the people shall not come up at all with Moses."

3 When Moses came to the people and *related all the words and ordinances* of the LORD, they all answered with one voice, "We will do everything that the LORD has told us." 4 Moses then *wrote down* all the words of the LORD and, rising early the next day, he erected at the foot of the mountain *an altar* and *twelve pillars* for the twelve tribes of Israel.

5 Then, having sent certain young men of the Israelites to *offer holocausts and sacrifice young bulls* as peace offerings to the LORD, 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; *the other half he splashed on the altar*.

7 Taking the book of the covenant, he *read it aloud to the people*, who answered, "All that the LORD has said, we will heed and do." 8 *Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people*, saying, "**This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words of his.**"

9 Moses then went up with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, 10 and *they beheld the God of Israel*. Under his feet there appeared to be *sapphire tilework*, as clear as the sky itself.

11 Yet he did not smite these chosen Israelites. After gazing on God, *they could still eat and drink*.

12 The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and, while you are there, I will give you the stone tablets on which I have written the commandments intended for their instruction."

I Corinthians 11

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread,

24 and, after he had given thanks, **broke it** and said, "***This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.***"

25 In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "***This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.***"

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord *unworthily* will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.

28 A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup.

29 For anyone who eats and drinks without *discerning the body*, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

The Real Presence

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas is mistakenly credited with a philosophical method of explaining the “true presence” of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine which is called *transubstantiation*. Although he was not the first to coin the term, he did indeed expand our understanding of the phenomenon of the Eucharist by developing our understanding of Aristotelian categories of substance, accidents and matter and form.

We understand substance to be the “essence of a thing.” It is “what a thing is.” Whereas an accident is defined as “the various qualities a thing has.” Accidents include: place, shape, size, color, etc... In other words, that which one can see, taste, touch or feel. With this understanding, *before* the consecration of the Mass we know the elements (bread and wine) to be as follows.

<u>Substance:</u>	<i>Breadness</i>
<u>Accidents:</u>	White, round, thin, wafer-like
<u>Substance:</u>	<i>Wineness</i>
<u>Accidents:</u>	Red, sweet or dry, room temperature

Then, after the priest speaks Christ’s words of consecration, there is a change in substance as follows:

<u>Substance:</u>	<i>Body of Christ</i>
<u>Accidents:</u>	White, round, thin, wafer-like
<u>Substance:</u>	<i>Blood of Christ</i>
<u>Accidents:</u>	Red, sweet or dry, room temperature

Transubstantiation in summary:

The substance of bread is converted into the substance of the Body of Christ and the substance of the wine is converted into the substance of His Blood – while the accidents of bread and wine remain the same.

St. Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 107):

St. Ignatius urged his people to shun those who followed the error of docetism which stated, “do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of the savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His loving kindness raised from the dead.” Then went on to state: “Observe well those who are heretical in respect to the grace of Jesus Christ that has come to us; how they are opposed to the mind of God. Charity is of no concern to them, nor are widows and orphans or the oppressed, either those in prison or at liberty, or the hungry or the thirsty. They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which, in his goodness, the Father raised... It would be better for them to show love in order they [also] might rise.”

St. Justin Martyr (A.D. 155):

“Not as ordinary bread and ordinary drink do we partake of them, but just as the Word of God, our Savior Jesus Christ, became Incarnate..., so we have been taught, the food that has been made the Eucharist by the prayer of His word... is both the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.”

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 185):

Defending the goodness of the material world against the great Gnostic heresy Irenaeus wrote:

“Since the chalice and the bread receive the word of God and become a Eucharist, the body of Christ,...how can they deny that the flesh is capable of the gift of God, which is life eternal, seeing that it is nourished with the

body and blood of Christ, and is His member?... It is this (human organism) that is nourished by the cup, which is his blood, and by the bread which is His body.”

[Thus, Irenaeus takes it for granted that his readers understand that the Eucharist is truly Christ’s body and blood.]

St. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 385):

“He transforms the elements of the visible things to that of the immortal thing by virtue of the consecration.”

St. John Chrysostom (388):

“Christ says, ‘This is my body.’ This word transforms the elements that are set forth.”

St. Cyril of Alexandria (428):

“God condescends to our weakness and sends the power of life into the elements and transforms them into the power of his own flesh, that we may have and partake of them as a means of life, and that the body of life may become in us a life giving seed.”

The Sacred Liturgy

“The Eucharist is the ‘source and summit of all Christian life.’ It is a single sacrifice that embraces everything. It is the greatest treasure of the Church. It is her life.”

John Paul II, “Prayer on Holy Thursday” 1982)

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy – Second Vatican Council

8. In the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle (cf. Rv 21:2; Col 3:1; Heb 8:2); we sing a hymn to the Lord’s glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, until he, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with him in glory (cf. Phil 3:20; Col 3:4).

The Mystery of Our Lord’s Passion and Death

“The consideration of the Mass must... commence with the mystery of our Lord’s Passion and death. This is what is continually being made present and actual – in the institution of the Last Supper. However, neither can this mystery be exhausted with one simple idea.

In this mystery our Lord sealed with His blood His testimony to truth (John 18:37), to the Kingdom of God which had come in His own person, and thus had “borne witness to the great claim” (1 Tim. 6:13). With heroic obedience that was steadfast even to the death of the Cross (Philippians 2:8), He had in this mystery fulfilled the will of His Father against whom the first Adam had set himself with defiant disobedience. With free resolve our Lord had put himself into the hands of His enemies, silently, making no use of His wondrous might, and had offered up His life as “a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He had taken up the warfare against the invisible enemy who held mankind imprisoned in sin, and as one who is stronger still, He had been victorious (Luke 11:22): He had cast out the prince of this world (John 12:31). He took His place at the head of mankind, striding forward through suffering and death, thus entering into His glory (Luke 24:26). As high priest He has offered up in the Holy Spirit the perfect sacrifice; with His own blood He has entered the sanctuary and set a seal upon the new and eternal covenant (Hebrews 9:11ff.). He himself became a Paschal Lamb, whose blood procured our ransom out of the land of bondage, whose slaughter inaugurated our joyous Easter feast (1 Corinthians 5:7ff.), the Lamb that was slain and yet lives, the Lamb for whose wedding feast the bride has clothed herself (Revelation 5:6ff.; 19:7ff.).

By all these notions, by all these pictures the attempt is made in the writings of the New Testament to circumscribe and to illustrate the great occurrence by means of which Jesus Christ effected the re-establishment [read: salvation] of mankind. All that is characteristic of the redeeming death of Jesus is clearly contained in some way in the institution of the Last supper. (Jungmann, Joseph, A. The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development. Christian Classics, Inc. Westminster, Maryland, 1992)

The Mass of All Ages:

As early as the second century we have the witness of St. Justin Martyr for the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration. They have stayed the same until our own day for all the great liturgical families. St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) around the year 155, explaining what Christians did:

- On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.
- The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.
- When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered admonishes and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.
- Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves . . .and for all others, wherever they may be, so that we may be found righteous by our life and actions, and faithful to the commandments, so as to obtain eternal salvation.
- When the prayers are concluded we exchange the kiss.
- Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together to him who presides over the brethren.
- He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks (in Greek: eucharistian) that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.
- When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying: 'Amen.'
- When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the "eucharisted" bread, wine and water and take them to those who are absent.[169]

Paragraph 1345 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

THE ORDER OF MASS

I. Liturgy of the Word

Entrance

St. Ambrose of Milan: “The People who have been purified and enriched with wonderful gifts (Baptism and Confirmation) begin to walk in procession toward the altar, saying: ‘I will go in to the altar of God, to God who rejoices my youth.’ Having stripped themselves of the last traces of the ancient error, renewed in the youth of the eagle, they hasten to go to the heavenly banquet. They enter, then, and seeing the holy altar prepared, they cry out: ‘You have prepared a table before me (Psalm22)’” (Danielou 120).

Greeting

2 Corinthians 13:13: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with all of you.”

Penitential Rite

St. Gregory the Great: “Dearly beloved brethren, it is we who are called to take part in the wedding feast of the Word, we who already have faith in the Church, who are nourished on sacred Scripture, and who rejoice because the Church is united to God. Ask yourselves now, I pray you, whether you have come to the feast wearing your wedding garment: examine your thoughts attentively” (Belmonte 47).

The Didache (Teaching of the Apostles): “On the Lord’s day, we meet together; break bread and give thanks, after having first confessed our sins so that our sacrifice may be pure” (Belmonte 55).

Gloria

Luke 2:14: “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Reading from Scripture

St. Caesarius of Arles: “Therefore, just as we take care when we receive the Body of Christ so that no part of it falls to the ground, so should we likewise ensure that the Word of God which is given to us is not lost to our souls because we are speaking or thinking about something different. One who listens negligently to God’s Word is just as guilty as one who, through carelessness, allows Christ’s Body to fall to the ground.”

Profession of Faith

Council of Toledo: “Let the Creed resound, so that the true faith may be declared in song, and that the souls of believers, in accepting that faith, may be ready to partake, in Communion, of the body and blood of Christ.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “Next, let us embrace one another and give the kiss of peace. Do not think that this is the kiss which friends are accustomed to give one another when they meet in the *agora* [marketplace]. This is not such a kiss. This unites souls to one another and destroys all resentment. The kiss is a sign of the union of souls. This is why the Lord said: If you bring your offering to the altar and you remember that you have anything against your brother, go first and be reconciled with your brother” (Danielou 133).

II. Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar and Gifts

St. Ambrose: “The altar is the figure of the body, and the body of Christ is upon the altar” (Danielou 130)”

St. Cyril of Alexandria: “Christ is the altar, the offering and the priest” (Danielou 130).

Cyril of Jerusalem: “You have seen the deacon hold out to the ministers and to the priests surrounding the altar of God, the water for washing their hands. This is not given them because of physical stains, but this washing of the hands is a symbol that you should be pure of all sin and all unworthiness. As the hands are the symbol of action, in washing them we signify the purity and innocence of our works” (Danielou 132).

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “By means of the figures, we must now see Christ being led on His way to His Passion, and stretched out on the altar to be immolated. When indeed the sacred vessels, in the patens and in the chalices, the oblation appears which is to be presented, then you must think that Our Lord Christ appears, led to his passion” (Danielou 133).

Lumen Gentium: “For all their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, if patiently borne – all these become “spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5). Together with the offering of the Lord’s body, they are most fittingly offered in the celebration of the Eucharist. (34)

Preface and Acclamation

St. John Chrysostom: “The angels surround the priest. The whole sanctuary and the space around the altar are filled with heavenly powers to honor Him Who is present on the altar” (Danielou 131).

St. Thomas Aquinas: “It is believed that the angels visit the assemblies of the faithful, especially when the holy mysteries are celebrated.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: (Anaphora) “The priest then cries: *Sursum corda*. Yes, truly at this moment, filled with holy fear we must hold our hearts raised on high to God and turned no longer toward the earth and earthly things. The priest invites us all implicitly to leave at this moment all the cares of life and our domestic preoccupations, and to have our hearts turned to heaven, to God the friend of men. Then answer: *Habemus ad Dominum*, giving by your answer your assent to the priest’s words. Let there be no one who says with his lips: *Habemus ad Dominum* and who keeps his spirit among the cares of this life. We ought always to be mindful of God. If this is impossible because of human weakness, at least at this moment we must try to be mindful of Him” (Danielou 134).

St. John Chrysostom: (*Sanctus*) “Man is as it were transported into heaven itself. He stands near the throne of glory. He flies with the Seraphim. He sings the most holy hymn.”

Theodore of Mopsuestia: (*Sanctus*) “The priest mentions among all the Seraphim who cause this praise to ascend to God... that we [are] all gathered together to sing in a loud voice so that we may be saying the same thing as the invisible natures are saying” (Danielou 135).

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “We use the awe-inspiring words of the invisible powers to show the greatness of the mercy which is freely lavished upon us. Fear fills our conscience through the whole course of the liturgy, both before we cry out ‘HOLY!’ and afterwards: we look down at the ground, because of the greatness of what is being done, manifesting this same fear” (Danielou 135).

Theodore of Mopsuestia: “We are no longer on earth, but in some way transferred to heaven. This is what is meant by *Sursum Corda*” (Danielou 135).

Eucharistic Prayer & Consecration

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “After we have sanctified ourselves by the Trisagion [*Holy, holy, holy...*], we pray God to send his Holy Spirit down on the offerings, so that which the Holy Spirit has touched becomes entirely consecrated and transformed” (Danielou 136).

St. Ambrose: “As soon as the consecration has taken place, the bread becomes the God of Christ. How can this be done? By the consecration. The consecration takes place by means of what words? By those of the Lord Jesus. Indeed what was said up to now was said by the priest. But here he uses the words of Christ. What is the word of Christ? It is that by which all things were made” (Danielou 136).

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “Do not think these are just plain bread and plain wine. They are the body and blood of Christ, as the Lord asserted. Faith must convince you of the latter even though your senses suggest

you the former. Do not judge about this according to your preferences but, based on your faith, believe with firmness and certainty that you have been made worthy of the body and blood of Christ” (Belmonte 141).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church: The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its *memorial* and because it *applies* its fruit... (1366)

Anamnesis

St. Ambrose: “Each time that the sacrifice of Christ is offered, the Death of the Lord, His Resurrection, His Ascension and the remission of sins are signified (To signify does not here mean only to recall. The word also intends to state that the sacrifice offered is not a new sacrifice, but the one sacrifice of Christ rendered present).”

St. John Chrysostom: “But do we not daily offer the sacrifice? We offer it, but in making the anamnesis of His death. And this is unique, not multiple. It was offered once, as he entered once into the Holy of Holies. The anamnesis is the figure of His death. It is the same sacrifice that we offer, not one today and another tomorrow. One only Christ everywhere, entire everywhere, one only Body. As everywhere there is one Body, everywhere there is one sacrifice. This is the sacrifice that we now still offer. This is the meaning of the anamnesis: we carry out the anamnesis of the sacrifice” (Danielou 137).

Doxology

Romans 11:36 “For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.”

Communion Rite

Matthew 6:9-13

“This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive our trespassers;
and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Fraction Rite

“Seeing Jesus coming toward him, John said, “Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

The priest breaks the hosts and places a small piece into the chalice while saying: “May the mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it” (Roman Liturgy).

Communion

St. Gregory of Nazianzen: “The Eucharist is the unbloody sacrifice by which we communicate in the sufferings and in the divinity of Christ” (Danielou 140).

St. John Chrysostom: “If you show the evil one your tongue moistened with the Precious Blood, he will not be able to resist; if you show him your mouth tinged with red, he will shun you like a frightened beast. Do you want to know the power of this Blood? Then just see where it came from and where its source was – the cross and the Lord’s side” (Cantalamessa 40).

Raniero Cantalamessa: “Instead of quenching our thirst for God’s presence, the Eucharist increases it and makes it a stronger torment” (94).

St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “Come forward also to the cup of his blood, not reaching out with your hands, but bowing and in an attitude of worship and reverence” (Belmonte 186).

St. Augustine: “Let no one eat the body of Christ without first adoring it” (Belmonte 186).

Dismissal

St. Teresa Child Jesus: “There is no other time than *after* Mass when we can so easily enrich our soul with virtues, or so rapidly advance to a high degree of perfection” (Belmonte 202).

Important excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

1348 *All gather together.* Christians come together in one place for the Eucharistic assembly. At its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration. It is in representing him that the bishop or priest acting in the person of Christ the head (in persona Christi capitis) presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer. All have their own active parts to play in the celebration, each in his own way: readers, those who bring up the offerings, those who give communion, and the whole people whose “Amen” manifests their participation.

1349 *The Liturgy of the Word* includes “the writings of the prophets,” that is, the Old Testament, and “the memoirs of the apostles” (their letters and the Gospels). After the homily, which is an exhortation to accept this Word as what it truly is, the Word of God, [173] and to put it into practice, come the intercessions for all men, according to the Apostle’s words: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and all who are in high positions.” [174]

1350 *The presentation of the offerings* (the Offertory). Then... the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper... “The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving.” [175] The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator’s gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices.

1352 *The anaphora:* with the Eucharistic Prayer – the prayer of thanksgiving and consecration – we come to the heart and summit of the celebration: In the preface, the Church gives thanks to the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, for all his works: creation, redemption, and sanctification. The whole community thus joins in the unending praise that the Church in heaven, the angels and all the saints, sing to the thrice-holy God.

1353 In the **epiclesis**, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing [178]) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the epiclesis after the anamnesis). In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ’s body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.

1354 In the **anamnesis** that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him. In the intercessions, the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.

1355 In the *communion*, preceded by the Lord's prayer and the breaking of the bread, the faithful receive "the bread of heaven" and "the cup of salvation," the body and blood of Christ who offered himself "for the life of the world":[179] Because this bread and wine have been made Eucharist ("eucharisted," according to an ancient expression), "we call this food Eucharist, and no one may take part in it unless he believes that what we teach is true, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth, and lives in keeping with what Christ taught." [180]

Bernard Leeming:

"Christ and the Church desire that the faithful should come daily to the sacred banquet; and the chief reason for this desire is that the faithful being united to God through the sacrament may therefore receive strength to restrain concupiscence, to wash away those venial faults which occur daily, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable: the main reason is not that the Lord should be honored and adored, or that the sacrament should be a kind of reward or recompense of their virtues. Whence the Council of Trent calls the Eucharist an antidote, by which we are freed from daily faults and are preserved from mortal sins (30)".

Worship in the Parish Communities Fifteen Years after the Council A Sermon Delivered to the Bishop's Conference in Fulda

Delivered by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

"Worship in the parish communities fifteen years after the Council" – this was the main topic of our conference here in Fulda at the grave of St. Boniface. What then is our liturgical life like today? In asking this question we are bound to have mixed feelings. On the one hand we are glad about the awakening of a new sense of common responsibility, a new experience of fellowship and of community participation in the Eucharistic mystery; **we rejoice in the new understanding which is abroad since the Church's liturgy has been brought from behind the veils of history to stand before us, fresh in its simplicity and greatness of stature.** But on the other hand, **we are aware of the strife and dissension which have arisen concerning the liturgy and within it; we shiver a little in the face of too much talk, too little silence and a lack of beauty; we are obliged to recall so much arbitrary action, which reduced the dignity of the Lord's institution to the level of something embarrassingly cobbled together.** So we have cause for thanksgiving but also no less cause to examine our consciences, and to help us do so I would like to make a few suggestions in this evening hour.

My first consideration is this: our topic refers to worship in the parish communities. "**Community**" is the new discover of the post-conciliar period. We have called to mind once more that Eucharist, in the language of the ancient Church, was called, among other things, *synaxis*, the "meeting together," the assembly. It draws and binds men together, unites them, builds up community. Conversely, the community experiences Eucharist as fulfillment, as the center of its life, something in which it shares as a totality. All this is true, but we must remember that the scope of *synaxis* is much wider than the individual community. **Behind it stand those words from the Gospel of John: Jesus wanted to die for the nation and not only for the nation but "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad" (Jn.11:52).** The assembly to which Jesus Christ calls us is the assembly of all the children of God. The Lord does not assemble the parish community in order to enclose it but in order to open it up. The man who allows himself to be "assembled" by the Lord has plunged into a river which will always be taking him beyond the limits of his self at any one time. To be with the Lord means to be willing, with him, to seek all the children of God. **It is a favorite theme of our time that the Church is "wherever two or three are gathered in my name", but the reverse is also true: the community is only "with the Lord" and "gathered in his name" provided it is entirely at one with the Church, wholly part of the whole. That is why, however much it lives in the here and now, in a particular place, seeking the consent of the local community, Christian liturgy is essentially Catholic, that is, it proceeds from the whole and leads back to it, it leads to unity with the pope, the bishops and the faithful of all times and places.** The Catholic element is not something added on externally, a legislative restriction of the community's freedom, but something from the Lord himself who seeks everyone and seeks to bring them all

together. **Liturgy is not “made” by the community; the community receives it from the whole, in the same way that it receives its own self, as community, from the whole.** And it can only remain an ecclesial community by continually giving itself back in commitment to this whole. Two things are of immediate practical importance here: **1.** The forms which are binding upon the whole Church shares, are not a kind of spoon-feeding of the local community; they are an expression of the authenticity and greatness of the liturgy. **2.** Eucharist must never be allowed to be used to bolster up a community’s self-affirmation or self-enclosure. Its genuineness and rightness are vindicated in those situations where not every erstwhile “parish community” can have its own priest and its own parish worship. **Then we can see whether we are only looking for the Eucharist in our own community as a means of self-affirmation and togetherness or whether we are willing to be found by the Lord who opens us out and leads us beyond frontiers.** Where parishes are opened up to one another, are received by one another, they are learning in a small way what catholicity means, namely, not priding oneself on one’s own traditions but seeing, in the opening of frontiers, a liberation into that great and wide realm for which the deepest yearnings of our souls are waiting.

There is something else: the Council reminded us most explicitly that the liturgy is, in the Church’s language, *action*, an action. **Therefore it implies the *participation actuosa*, the active participation of all the faithful.** But here again the impression has been given, to a greater or lesser extent, that, if the liturgy is to be the work of the community, it must also be created by it; and, putting it crudely, this led to its being measured by its entertainment value. The idea was to make it as exciting as possible, shaking up the standoffish, the fringe members, and drawing them into community; but, strangely, what happened was that, as a result of all this, the liturgy actually lost its authentic inner vibrancy. For this does not arise from what *we* do but from the fact that something is being done here which all our concerted efforts cannot achieve. What has created the liturgy’s special position, down the centuries, is the fact that in it a supreme authority is operative, an authority which no one can arrogate to himself. **In the liturgy the absolutely Other takes place, the absolutely Other comes among us.** In his commentary on the Song of Songs, that primarily and profoundly human poem on the yearning and the tragic quality of love, Gregory of Nyssa describes *man as the creature who wants to break out of the prison of finitude, out of the closed confines of his ego and of this entire world.* And it is true: this world is too small for man, even if he can fly to the Moon, or one day perhaps to Mars. He yearns for the Other, the totally Other, that which is beyond his own reach. Behind this is the longing to conquer death. In all their celebrations, men have always searched for that life which is greater than death. Man’s appetite for joy, the ultimate quest for which he wanders restlessly from place to place, only makes sense if it can face the question of death. Eucharist means that the Lord’s Resurrection gives us this joy which no one else can. **So it is not enough to describe the Eucharist as the community meal. It cost the Lord his life, and only at this price can we enjoy the gift of the Resurrection.** Therefore the Eucharist does not stand or fall by its effect on our feelings. Feelings come to an end, and ultimately all entertainment becomes tedious – as we know only too well nowadays. What we need is the presence in our lives of what is real and permanent so that we can approach it. No external participation and creativity is on any use unless it is a participation in this inner reality, in the way of the Lord, in God himself. Its aim is to lead us to this breakthrough to God. **This involves two further practical considerations: liturgy is not a matter of variety and change; it is concerned with an ever-deeper experience of something that is beyond change because it is the very answer that we are seeking.** Secondly, liturgy is not only concerned with the conscious mind and with what can be immediately understood at the superficial level, like newspaper headlines. **Liturgy addresses the human being in all his depth, which goes far beyond our everyday awareness; there are things we only understand with the heart; the mind can gradually grow in understanding the more we allow our heart to illuminate it.**

I would like to mention a third aspect involved in the proper celebration of the Eucharist. It is one of the happy features of worship in the wake of the Council that more and more people participate fully in the Eucharist by receiving the body of the Lord, communicating with him and, in him, with the whole Church of God. Yet do we feel a slight uneasiness at times in the face of an entire congregation coming to communion? Paul urgently insisted that the Corinthians should “discern” the Lord’s body (1 Cor 11:29): is this still happening?

Occasionally one has the feeling that “communion” is regarded as part of the ritual – that it goes on automatically and is simply an expression of the community’s identity. **We need to regain a much stronger awareness that the Eucharist does not lose all its meaning where people do not communicate.** By going to Communion without “discernment”, we fail to reach the heights of what is taking place in Communion; we reduce the Lord’s gift to the level of everyday ordinariness and manipulation. The Eucharist is not a ritual meal; it is the shared prayer of the Church, in which the Lord prays together with us and gives us himself. Therefore it remains something great and precious, it remains a true gift, even when we cannot communicate. If we understood this better and hence had a more correct view of the Eucharist itself, many pastoral problems – the position of the divorced and remarried in the Church, for instance – would cease to be such a burden.

One final remark: when we speak of worship in the parish community, we immediately think exclusively of the Eucharist. But this very fact expresses the regrettable narrowing and impoverishment which have overtaken us in these latter years. **The Eucharist is the heart and center of our worshipping life, but in order to be this center it must have a many-layered whole in which to live.** Eucharist presupposes baptism; it presupposes continual recourse to the sacrament of penance. The Holy Father has emphasized this most strongly in his encyclical “*Redemptor Hominis*”. The first element of the Good News, he stresses, was “Repent!” “The Christ who invites us to the Eucharistic meal is always the same Christ who exhorts us to penance, continually saying “Repent!” ” (IV, 20). **Where penance disappears, the Eucharist is no longer discerned and, as the Lord’s Eucharist, is destroyed.** But **Eucharist also presupposes marriage and ordination, the social and the public structure of the Church. It presupposes personal prayer, family prayer and the paraliturgical prayer of the parish community.** I would like to mention two of the richest and deepest prayers of Christendom, prayers which are able to draw us again and again into the vast river of Eucharistic prayer: the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary. One of the reasons why, nowadays, we are so discountenanced by the appeal of Asiatic or apparently Asiatic religious practices is that we have forgotten these forms of prayer. The Rosary does not call for intense conscious efforts which would render it impossible but invites us to enter into the rhythm of quiet, peaceably bringing us peace and giving a name to this quietness: Jesus, the blessed fruit of the womb of Mary. Mary, who cherished the living Word in the recollected quiet of her heart and thus was privileged to become the Mother of the incarnate Word, is the abiding pattern for all genuine worship, the Star which illuminates even a dark heaven and shows us the way. May she, the Mother of the Church, intercede for us so that we may be enabled to fulfill more and more the Church’s highest task: the glorification of the living God, from whom comes mankind’s salvation. Amen.

Handy Scripture Passages:

Abel’s Offering:	Gen 4:1-4	Perpetual Sacrifice	Rev 5:6
Abraham’s Sacrifice:	Gen 22	Last Supper Narratives:	Mt 26:26-29
Sacrifice of Melchizedek:	Gen 14:18-20		Mk 14:22-25
The Passover:	Exodus 12:1-28		Lk 22:17-20
Manna in the Desert	Exodus 16:13ff	Paul’s Teaching:	1 Cor 10:1ff
Pure Offering:	Malachi 1:11		1 Cor 11:23-26
Eucharistic Discourse	John 6	Unworthy Reception:	1 Cor 11:27ff
“Lamb of God”	John 1:36	Early Masses	Acts 20:7
			Luke 24:27ff

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Eucharist

“Christ and the Church desire that the faithful should come daily to the sacred banquet; and the chief reason for this desire is that the faithful being united to God through the sacrament may there from receive strength to restrain concupiscence, to wash away those venial faults which occur daily, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable: the main reason is not that the Lord should be honored and adored, or that the sacrament should be a kind of reward or recompense of their virtues. Whence the Council of Trent calls the Eucharist an antidote, by which we are freed from daily faults and are preserved from mortal sins (Leeming 30)”.

Sign (bread and wine) ⇒

Reality signified (the true Body and Blood of Our Lord) **(1) (sign and reality)** ⇒ sign of **another reality** (the Mystical Body of Christ and the Unity of the Church in the Holy Spirit) **(2)(reality only).**⇒

The mere sacrament

The symbolic reality

The reality only