

Emmanuel



Eucharistic Spirituality

November/December 2020



Website and Digital Edition

Emmanuelpublishing.org now features easy on-site access to the digital edition of *Emmanuel* along with additional access to thought-provoking web-based theological, liturgical and ecumenical reflections.

All print subscribers can request free access to the digital edition by contacting us with your name and mailing address through our website: emmanuelpublishing.org - or - by email at: emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com.

EMMANUEL MAGAZINE (ISSN 0013-6719) is published bimonthly with 6 issues a year, by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Phone (440) 449-2103. E-mail: emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS (print subscription includes access to digital edition): individual (U.S.) \$35.00 one year/ \$65.00 two years; Canadian and foreign \$40.00 one year/ \$75.00 two years, U.S. currency; single issues \$8.00 plus postage. EDITOR: 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland OH 44143. POSTMASTER: send address change to Emmanuel Magazine, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. ©2020

©2020 BY THE CONGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

EMMANUEL MAGAZINE is a member of the Catholic Press Association. Indexed by The Catholic Periodical and Literature Index.



SENIOR EDITOR
EDITOR/MANAGER
LAYOUT
CIRCULATION MANAGER
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
PHOTOGRAPHY

Anthony Schueller, SSS
John Christman, SSS
Kay Vincent
Elizabeth Zaller
Patrick Riley
John Christman, SSS;
Keith Chevalier

BOARD

Lisa Marie Belz, OSU
Paul Bernier, SSS
Thomas Dragga
James Menkaus
Gilbert Ostiediek, OFM

COVER

THE BURLINGTON HOUSE
CARTOON - THE VIRGIN AND
CHILD WITH SAINT ANNE AND
SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
Leonardo Da Vinci
c. 1500, charcoal on paper

emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com

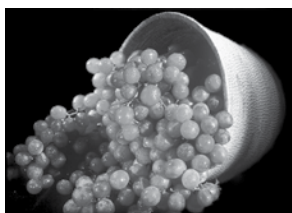
Emmanuel Magazine is published by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is a Roman Catholic religious group of men whose mission is to assist the church in its efforts to form Christian communities whose center of life is the Eucharist. "Our ideal," as it is stated in our Rule of Life, "is to live the mystery of the Eucharist fully and to make known its meaning, so that Christ's reign may come and the glory of God be revealed to the world."



Emmanuel Magazine

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 126 Number 6



EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Living the Eucharist through Holy Matrimony
by George and Anna Peko 352

Why Do We Use the Title “Father” for a
Priest? The Challenge of Matthew 23:9
by David W.T. Brattston and John Christman, SSS 358

EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Two Books or Three Books to Read?
by Peter Schineller, SJ 364

Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Sacramental Act
of Love of Neighbor
by Erin Lothes Biviano 369

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Chalkware Catholicism: The Aims and Art of
Catholic Statuary Reconsidered
by Michael DeSanctis 377

Ongoing Renewal of the Eucharistic Liturgy
by John Zupez, SJ 383

EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Eymard Along the Journey
by Jim Brown 389

EUCCHARIST & CULTURE

Art, Music, Film, Poetry, and Books 413

COLUMNS

From the Editor 350
Pastoral Liturgy 391
Breaking the Word 396
Eucharistic Witness 420
Index 421



FROM THE EDITOR

The closing months of 2020 are upon us. I suspect that many are saying, with a mix of relief and anxiety, “Thank God; enough! And may the new year 2021 be infinitely better than the departing one has been on virtually every level of our shared history and experience!”

A year ago this time, as we entered into the familiar civic and religious rituals of year’s end, awash in the warmth of loved ones and friends, the glow of Christmas lights and holiday decorations, the exchange of greetings and gifts, the singing of beloved carols and hymns, etc., who among us could have imagined all that would follow?

Coronavirus was a concern only in China where it was first identified in December 2019, not a pandemic gripping the world. The economies of most nations were expanding, not nearing Depression-era levels of unemployment and need. Tensions of race and economic stratification were often buried or overlooked, not the subject of daily protests after acts of bias and targeted violence. So much has changed in the last twelve months. Students were living typical lives of study, sports, family, and friends, not of remote learning and isolation from their teachers and peers. Family life was filled with diversions and activities, not the tedium of lockdown and isolation. Believers came together for worship, fellowship, and service, not live-stream or digital taping.

Against the challenges of the present moment stands the perennial message of Christmas, with its images of angelic visitations, trusting surrender to the will of God, the coming of Christ among us in the humblest of circumstances, and the protection and love afforded Jesus by his mother Mary and Joseph.

It is easy to forget that Jesus’ day had more than its share of hardship and difficulty. The province of Judea was ruled by a procurator with loyalty only to Caesar and the political, economic, and military interests of the

empire. Roman garrisons occupied the land and crushed any threat of violence or sedition. The temple and the priesthood functioned only with permission of the state. Most Jews, including Mary and Joseph, lived in poverty and obscurity.

Pope Francis, echoing Sacred Scripture, often speaks of God's faithfulness. In redeeming creation, God drew near in humility, gentleness, and love, rather than in power and majesty. God took on a human face in his Son Jesus, just as Christ becomes small, little, in the Eucharist, in order to raise us to divinity.

To quote the Holy Father: "Christmas reminds us that God continues to love us all" . . . and that in any moment or challenge, grace will see us through to a new day.



Anthony Schueller, SSS
Senior Editor

In This Issue

Family and relationships often occupy our time and thoughts in Advent and Christmas. In this issue George and Anna Peko offer a reflection upon the Eucharist and marriage drawn from their years of marriage and ministry together. Also important is our relationship with the world around us. Peter Schineller, SJ offers a reflection upon differing ways we can encounter God. As Christmas is a season so often associated with consumerist excess, Erin Lothes Biviano's article Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Sacramental Act of Love of Neighbor is a welcome presentation of concrete ways we can better live in harmony with creation. Sister Lisa Marie Belz, OSU guides us through the Advent and Christmas readings with thought provoking and often uplifting insights into the scriptures. These plus a number of attentive examinations of the liturgy fill out this issue of Emmanuel.



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Living the Eucharist through Holy Matrimony

by George and Anna Peko

How does a couple build and nurture a eucharistic marriage?

George and Anna Peko have been married for 12 years and have 2 children ages 7 and 5. George and Anna both work at Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. George is the Catechetical Leader and Evangelization Director and Anna is the junior high Math and Reading teacher. Together they help prepare couples for marriage in their local parish.

THE MOST FRUITFUL MARRIAGES ARE THE ONES THAT ARE CENTERED IN THE EUCHARIST. We have been married for twelve years, and over the last twelve years we have discovered that when a couple enters into a marriage, that marriage is all the more meaningful if they also enter into a eucharistic life together. Initially, many are called to marriage for various reasons such as love, conjugal love, children, and simply following what feels right in the evolution of a relationship. However, over time, when the initial excitement and the honeymoon phase is over, the successful Catholic Christian couples that truly have sacramental marriages will have placed Christ at the core of the union. Holy Matrimony is a calling to a holy life through the development of virtues and focusing on what we believe are the three most important pillars of a sacramental union: sacrifice, love, and compassion. For us, the Eucharist is the beginning and the complete fulfillment of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Our Sacramental Experience

In our relationship the calling to the sacrament of Holy Matrimony was also a calling to the Eucharist. The two cannot be separated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church has these sacraments in different categories. One is a Sacrament of Initiation and the other is a Sacrament at the Service of Communion. Even though these sacraments are described categorically, in our experience, no division actually exists.

We were married twelve years ago in the Roman Catholic Church. We are both Roman Catholics, and it was very important to us to be married in the Church. If asked why we felt this need to be married in the Church, the answer and understanding that we had at the time

has changed over the years. The meaning of the sacraments naturally evolves and deepens over time. Initially, without being able to clearly define why we were called to the Church, we knew deep within us that it was the right thing to do. We wanted to go before God and family to express our love and devotion through our vows to one another. Now we see that this calling to the Church was so much deeper. It was a calling to Christ and to make our relationship with Jesus and the Eucharist a central point of our union and our family. Christ's presence during our wedding and receiving Jesus in the Eucharist as part of our ceremony was important beyond measure. Even though we may not have fully understood what that meant in the long term, in the short term we knew we needed Jesus there with us to have a holy start to our marriage.

Reflecting upon this sacrament twelve years later, it is apparent that the calling to Christ and the Eucharist was the true beginning of our marriage. Jesus through the Eucharist called us to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony within the context of Mass and receive him sacramentally to begin our journey together. This is what we mean when we say the Eucharist is the beginning of Holy Matrimony. In the Gospel of Matthew 18:20, Jesus said, "When two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." The Eucharist begins a marriage once two come together with the Holy Spirit to celebrate the love that comes from Jesus through the Holy Spirit. This love bears fruit, and couples will continue to seek this love through the Eucharist.

Creating a Eucharistic Marriage

One of the fruits of marriage is the birth of children. There is a eucharistic dimension to this. Marriage is a vocational calling by Christ. This calling allows married couples to pass on the faith to their children and develop their children's relationship with Christ through the Eucharist. The two sacraments here are again united because without future generations produced from Catholic Christian unions, the Eucharist would run the risk of becoming a memory. We need more married couples to perpetuate the faith and renew the eucharistic life of the community. A eucharistic marriage draws a couple into the love of the triune God and nurtures a holy union.

Marriage above all is meant to make a couple holy by developing virtues. There will be times when a couple is happy and feeling peaceful, but there will also be unpleasant times. If one enters into marriage with the belief that it is going to make them happy for the rest of their lives, they are going to have difficulty navigating the



more challenging times. This is why God's calling for a married couple is holiness above happiness.¹ A marriage by its very nature is meant to make one holy by developing virtue and bringing one closer to God. As the couple grows in holiness, they have good times where God must be praised, and also difficult times where they must seek God's help and compassion.

One of the most destructive mindsets within a marriage is when a spouse begins to focus on what the other is or is not doing for them. This will immediately create unreasonable expectations that the spouse will most likely not be able to fulfill. This is when conflict and frustration become the center of the marriage and God becomes secondary. It is not the job of a married person to make their spouse happy. One can only make oneself happy by focusing on one's relationship with God and growing in the role as a husband or wife. Happiness may be a by-product of the growth and effort, but only having faith in God will create true joy and peace within a marriage. In addition, if one only loves their spouse when they are simply getting along, the couple will never succeed. A couple must believe in "we and us" and never fall into the devil's snare of "me and you." The couple must stand together.

A eucharistic marriage draws a couple into the love of the triune God and nurtures a holy union.

Marriage is holy because it is an affirmation of the Trinity. Just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in three persons and represent a community of love and life, so is the trinity of the husband, wife, and Christ, which is also a community overflowing with love and life. The married couple must allow the roots of their faith and love of Jesus Christ to permeate so deeply to the very middle of their eucharistic core that when the storm comes, the tree of their marriage will be a solid oak that cannot be uprooted because it is rooted in Christ Jesus. If the roots spring from the Eucharist, when the storm comes, the tree will not be unearthed, and the marriage and family will not be damaged or destroyed. Creating a holy marriage is accomplished through the three pillars of a sacramental union which are sacrifice, love, and compassion.

Sacrifice, Love, and Compassion

Many of the good things in one's life come from sacrifice. Faith, right

action, peace, and many of the principals and precepts that the Catholic Church teaches are founded in sacrifice. Before one enters into a marriage, they must reflect on what they are willing to sacrifice for their faith, for God, for family, and for peace in their life. Too often many people are not willing to give up their time, comfort, money, or pride for the promises of Christ. Couples too often fall into temptation and are seduced by non-sacrificial ways of life. This will inevitably lead to pain in their relationship. Love is the supreme way to increase one's ability and motivation to make sacrifices in their life together.

Love has driven the best of humanity to make the sacrifices necessary to resist temptation, to conquer sin, and to improve the lives of those around them. One of the easiest ways to start one's journey of love is to say the most powerful expression of humankind, which is *I love you*. *I love you* feels good to say and feels even better to hear. Many times, the temptation is to do the opposite and hate. Hate is easy to feel, requires no discipline, and just waits to be provoked. On the contrary, love needs to be pursued, practiced, and must persevere.² Saint Paul defines the virtue of love in 1 Corinthians 13:4, "Love is patient. Love is kind." And he goes on to describe what love is *not* in verses 4-7. Love "is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered"³ Being jealous, pompous, inflated, rude, self-seeking, and quick-tempered requires no discipline. They are easy emotions to feel and act upon.

One of the most destructive mindsets within a marriage is when a spouse begins to focus on what the other is or is not doing for them.

Love must be the focus within a marriage everyday so that there is never an end to it. This love must begin with loving God above one's spouse and family. Even though it seems counterintuitive to love anyone above your family, this complete and total love for Christ will deepen the love within the family. In the Gospel of Matthew 10:37, Jesus said, "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Interestingly, a person's love becomes deeper and fuller for their spouse and children when they love Jesus the most.

In the Gospel of Luke 22:35-38, the disciples were being sent out to evangelize and Jesus knew that they were to face great trials.



The disciples said, “Lord, look, there are two swords here.” But Jesus replied, “It is enough!” Knowing of the dangers ahead, the disciples showed Jesus that they only had two swords and Jesus responds that two swords is enough. This is similar to a married couple that will face many trials and tribulations on their journey. Each person in a marriage is a sword that embodies strength, courage, justice, and right action. Helping one another through Jesus Christ is a true calling of apostolic action and missionary discipleship for a married couple. A couple’s fulfillment of this calling through sacrifice and love will inherently lead to compassion.

I love you feels good to say and feels even better to hear.

Compassion is vastly important because it will lead to sympathy and empathy for one’s spouse. It leads to forgiveness when the spouse does not meet the sacramental calling. Forgiveness fueled by compassion is one of the most important aspects within a marriage because with great certainty each spouse is going to want and need the other to have compassionate forgiveness within them. These three pillars of sacrifice, love, and compassion are rooted in the Eucharist. The Eucharist and all of the life and love from the real presence of the resurrected Jesus Christ fulfills a marriage and allows a couple to help each other grow in goodness and grace.

In our experience the profundity of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is due to the eucharistic calling within a union to grow in holiness. A couple that helps one another strengthen their relationship with God discovers deeper love, and service towards God and others. Ephesians 5:21 states, “Serve one another out of reverence of Christ.” In serving one another, the couple is in turn serving and adoring God. This will always be a work in progress, but it does bear fruit. For all marriages, including ours, there will be progression and regression, times of joy and times where forgiveness is needed. Living as husband and wife by serving one another through Jesus Christ witnesses to the eucharistic dimension of marriage. We not only receive Eucharist together, but we are Eucharist for one another. That eucharistic self-giving flows out into our family, our places of work, our community, and our world. This is how we live a *eucharistic* marriage.

May the peace of the Lord be with you and your family.



Notes

¹ Thomas, Gary. *Sacred Marriage*. (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan. 2000) pg. 11.

² Ibid, pg. 40.

³ Pope Francis provides wonderful theological insights related to Saint Paul's writings on love in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (*The Joy of Love*) paragraphs 90-119 (promulgated March, 19, 2016). Cf. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html

In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

Rev. Mario Marzocchi
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

Since its inception, *Emmanuel* has published a list of deceased members of the Priests' Eucharistic League, remembering those who have served the church generously and faithfully and have passed into the promised eternal life. Priests in the Eucharistic League whose names begin with V, W, X, Y, and Z are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during November and December.



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Why Do We Use the Title “Father” for a Priest? The Challenge of Matthew 23:9

by David W. T. Brattston and John Christman, SSS

Does Matthew 23:9 contradict the traditional practice of calling a priest “Father”?

Dr. David W.T. Brattston is a retired jurist and author. Among his published works are several volumes on traditional Christian ethics. He lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada. John Christman, SSS is editor of Emmanuel.

IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW CHAPTER 23 JESUS SPEAKS TO A LARGE GATHERING OF people including his disciples. In his discourse he enumerates some of the difference between those who follow his teaching and those who follow the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees. As part of these differences Jesus instructs his listeners, “Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven” (Mt 23:9). Catholics upon reading this may pause to ponder the question, “Then why do we call a priest by the title ‘Father’?” It seems at first glimpse to be contrary to a plain and literal reading of Scripture.

Understanding the Bible can be a complex and difficult task. When we consider the great historical gap between the writing of the biblical texts and the present, along with the differences in language and culture we begin to see just how difficult it can be to understand the Bible. Likewise, the New Testament authors assume knowledge and presuppositions that were in their own minds and in those of their first readers but are not contained in the Bible itself. For instance, many New Testament letters present instructions and discussion that have special concerns or foci but do not set out the entire teaching of their authors or conditions in the communities to which they were addressed.¹ Other early Christian literature helps provide some such background. It reveals the meanings and concepts that a hearer of Jesus would likely attach to New Testament phrases and allusions, and how such a hearer might understand them.² In light of this complexity scripture scholars have developed a number of interpretive devices to help readers understand the Bible. They use methods such as historical-critical method, narrative criticism, form criticism, and others to ascertain the meaning of a particular text. All these together help provide a fuller sense of what a particular passage might mean.

So, when we consider a challenging text such as Matthew 23:9 we

know it will require much more research to understand its meaning. This begins with asking some important questions, such as, “Who was Matthew writing to?” “What was the historical context of this discourse?” “Where else in Scripture is the word “father” used as a title for a person and what does it mean in that context?” When Scripture is taken as a whole, we realize that some passages shed light upon other passages and help us form a fuller understanding of a particular text. Rather than interpret a verse in isolation, Matthew 23:9 requires more information from which to draw conclusions, more dots to form a larger or clearer picture. Additionally, we may wish to consult other early Christian texts to learn how the early Christian communities understood and utilized the term “father.” This will provide a much deeper understanding of religious questions and obtain more clarification. As in a court trial, all witnesses must be heard and their statements weighed so that the judge can arrive at the truth, for a decision that takes all the evidence into account.

“Father” in the New Testament

The New Testament contains a number of examples of Christians using the word “father” when addressing male human beings. In Acts 7:2, Stephen the Martyr addressed the Jewish Sanhedrin in the following manner, “My brothers and *fathers*, listen. The God of glory appeared to our *father* Abraham...” A few years later in his speech to a hostile crowd in the Temple, the apostle Paul began, “My brothers and *fathers*, listen to what I am about to say to you in my defense” (Act 22:1). Other New Testament letters direct the term to male parents within the Church. Such as “*Fathers*, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph 6:4), and “*Fathers*, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged” (Col 3:21). In the First Letter of John 2:13–14 the author twice addresses his readers as “fathers” in distinction to “little children” and “young men.”

Perhaps even more pertinent to this question of the title “father” in the New Testament is Paul’s use of the term in First Corinthians 4:15. Here Paul refers to himself as a “father” of the Christian community. He writes, “Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many *fathers*, for I became your *father* in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” Here Paul draws upon a Jewish tradition of using the title “father” to signify a spiritual teacher, as W.D. Davis and D.C. Allison point out, “‘father’ is used of instructors in the Old Testament wisdom tradition, and Paul regards himself as the ‘father’ of his converts (1 Cor 4:15).”³ So clearly, elsewhere in the New Testament the title “father” is used and carries meaning both in familial contexts and honorific



contexts, while importantly *not referring to God*.

The Community of Matthew's Gospel

Just as Paul wrote each of his letters to different communities that had their own unique character and composition, strengths and weaknesses, the same can be said of the writers of the four gospels. Each gospel was initially written for a particular community. That community's context and experience shapes the meaning and message of the gospel account. Much can be said about the community that Matthew was writing to. For our purposes it might be sufficient to state that Matthew's audience was largely a Jewish Christian audience that was coming to terms with what it meant to be a follower of Jesus within a Jewish socio-political context. In fact, as Daniel Harrington notes, the Christian community to whom Matthew was writing is in conflict with the larger Jewish leadership structure of its day. In this light he observes, "the Matthean community wishes to distinguish itself sharply from the Jewish community with whom they are in conflict. The common Semitic title for an elder, Abba ('Father'), is to be reserved for God, and the title 'Master' for Christ. The members of the community are to be 'servants' to one another."⁴ This provides us with some contextual insight. The Church structure that Matthew is proposing, as Harrington states, is more "egalitarian" in nature than the Jewish community of his day.⁵ Matthew is proposing an alternative to the religious structures of his day based upon a Christian view of service and brotherhood/sisterhood.

The Early Christian Communities

Harrington is quick to point out that the Matthean ecclesiology represented in the prescription against honorific titles given to Church leaders gave way to a more hierarchical structure. As he states, "Though the title 'Rabbi' ceased to be used among Christians, probably because it became a central title within Judaism, the traditional Semitic title 'Father' gained wide usage, as did a number of other honorific title reflecting the power or status of their holders."⁶

We see this use of the term develop within the Christian tradition. The *Epistle of the Apostles* 41–42 reports that the question about the title "father" had arisen by the middle of the second century, at the latest. This non-canonical writing depicts Jesus teaching the apostles material not found in the standard four gospels:

We said unto him: “Lord, thou art he that said unto us: ‘Call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father, which is in heaven, and your master.’ Wherefore say thou now unto us: ‘Ye shall be fathers of many children, and servants and masters?’” He answered and said unto us: “Ye have rightly said. For verily I say unto you: whosoever shall hear you and believe in me, shall receive of you the light of the seal through me, and baptism through me: ye shall be fathers and servants and masters.” But we said unto him: “Lord, how may it be that every one of us should be these three?” He said unto us: “Verily I say unto you: Ye shall be called fathers, because with praiseworthy heart and in love ye have revealed unto them the things of the kingdom of heaven. And ye shall be called servants, because they shall receive the baptism of life and the remission of their sins at my hand through you. And ye shall be called masters, because ye have given them the word without grudging, and have admonished them, and when ye admonished them, they were converted.”⁷

In some New Testament passages the title “father” is used and carries meaning both in familial contexts and honorific contexts, while importantly not referring to God.

Elsewhere in the tradition it is commonplace to speak of the “patristic period.” The patristic period runs from the end of the first century to the middle of the eighth century and is named as such due to the influential teachings of the Christian leaders of that time period who are referred to as the, “Fathers of the Church.”⁸ Under this umbrella term we encounter numerous other uses of the honorary title “Father” such as, “Apostolic Fathers,” “Desert Fathers” “Cappadocian Fathers” and others. These include such luminaries as Saint Ignatius of Antioch, Saint John Chrysostom, and Saint Augustine. This attests to the commonplace usage of the term within the Christian tradition to designate honor to a significant teacher of the faith.

Of particular interest here is the patristic scripture scholar and Doctor of the Church Saint Jerome. Jerome actually wrote about the meaning of Matthew 23:9 and explored distinct uses of the title “Father.” He found that it could be applied honorifically to people as long as it was properly understood. He writes:



No one should be called teacher or father except God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the Father, because all things are from him. He alone is the teacher, because through him are made all things are reconciled to God.

But one might ask, "Is it against this precept when the apostle calls himself the teacher of the Gentiles? Or when, as in colloquial speech widely found in the monasteries of Egypt and Palestine, they call each other Father?" Remember this distinction. It is one thing to be a father or a teacher by nature, another to be so by generosity. For when we call a man father and reserve the honor of his age, we may thereby be failing to honor the Author of our own lives. One is rightly called a teacher only from his association with the true Teacher. I repeat: The fact that we have one God and one Son of God through nature does not prevent others from being understood as sons of God by adoption. Similarly this does not make the terms father and teacher useless or prevent others from being called father.⁹

Here we see that the honorific title "father" was in use within some of the early Christian communities and even brought into dialogue with Matthew 23:9 by Saint Jerome.

The Use of the Honorific Title "Father" Today

The Catholic Church is not alone in its practice of using the honorific title "Father" for members of the priesthood. The Eastern Orthodox use the term for a priest, as does the Coptic Orthodox Church. Likewise, high Anglicans address their clergy as "Father" as do some Lutherans.

Thus, we see not only its broad acceptance but also its value to those who use it. Bishop Jorge Rodriguez of Denver finds the title "father" meaningful as it relates the priest to God and the priesthood of Christ. He writes, "The priest, as father, teaches us the faith, forgives us when we fail and blesses us like a father and like God, our Father. We receive from the priest the apostolic faith, the sacraments, supernatural life. He is not the source but the channel."¹⁰ Note here his important acknowledgement, as in the passage from Jerome, that the priest is not the "source but the channel."

However, others may not find the term useful. Jean-Pierre Roche, himself a Catholic priest, finds the title unhelpful as he believes it encourages clericalism and creates a stumbling block for Christian “fraternal relationships between adults that are equals.”¹¹ He too cites Matthew 23:9 and emphasizes that only God is to be called Father. Instead, Roche prefers the titles of “brothers” and “sisters” in Christ.¹² This finds precedence in Matthew’s ecclesiology.

Matthew is proposing an alternative to the religious structures of his day based upon a Christian view of service and brotherhood/sisterhood.

In a sense this challenge may be a perennial one, because Matthew’s text acknowledges an important value from within the tradition. While there is much historical precedence for the use of the honorific title “Father,” there is also the value of fraternal relationship as brothers and sisters in Christ with God as the one true authority. As Harrington astutely observes, “The struggle between the sociological necessity for institutionalization and the mandate for community fellowship affected the Matthean community as it does many Christian communities today.”¹³ So when we use the term “father” when addressing a priest, it may be best to hold these two views together, lest we lose something important within the tradition.



Notes

¹ J. Ian H. McDonald *The Crucible of Christian Morality* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998) pp. 51–52.

² Craig A. Evans *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* pp. 4 and 178–188.

³ *The International Critical Commentary: The Gospel According to Saint Matthew - Volume III*. W. D. Davies and D.C. Allison (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1997) 277

⁴ *Sacra Pagina Series Volume 1: The Gospel of Matthew*. Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. (Collegeville, Michael Glazier, 1991) 323

⁵ Harrington, 324

⁶ Harrington, 324

⁷ *Epistle of the Apostles* 41–42, trans. Montague Rhodes James *The Apocryphal New Testament* p. 500 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953 reprinted 1963) (language and punctuation modernized).

⁸ “Fathers of the Church” by Boniface Ramsey, OP in *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Joseph Komonchak, Mary Collins OSB, Dermot Lane (Collegeville, Michael Glazier, 1987) 388

⁹ *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New testament Ib Matthew 14-28*. Ed Manlio Simonetti (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2002) 168

¹⁰ <https://denvercatholic.org/why-do-we-call-priests-father/>

¹¹ <https://international.la-croix.com/news/stop-calling-me-father/9779> accessed March 2, 2020

¹² Ibid

¹³ Harrington, 324



EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Two Books or Three Books to Read?

by Peter Schineller, SJ

Can the results of human creativity and ingenuity be pathways leading to God?

Following assignments in Africa and Jordan, Father Peter Schineller, SJ currently serves on the staff of the Jogues Retreat Center in Cornwall, New York.

WHERE DO WE FIND GOD? WHERE DOES GOD SPEAK TO US? SEVERAL ANSWERS can be given. One traditional answer is to speak of the two books God has given to us, namely the book of the Bible and the book of creation. Christians consider the Bible to be the word of God. It is at the center of our faith. It has the words of everlasting life. It should be our constant companion. Christians should read, pray, study, and put into practice the teachings of the Bible. It is the basic, solid source of our faith.

Christian thinkers and saints say there is a second book we should read, namely the book of creation. This second book, perhaps 15 billion years old, is our universe. It is the work of God and in it we find signs and traces of God. There is an oft-quoted saying of the father of monasticism, St. Anthony (251-356), which captures well the ancient Christian attitude to the world around us. A philosopher once asked St. Anthony, "How do you manage, Father, deprived of the consolation of books?" Anthony replied: "My book is the nature of created things, and this is before me whenever I wish to read the words of God."

Thus too in St. Bonaventure, (1217-1274) we read that there are not one but two books by which we can and must find God. He writes, "The universe is like a book, reflecting, representing and describing its Maker."¹ Two more citations to make the point clear. Alan of Lille writes that "Every created thing is for us a book, a picture, and a mirror."² And Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) explains that "anyone who truly knows creatures may be excused from listening to sermons for every creature is full of God, and is a book."³ Not only saints and theologians, but many philosophers and scientists share this insight into the two books. Sir Francis Bacon writes: "God has, in fact, written two books, not just one. Of course, we are all familiar with the first

book he wrote, namely Scripture. But he has written a second book called creation.”⁴ Pope John Paul II echoes the unity of the two books of the Bible and the book of creation in a homily of June 2001:

Reading the Bible, we discover right from the first page that God speaks to us. He speaks to us as he gives life to creation: the heavens, the earth, light, water, living things, man and woman, everything exists by his word. His word gives meaning to all things, rescuing them from chaos. For this reason nature is an immense book in which we can see with ever fresh wonder the traces of divine Beauty.⁵

Well said and powerful. Indeed, the world is not simply a resource, or a garden entrusted to our care, but a revelation of the ways and will, the power and beauty of God.

A Third Book

But can we stop there? I believe we must go one step further. My concern is that in the Bible only objects directly created by God seem to be highlighted as “blessing the Lord.” Few manufactured objects are pointed to as revelations, as objects that lead us to God, or that bless God. Yes, manufactured musical instruments, houses, and cities do bless the Lord. Nevertheless, there is scant mention or emphasis in the Bible on objects created by and used by humans.

Is this our understanding of the world we live in? Look around in your home and in our cities. We are surrounded by human-made objects. What are we to make of them? Can we seek and possibly find God in this third book as we find God and as God reveals God’s self in the first two books? Can we say that like the cattle and beasts, like the sun, moon and stars, that the works of humankind, (ex. computers, skyscrapers, and cities) can and do give glory to God and reflect the power and beauty of God? I believe this is true and increasingly important as we find our lives determined more and more by such human-made objects.

The challenging question facing us is how to keep one’s life in the Spirit, since the spiritual life is alive and well in the city built by human brains and hands. So, might we not ask, “Is there not a third book we must try to read — a book which surrounds and envelopes us, which makes living today possible?” The Catholic bishops at the Second Vatican Council, over fifty years ago, gave the foundation for our answer. They saw that the creative energy and inventiveness of human persons



comes from God and can give glory to God. They wrote:

Far from thinking that works produced by men and women's own talent and energy are in opposition to God's power, and that the rational creature exists as a kind of rival to the Creator, Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the flowering of God's own mysterious design (*Gaudium et spes* - *Church in the Modern World*, 34).

My concern is that in the Bible, only objects directly created by God seem to be highlighted as "blessing the Lord."

Again, Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini* of 1998 (No. 10), writes:

Coming as it does from the hand of God, the cosmos bears the imprint of his goodness. It is a beautiful world, rightly moving us to admiration and delight, but also calling for cultivation and development. At the "completion" of God's work, the world is ready for human activity. The "work" of God is in some ways an example for man, called not only to inhabit the cosmos, but also to "build" it and thus become God's "co-worker".

He continues:

The exhilarating advance of science, technology and culture in their various forms — an ever more rapid and today even overwhelming development — is the historical consequence of the mission by which God entrusts to man and woman the task and responsibility of filling the earth and subduing it by means of their work, in the observance of God's law.⁶

Yet we must also add a caution. Is there not a danger here, the danger of idolatry? As in the Hebrew Scriptures, and as in the history of religions, we find humans at times worshipping the objects they have made with their own hands, objects made out of God's good creation. The golden calf is the prime example. We make it into an idol,

place our trust in it and give allegiance to it. Clearly not everything that the human person has created is simply good or a reflection of the divine. Making a pornographic film is not good, nor reflecting the goodness, wisdom of God. Rather, it is being led by the bad spirit, the evil one. On the other hand, making a nature film — showing the beauty of nature and the cleverness of animals, can be a reflection, a sharing in the wisdom of God. It shows forth the beauty of creation and hence the beauty of the creator.

So too in the Bible. We see there that things created by God can be dangerous and destructive. The wind and the rain can lead to destructive cyclones and floods. The wild beasts can attack and kill human beings. God who created the wind, rain, and lions, does not guarantee that they will only and always have good effects, results. And, as we see clearly today, we can destroy and ruin God's creation as we do with polluted rivers, waters, and the destruction of forests. We can use our manufactured items (ex. gunpowder and nuclear energy) for destructive, evil ends, as well as for good. On the positive side, we use our intelligence to understand our universe at the macro and micro levels. Through medical research and medicine, we lengthen our life expectancy and improve the quality of life.

The challenging question facing us is how to keep one's life in the Spirit, since the spiritual life is alive and well in the city built by human brains and hands.

God is the Creator. Our world comes from God's hands. But in a true sense, the world is an unfinished symphony, where we have a role to play. Irenaeus put it well: "*Gloria Dei, vivens homo.*" Whatever enriches and improves the human condition gives glory to God. God's wish and will is that we give God glory by improving and completing the symphony which is the universe. Jesuit polymath Fr. Walter Ong once wrote: "Computers were to be a part of God's creation just as much as dinosaurs were."⁸

We end with an insightful and oft-quoted expression from Samuel Morse. In 1844 he sent the first telegraph from Washington to Baltimore. He exclaimed at the success of this technological innovation: "What hath God wrought?"⁹ Yes it was the work of human hands, but also the work of God in and through human intelligence. Morse rightly saw that the telegraph (and now we add, the computer, the skyscraper,



the jet airplane, and space station) can and should be viewed with the Bible and Book of Creation as the third book, that lead and point us to God.



Notes

¹ St. Bonaventure. "The universe is like a book, reflecting, representing and describing its Maker." *On the Trinity of God*, Chapter 12, Nos. 1-2

² Cf. G. R. Evans, Alan of Lille: The Frontiers of Theology in the Later Twelfth Century (London, Cambridge University Press, 1983). For further reading on Alan of Lille.

³ Eckhart writes that "anyone who truly knows creatures may be excused from listening to sermons for every creature is full of God, and is a book." God is equally near in all creatures. The wise man saith, "God hath spread out His net over all creatures, so that whosoever wishes to discover Him may find and recognize Him in each one." Meister Eckhart, Sermon – "The Nearness of the Kingdom." It is also found in Matthew Fox, *Meditations with Meister Eckhart* (Bear and Company, 1983). Eckhart then adds that
If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature – even a caterpillar – I would never have to prepare a sermon.
So full of God is every creature....

⁴ Francis Bacon. Sir Francis Bacon writes: "God has, in fact, written two books, not just one. Of course, we are all familiar with the first book he wrote, namely Scripture. But he has written a second book called creation." <https://quotes.thefamouspeople.com/francis-bacon-115.php>,

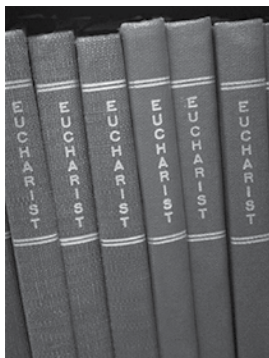
⁵ Pope John Paul II, Homily, June 2001.

⁶ Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini* of May 31, 1998 (No. 10)

⁷ Irenaeus put it well: "*Gloria Dei, vivens homo.*" The phrase is found in his *Adversus Haereses*, 4,20,7. "*gloria enim Dei vivens homo, vita autem hominis visio Dei*"

⁸ Walter Ong, "Do We Live in a Post-Christian Age?" *America* 3 February 1996, p. 16. Also found in "Church and Cosmos: Reflections on Frames of Reference." *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* (Rome) 27.3 no. 83 (1996): 9-17.

⁹ Morse "What hath God wrought" is a phrase from the Book of Numbers (Numbers 23:23), the official first Morse code message transmitted in the US on May 24, 1844, to officially open the Baltimore–Washington telegraph line. Cf. Wikipedia, "What hath God Wrought."



EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Sacramental Act of Love of Neighbor

by Erin Lothes Biviano

Does our sacramental worldview call us to divest from fossil fuels?

The poor communities around the world are already the early and disproportionate victims of the current ecological degradation and we cannot remain indifferent any longer to the increasingly desperate “cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (Laudato Si’, 49).¹

A CALL TO PROTECT OUR COMMON HOME FROM THE RAVAGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE through divesting from fossil fuels increasingly emerges from the highest levels of Church authority. A 2020 Vatican report calls for Catholics to “shun companies that are harmful to human or social ecology, such as abortion and armaments, and to the environment, such as fossil fuels.”² Fossil fuel divestment is recommended as a *Laudato Si’* goal in “*Laudato Si’*: Special Anniversary Year.”³

Though fossil fuel divestment involves untangling complex investment structures and can provoke a range of reactions, at one level it is quite simple. If we as a global society wish to have clean, renewable energy accessible to all, and stop contributing to dangerous climate change that intensely harms the poor, we must stop investing in fossil fuel energy. Those who want apples should stop planting oranges.

In this short essay I hope to express a dimension to divestment beyond its economic aspect, which is its religious, even sacramental meaning. I will indicate some often-heard concerns, offer ethical responses to them, and then propose a spiritual interpretation of divestment as a sacramental action. To conclude, I reference various resources as well as some barriers ahead, particularly for the United States Catholic community, which is my own faith community. The concerns often heard are at least three: that divestment is risky, impractical, and symbolic. These are legitimate concerns that deserve attention

Erin Lothes Biviano, is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Saint Elizabeth University. She is author of *Inspired Sustainability: Planting Seeds for Action* and editor of *Light for a New Day: Interfaith Essays on Energy Ethics*.



alongside ethical assessments.

Risks

There *are* risks to any investment strategy, and all portfolios are subject to losses. Certainly, fossil fuels have been profitable. Yet, as carbon becomes priced or regulated, or increasingly politically or socially unpopular, stranded assets (fossil fuel assets that will not be saleable under future regulations and thus a source of loss) are a real risk in the near future. Thus, new definitions of fiduciary responsibility are emerging that may define investments in fossil fuels as impractical and risky themselves.

Catholic social teaching forbids seeking maximum returns if it means compromising moral standards. *Laudato Si'* teaches that “[t]he principle of the maximization of profits, frequently isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy. As long as production is increased, little concern is given to whether it is at the cost of future resources or the health of the environment” (LS 195).

Most importantly, in the case of other industries barred by values screens, faith-based socially responsible investment guidelines do not ask about the risk of lost profitability from divesting from them. These products and services are excluded on a moral basis.

Practicality

Divestment has also been dismissed as impractical — that the act of selling one’s shares is hypocritical and futile because others purchase them, and the fossil infrastructure is unchanged. On the contrary, divesting and reinvesting is eminently practical because reinvested funds can be directed to impact investing (investing in socially positive companies), sustainable investments, and the essential scaling up of renewable energy technologies and infrastructure.

Society must invest in renewable energy systems at a massive scale, and investors’ funds are an important means to that end. A report from the Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy points out that wind and solar would benefit from accessing institutional investors (pensions, endowments, insurance, sovereign wealth funds, and foundations) as wind and solar cannot access some of the capital,

tax breaks, and accounting mechanisms available to fossil fuel corporations.⁴ This capital is *not* needed to fund fossil fuel systems, which benefit from billions of dollars in subsidies. This is clearly documented by the International Monetary Fund and by Oil Change International, showing \$20 billion of US federal and state subsidies to fossil fuels through support for exploration, deductions for drilling costs, reduced royalties for mining on public lands, deductions for oil spill penalties, etc.⁵

These subsidies exist alongside the fossil fuel industry's well-documented tactics of disinformation. Harvard researchers conclude that ExxonMobil suppressed its own reports about climate change for decades, systematically misleading the public since 1977.⁶ The Global Climate Coalition, a prominent lobbying group, refuted climate science against the findings of its own experts.⁷

The sacramental realization of love of neighbor enacted by re-directing funds to clean investments, for the sake of a stable climate and fruitful earth, is no less symbolic than providing funds to buy bread for the hungry.

This entrenched opposition to accelerating the renewables revolution, amidst active efforts to *expand* the extraction of fossil fuels, are signs that divestment is needed.⁸ The interfaith environmental coalition GreenFaith articulates precisely this opposition as one of the criteria employed by many faith communities when discerning a decision to divest. The criteria include large scale, systematic harm; intractable opposition to change; and the need for religious groups to redefine society's moral code, reject complacency, and spur an appropriate disgust for corporate-sponsored ecocide.⁹ Such intractable opposition must be countered by a strong moral witness that calls people to recognize the seriousness of our climate emergency, to interrupt business as usual in finance and technology, and to take the opportunity to impact society's moral code courageously.

Symbolism

In response to the claim that divestment is "symbolic," I affirm that it is indeed symbolic. In fact, to draw upon Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner's articulation of a Catholic theology of symbol, divestment is a "real



symbol,” the very reality of the thing presented within the symbolic action or image. As Rahner writes, “[a] symbol is not something separate from the symbolized object. On the contrary, the symbol is the reality, which reveals and proclaims the thing symbolized, ... being its concrete form of existence.”¹⁰ Similarly, divestment is a visible sign of invisible realities, the visible reality of conferring funds to build a healthy and sustainable economy. As such divestment has a sacramental quality; it re-presents the intent and actuality of funding new energy systems. This is a profoundly loving action that counters disease caused by pollution, energy poverty, drought and crop loss, storm, impacts, and the ravaging of ecosystems. Conversely, business as usual investments manifest the invisible reality of the power relationships that pervade energy and inequality, power inequities that are plainly visible in energy poverty, disproportionate climate impacts, and ecological debt.

Thus the “symbol” of divesting is in no way an empty performance but a practical contribution to building a renewable energy economy. The sacramental realization of love of neighbor enacted by re-directing funds to clean investments, for the sake of a stable climate and fruitful earth, is no less symbolic than providing funds to buy bread for the hungry. It is the actual reality of the love of neighbor, future generations, and all living families of the earth.

Love of neighbor requires a preferential option for the poor. In our current era of climate change, enacting that option for the poor requires reversing environmental injustice. These themes have been addressed by magisterial social teaching since at least 1972 when the Vatican sent a delegation to the United Nations Stockholm climate conference. They have been emphasized by Pope John Paul II in his 1990 *World Day of Peace Message*, analyzed by Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in veritate*, and comprehensively established by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* (LS), with its integrated critique of culture, economics, technology, and politics. All of these texts present a deeply compassionate and spiritual call to ecological conversion.

Regarding energy specifically, *Laudato Si’* states:

We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas – needs to be progressively replaced without delay... the international community has still not

reached adequate agreements about the responsibility for paying the costs of this energy transition.... Politics and business have been slow to react in a way commensurate with the urgency of the challenges facing our world (LS 165).

There is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy (LS 26).

The excellent Vatican text *Energy, Justice, and Peace: A Reflection on Energy in the Current Context of Development and Environmental Protection* anticipated the teaching of *Laudato Si'*, applying the preferential option for the poor to energy decisions. *Energy, Justice, and Peace* clarifies that energy should “primarily solve the shortages of the poorest populations,” and thus, advanced countries have “the moral duty of developing the use of the most complex and capital-intensive energy technologies.”¹¹ This development only takes place through research and investment that scales up individual, institutional, and societal deployment of currently available technologies. And funding this development and deployment of renewable energy requires divestment that reverses funding for the ongoing prospecting, extraction, and production of fossil fuels.

It is the moral challenge of this generation to reverse the fossil fuel economy and fund a clean, healthy, sustainable, inclusive renewable economy, as an imperative of intergenerational justice.

The essay “Catholic Moral Traditions and Energy Ethics for the Twenty-first Century” further articulates criteria from Catholic social teaching, identifying seven principles of energy ethics that empower conversations in a US Catholic context about *energy decisions as ethical decisions*.¹² Indeed, this conversation is not only an ethical imperative but a spiritual opportunity. As the Protestant theologian Langdon Gilkey wrote, through a sacramental religious vision, finite objects become “media of the divine, and endow all of secular and ordinary life with the possibility and the sanctity of divine creativity.”¹³



Finite and relative *financial* instruments play an essential role in secular life and cannot be left out of the creativity needed to direct funds appropriately in order to establish a healthy, sustainable, and just economy. Thus, a sacramental view of divesting places finance within a moral vision, seeing the pragmatic exchange of investments within the covenantal economy of God's providence, neighborly justice, and creaturely praise and gratitude.

This sacramental interpretation of the meaning of divestment builds upon the message of *Laudato Si'* and other episcopal and papal teachings, which call us to see the one complex social and environmental crisis as a religious summons to ecological conversion.

Resources

What are the resources for further ethical and practical discussion? The interfaith community has given strong witness to the religious meaning of divestment. In 2016, during the United Nations climate conference at Marrakesh, an Interfaith Statement on Climate Change was signed by hundreds of faith leaders worldwide. This statement is a call to accelerate fossil fuel divestment and clean energy investments, which was delivered to the office of the Secretary General. A collection of essays by religious leaders from the world's major faith traditions on energy ethics, which I had the privilege to edit with GreenFaith, was released at that time. GreenFaith's Divest and Invest Now movement continues to support faith communities from all traditions.¹⁴

The Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and Catholic Relief Services have hosted three impact investing conferences to share best practices related to investing for the common good and mitigating climate change. Additionally, the highly professional Catholic Impact Investing Collaborative is a network of wealth management professionals and financial officers. They are committed to values investing, have links with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, and have significant experience with divestment. Their website at Catholic Impact.org is another valuable resource for those seeking assistance with these questions. Also, Trocaire, the official overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland, has issued a very helpful resource, "Ethical Investments in an Era of Climate Change," available on the CIIC website and the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) website. The GCCM has supported the divestment of over one hundred Catholic


groups worldwide.

Barriers

A note on barriers. The traditional Catholic support of shareholder engagement is an important effort to bring a moral voice within corporate boardrooms. It is effective in many campaigns for social justice. However, shareholder advocacy has had only limited success in obtaining change at the necessary pace from fossil fuel companies.¹⁵ The pace of change so far achieved through shareholder engagement, even with recent corporate concessions to recognize climate science, does not match the actual need for a faster shift to renewable energy as defined by science. In part, this is due to the *distinction between advocating for change in process and advocating for change in product*.

Changes to a business model that improve the fairness, safety, inclusion, health, transparency, wages and wellbeing of workers are process changes that a corporation can accept and continue to make and sell their product. It is inherently challenging for a company to comply with *product changes*, requests to put themselves out of business.

Yet many Christian groups will wish to continue their witness through shareholder engagement. If they are to join the divestment movement, they must have options to choose portfolios divested from fossil fuels while maintaining relationships with faith-based shareholder engagement. At present, these options are limited in the extreme, and this represents a significant barrier to some Catholic divestment efforts. Fossil-free investment vehicles must be developed, and investment advisors educated about them to accelerate the divestment movement.

It is the moral challenge of this generation to reverse the fossil fuel economy and fund a clean, healthy, sustainable, inclusive renewable economy, as an imperative of intergenerational justice. Divestment is both an ethically and spiritually meaningful part of the solidarity that works for justice and a stable, sustainable earth community. In Pope Benedict's words, "If you want peace, care for creation." 

Notes

¹ Laudato Si' Special Anniversary Year Plan, Dicastery for Promoting Integral



Human Development, 2, https://www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org/files/shftp_uploads/2020/6/2LAUDATO_SI_English_Web_1_.pdf

² This document is currently only available in Italian. See “Journeying for the Care of the Common Home,” Holy See Interdicastery Table on Integral Ecology, https://www.ncronline.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/In%20cammino%20per%20la%20cura%20della%20casa%20comune.pdf. See Philip Pullella, “Vatican urges Catholics to drop investments in fossil fuels, arms,” Reuters, June 18, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vatican-environment/vatican-urges-catholics-to-drop-investments-in-fossil-fuels-arms-idUSKBN23P1H1>.

³ Laudato Si’ Special Anniversary Year Plan, 8.

⁴ Travis Bradford et al., “Financing Solar and Wind Power: Insights from Oil and Gas” (New York: Columbia Center on Global Energy Policy, 2017), 7–9, <https://energypolicy.columbia.edu/research/report/financing-solar-and-wind-power-insights-oil-and-gas>

⁵ Janet Redman, Kelly Trout, Alex Doukas, and Ken Bossong, “Dirty Energy Dominance: Dependent on Denial; How the U.S. Fossil Fuel Industry Depends on Subsidies and Climate Denial” (Washington, DC: Oil Change International, 2017),

⁶ Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes, “Assessing ExxonMobil’s Climate Change Communications, 1977–2014,” *Environmental Research Letters* 12 (August 2017), <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aa815f/meta>.

⁷ Andrew C. Revkin, “Industry Ignored Its Own Scientists,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/24/science/earth/24deny.html?mcubz=1>.

⁸ ExxonMobil intends to increase profits to three times what they were in 2017, reaching \$23 billion in 2025. The goal is not simply to maintain production but to increase it through pumping vast new projects in the US, Brazil, and Guyana. “Bigger Oil,” *The Economist*, February 9, 2019, 17.

⁹ Fletcher Harper, “Divest and Reinvest Now! The Religious Imperative for Fossil Fuel Divestment and Reinvestment in a Clean Energy Future,” (GreenFaith, 2013).

¹⁰ Karl Rahner, “The Theology of the Symbol,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4 (New York: Crossroad, 1966), 251.

¹¹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Energy, Justice and Peace: A Reflection on Energy in the Current Context of Development and Environmental Protection* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2014), 111.

¹² Erin Lothes Biviano, David Cloutier, Elaine Padilla, Christiana Z. Peppard, and Jame Schaefer, “Catholic Moral Traditions and Energy Ethics for the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 5 (2016).

¹³ Langdon Gilkey, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity: A Protestant View* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 196–97.

¹⁴ Cf. GreenFaith website: <https://greenfaith.org>

^{15w} Elizabeth Douglass, “Exxon’s Gamble: 25 Years of Rejecting Shareholder Concerns on Climate Change,” *InsideClimate News*, June 8, 2015, http://books.insideclimatenews.org/exxonclimategamble?utm_source=Inside+Climate+News&utm_campaign=9c3c459b33-6_8_2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_29c928ffb5-9c3c459b33-327747253_



EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Chalkware Catholicism: The Aims and Art of Catholic Statuary Reconsidered

by Michael DeSanctis

What does a sacramental imagination make of the religiously mundane?

Sleeping Among the Saints

"CHALKWARE CATHOLICISM" IS A PHRASE I COINED SOME TIME AGO IN MY WRITING on sacred art and architecture to describe an approach to the faith, once widespread among the faithful, that relied heavily on the plaster statuary — or "chalkware" — displayed in parish churches throughout this country prior to the wide-ranging changes in worship initiated by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). I use the term with no intent of derision but simply as a way of identifying a form of popular piety that drew as much solace from meditating upon the cast-plaster likenesses of the saints, angels, and other holy persons as from the more abstractly-rendered presence of Christ made available in the Catholic place of worship by word and sacrament. I admit to being a fan of the decidedly old-fashioned art of Catholic statuary myself, in fact, and bear only respect for the unassuming acts of trust it continues to inspire in many believers today, despite having spent a career as a liturgical educator and designer promoting models of place and prayer within the Church some might judge wholly incompatible with such things. I confess, as well, to having made a tidy side-business of repairing statues owned by parish groups and individuals who commend their broken bodies to my care as one might entrust the frame of a cherished family to the hands of a physician. In this latter way, at least, I've been able to mimic the life's work of my paternal grandfather, an Italian-born church painter-decorator, at whose feet I was first introduced to the sculptural possibilities of chalkware, to the appellations unique to each figure in the Church's long canon of saints, and, generally, to a religious imagination beguiled by the very materiality of this world.

Michael E. DeSanctis, Ph.D., is a retired professor of fine arts and theology at Gannon University, Erie, Pennsylvania. He writes widely on the subject of sacred architecture and is the author of *Building from Belief: Advance, Retreat and Compromise in the Remaking of Catholic Church Architecture* (The Liturgical Press, 2002) and *Renewing the City of God: The Reform of Catholic Church Architecture in the United States* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1993).



As a young boy I played amidst great companies of saints stored in a back bedroom-studio of the duplex-style home where my own family occupied a flat directly above my grandparents'. On special occasions, I'd sleep there too, fearful always that in the darkness some eyeless figure of St. Lucy or, say, the looming presence of the Immaculate Heart might inch its way closer to my roll-away bed. The place was an "atelier" of a very special sort, part turpentine-scented operating room, part oratory, from which my grandfather's many Roman-collared customers came and went, bulky statues in hand, like the porters in some great, unending street procession. Those visitors appearing at the door empty-handed, usually left most quickly. On one occasion, for instance, an unsuspecting utility worker discovered half-concealed beneath a drop cloth in a dark corner of the house's basement what appeared to be the bruised and bloodied corpse of a man, possibly of Middle-Eastern extraction and thirty or thirty-five years of age, both feet of whom had been pinned to a length of wood by a single spike. Terrified by his discovery, the man fled from the scene and summoned the police. Only later did he learn that it was simply an over-sized crucifix awaiting my grandfather's attention he'd stumbled upon, the artful record of a gruesome crime, to be sure, but not one likely to gain *him* any notoriety.

"Devotion begets depiction," I like to say, when pushed to explain the Church's longstanding reliance on the work of painters, sculptors, and architects.

To a greater or lesser degree, *every* believer is bound to find something familiar and *familiar* in the images of the saints that remain fixtures in their homes and churches. However, in our electronic age, they're as likely to emanate from the screens of the PCs and smartphones that prevail in our culture as in the form of cast-plaster. The natural materials from which Catholic devotional objects and sacramentals were once fashioned — wood and metal, paper and felt, lengths of braded palm leaf — have been augmented by those possessing the glow and hum we've come to expect from every other part of our modern sphere of possessions. There's something "icon-producing" and probably laudable about this recent twist in Catholic devotional imagery, however, which is transforming the monitors of the machines we treat as essential windows on the world into nothing short of apertures onto the sacred.

The State of Statues

"Devotion begets depiction," I like to say, when pushed to explain the Church's longstanding reliance on the work of painters, sculptors, and architects. Prayer hardened into artistic form gains a sensual-aesthetic dimension that enlarges, enriches, and ultimately preserves its content. In the long tradition of Catholic image-making, one finds the "fossil record" of an organism that crawls, even slithers through its cultural surroundings as often as it strides through them. Some moments in the evolution of the Church's understanding of itself have brought forth artistic expression of the highest quality. Others are remembered as having produced only mediocrity, aridity, or some degradation of form that signals a malaise within the larger body of Christ. The devotional chalkware known to Catholics in this country is a relatively recent and minor addition to the Church's vast legacy of artistic achievement, of course. No mass-produced object, regardless its immediate attractiveness, enjoys the stature of one unique in conception and production to its maker. That American Catholics' love-affair with their statuary persists, however, suggests that it remains a legitimate aid to prayer — for some, even, a sustainer of belief itself amid life's abundant ugliness — and a source of middle-brow beauty unencumbered by interpretive theories and fancy theologizing.

Prayer hardened into artistic form gains a sensual-aesthetic dimension that enlarges, enriches, and ultimately preserves its content.

Certainly, the churches of Europe served as repositories of statues prior to Catholicism's arrival in this country. Yet, depending on their age and origins, these were usually one-of-a-kind objects carved by hand from stone or wood. In the U.S., where mass-produced furnishings for residential as well as ecclesiastical use became widely available by the mid-19th century, buildings erected by parish communities even of modest means came to be adorned with cast-plaster artworks of various kinds purchasable for a fraction of the cost of their hand-carved counterparts. The thrifty parish priest of the 1860s or 70s and his labor-class flock of Irish or German immigrant-Catholics could obtain a panoply of saints made of nothing but plaster of Paris and still boast of possessing a place of worship as handsomely appointed



as any they remembered from their homelands. Each statue ordered from such suppliers of Catholic goods as the Daprato Rigali Studios of Chicago, Milwaukee's Diederich Schaefer Company or W. and E. Schmidt Company, or numerous smaller businesses scattered throughout the country, reflected a kind of American ingenuity by putting catalogue-quality objects of veneration within reach of the average parish. Entire church buildings, in fact, could be constructed affordably from prefabricated structural components and standardized millwork, their sanctuaries decked out in cast-plaster surrogates for the saints, in a way that combined New World pragmatism with the Church's most ancient aspirations.

In the half-century since the Second Vatican Council, as part of the movement to redirect the attention of lay participants in sacred liturgy from what's sometimes denigrated as "statue worship" to the mysteries emanating from altar and ambo, many pastors have chosen to strip their churches of statuary altogether, or at least to reduce the number of sculpted objects that adorn their interiors. With recent advancements in large-screen digital projection technologies, wall-mounted Jumbotron screens similar to those first popularized in Evangelical churches have replaced the painted or photo-mechanically reproduced images of great holy men and women Catholics have traditionally been moved to venerate by touch as much as sight. Should the sanctuaries or ancillary spaces of buildings be adorned nowadays with three-dimensional depictions of the saints at all, these are apt to be made of vacuum-molded plastic of one kind or another as opposed to the more fragile plaster of Paris. Though far less breakable than their predecessors, they are generally less detailed, and not nearly as colorful. To call them "hand-painted" would be misleading. The truth is that the teams of skilled artisans once employed by manufacturers of Catholic devotional goods — men and women armed with the fine-tipped brushes and palettes full of the kinds of colors required of their craft — have been replaced by skilled airbrush artists who churn out statues with assembly line speed. Gone is the customary "color coding" of the saints with which artists in service to the Church once complied, more or less consistently. A likeness of St. Joseph, for example — a perennial favorite among Catholic and non-Catholic realtors alike for all the wrong reasons — can no longer be expected to feature the earth-toned robes and belts in brown or umber or burnt sienna that iconographic convention once prescribed for them. If the decorative base on which the saint stands is sprayed jet black with no hint of modelling, so likewise will be the lily-crowned staff he carries

along with his beard and hair — part of an “editing down” of colors that reduces for the sake of productivity the number of times finish artists are required to change out the color cups of their airbrushes. (Figures of St. Patrick offer a rare exception to this trend, it seems, as even believers least savvy about the art of the Church would regard a mantle or miter finished in anything but some shade of green an obvious mistake.)

That American Catholics’ love-affair with their statuary persists, however, suggests that it remains a legitimate aid to prayer — for some, even, a sustainer of belief itself amid life’s abundant ugliness — and a source of middle-brow beauty unencumbered by interpretive theories and fancy theologizing.

Looking Beneath the Plaster

American Catholics generally lament the “flattening out” of the physical setting for the Mass that has occurred in recent decades, a process resulting as much from changes in the way sacred buildings are actually constructed nowadays as from any of the Church’s official directives on sacred art and architecture promulgated in the wake of Vatican II. It may be argued that the place of Catholic worship has lost a measure of the three-dimensionality it historically possessed. The sturdy wall masses that defined the interior perimeters of older churches, thickened by base boards, wainscoting and crown molding — not to mention both floor and ceiling planes finished in masonry veneers — have given way to a cardboard-thin confection of drywall all around. What’s changed as well is the decorative treatment of the sanctuary, which, before Vatican II, was typically thrown into high relief by the assorted shapes within a sculptural backdrop meant to engage the eyes and silent intentions of the Chalkware Catholic consigned to the nave. Stripped of such objects, the sanctuary has regained its role as a place where the saving action of Christ alone, ritually enacted at altar, ambo, and chair, claims the exclusive attention of an assembly praying as one. Directives on the display of devotional objects in churches found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, in fact, insist that “their number not be increased indiscriminately” and that by their placement they not draw attention “to themselves and away from the [liturgical] celebration” (GIRM, 318). Pastors in the US



are likewise reminded by *Built of Living Stones*, the instruction on sacred art and architecture promulgated in 2000 by the then National Conference of Catholic Bishops, of the supremacy of *liturgical* prayer, corporate by nature, in the place of Catholic church building, which may necessitate that objects previously adorning the sanctuary be removed to some fitting “alcove” set aside for “statues or icons” (BLS, 136).

Pastors and parish liturgy committees with discerning eyes will likely find *many* alternative locations within a church that may house statues, and their presence need not offend those they serve who boast of possessing the most elevated sensibilities or a manner of worship that tends toward the cerebral. Even for the liturgical purist or the Catholic intellectual, the sculpted surrogate of a saint or some similar object can hold something of value. This may seem surprising in an age when pixels enjoy greater currency than plaster, that our thoroughly naturalized church in the U.S. might wish to disassociate itself from the “peasant art and piety” of its immigrant past. The external expressions of Chalkware Catholicism need not be seen as vitiating the work of liturgical renewal that parishes have undertaken over the last fifty years, however. Properly applied in our churches, statuary art can embody an element of “sacred objecthood” that underlies all Catholic sacramentality, from its highest to its lowest forms, along with what I’ve come to call “sacred mimesis.” To the objects of bread and wine-turned-divine flesh and blood, the Church lends its attention when engaged in its supreme act of prayer, the liturgy of the Eucharist. To objects that *emulate* flesh and blood through artful slight-of-hand, the Church turns when involved in the lesser prayer-form of devotion. In either case, the Church finds reflections of its true identity, invitations to delve even deeper into the mystery of its salvation, and reason to persist in believing that even the commonest of earthly matter can serve as an entrée to celestial realities.





EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Ongoing Renewal of the Eucharistic Liturgy

by John Zupez, SJ

What remains to be realized in the liturgical vision of the Mass implemented by the Second Vatican Council?

SOME CATHOLICS SPEAK OF THEIR REGRET AT NOT HAVING A SENSE OF GOD'S presence when they enter a modern Catholic church. There are churches in recent years that have been restored to recapture this feeling which Catholics had when entering a church decorated in the older, more ornate manner, with the main altar and tabernacle a central focus. A church in our diocese was recently restored to how it may have looked a century ago. The walls of the sanctuary were repainted in an ornate fashion. Thirty-five statues and eight paintings are displayed in the church, mainly as a backdrop for the main altar and the four side altars. The atmosphere is provocative of awe and mystery at the divine and is very conducive to private prayer.

In contrast to this, the basilica at the Benedictine abbey nearby was redone with the tabernacle in a separate chapel off to the side. The sanctuary is painted simply a light yellow and contains no statues, only a crucifix against the back wall. All this clearly distinguishes this space for public worship from a shrine which would be more conducive to private prayer.

Since the Second Vatican Council, churches have usually been constructed to place the focus on the community, which is "church." The word comes from the Greek *kurion* which means "the Lord's people": we are church. We are baptized to be ambassadors of God's love for the world, and the Eucharist is meant to constantly remind us of our calling as one body in Christ. Jesuit Father General Pedro Arrupe wrote:

The rediscovery of what might be called the "social dimension" of the Eucharist is of tremendous significance

John Zupez, SJ, has taught in seminaries and has written over 50 articles published in Catholic journals, mainly on the theology of St. Paul, the church's liturgy, and social justice. Now 83, he works in full-time prison ministry.



today. We once again see Holy Communion as the sacrament of brotherhood and unity. ...In the Eucharist, in other words, we receive not only Christ, the head of the body, but its members as well. ...Wherever there is suffering in the body, wherever members of it are in want or oppressed, we, because we have received the same body and are part of it, must be directly involved. We cannot opt out or say to a brother or sister: "I do not need you. I will not help you."¹

In this same vein, Hans Urs von Balthasar has said:

We must make every effort to arouse the sense of community within the liturgy ... enlarging the scope of prayer, so often narrow and selfish, to embrace the concerns of the whole Church and, indeed — as in the Our Father — of God. ...[This is] one of the conditions for the presence of the Eucharistic Lord: "Where two or three are gathered together ..." — that is, where individuals, in profound faith and obedience, desire to be and to realize the Church — "there I am in the midst of you."²

As Catholics come to understand what it means for Christ's presence to be more or less realized through the effort they put into this, they may be persuaded to sit together, at the front, close to the table of the Lord, the better to realize a community come to share their faith. There is an anomaly in the situation, easily perceived by the young, when we sit apart in our own space and come close to Catholics whom we don't know only for the brief moment of the "gesture of peace." Joining in the same pew with all our fellow Christians can embolden us to be more Christlike to all others outside of church. Homilies, the liturgical committee, and the pastor's column in the parish bulletin can lead us to give bolder expression to our oneness in Christ at the Eucharist.

Reflections Upon Some Liturgical Guidelines

Ressourcement, recapturing the spirit of the early Church Eucharist, was behind the liturgical changes of Vatican II. What early Christians celebrated in memory of Jesus was to be restored to its "noble simplicity" and forcefulness, free of distracting accretions. It has been said that it has often taken a century to implement a Church council, and that we are still only halfway to implementing the liturgical

renewal envisaged by many of the theologians at Vatican II.

A vibrant sharing among the congregation is facilitated by the priest facing the people and inviting them to take the active part to which they are called as one priestly people. There are also other ways in which a careful choice of options facilitates participation.

At the beginning of the Mass, although confessing our sinfulness is offered as an option, in the *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* Daniel Grigassy writes:

The penitential rite has been experienced in its various forms as a disturbance in the ritual flow of the liturgy, an afterthought between the greeting and gathering prayer. Many pastors and liturgists note this misplacement of the penitential rite. If the purpose of the introductory rites is to make the assembled people a unified community and to prepare them properly to listen to God's word and to celebrate the Eucharist ... why run the risk of individualizing members of the assembly in a penitential mode after they have gathered precisely as a worshipping community?³

The penitential rite, and also the "Lamb of God ... have mercy on us" before Communion, can convey the false notion that we make ourselves worthy by protestations of our sinfulness. We should rather see our imperfections as always remaining with us, with the love or true charity signified by the communion bread as the best remedy.

It has been said that it has often taken a century to implement a Church council, and that we are still only halfway to implementing the liturgical renewal envisaged by many of the theologians at Vatican II.

The "Lamb of God" accompanies the breaking of the bread, and the General Instruction of the Roman Missal directs that it be repeated only "as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion" (GIRM, 83). Often the priest has completed breaking the bread by the time the congregation has concluded the gesture of peace, and a spoken rather than sung "Lamb of God" is more than



sufficient. Also, the priest is ordinarily not to go to the tabernacle for hosts: "It is most desirable that the faithful ... receive the Lord's Body from hosts consecrated at the same Mass" (GIRM, 85). By focusing on the bread consecrated at this Eucharist, it is more clearly conveyed that this consecration signifies more deeply our own consecration, our own transformation into the body of Christ on earth. During the Eucharistic Prayer the priest never prays in his own name; it is always "we" who offer, "we" who celebrate. And it is "we" who need to spend some quiet time after communion listening to how God is calling us to speak and act so as to bring the face of Christ into our world today.

Pope Benedict called for amplification of the dismissal at Mass, to remind us that we are all disciples, sent forth to preach the good news of God's love by our lives. While there are places in the Mass where the priest is encouraged to personalize a transition, some would like to see this extended to the dismissal, where proposals have included those like the following based on one in the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* (1892, 1928) and taken largely from 1 Thessalonians 5:

Go forth in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good,
return no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted,
support the weak, help the suffering, respect all persons.
Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of God's
Spirit in you, and give thanks to God in all circumstances.⁴

If this is truly the spirit of our celebration together, then we will be further encouraged to present the face of Christ to the world as Pope Francis has done, and his popularity will become the Church's popularity.

United in Song

The ritual recommends that the communicants "by means of the unity of their voices ... highlight more clearly the 'communitarian' nature of the procession to receive Communion" (GIRM, 86). This leads to the question of how to enhance congregational singing. The chief task of the choir is to facilitate this congregational singing, not to introduce variety or enhance a narrowly defined theme for the particular Mass. As *Sacrosanctum concilium* affirms: "Fully conscious, and active participation ... is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, ... 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 (SC 14)."

Fostering this spirit needs to become our top priority if the Mass is to become again a serious force, cherished in the Christian life. For this it helps for the hymns to be well memorized, as is evident if the hymn is to be sung during the Communion procession. And the singing is *at least* marginally better when people know the song by heart. It also makes for better liturgy when the people are not reading from books but listening to the proclamation of the Word and conscious of others around them while they are united in song. To achieve more fulsome participation the ritual also allows for the people's use of *seasonal* responses to the responsorial psalm between the readings.

Early Christians huddled together to support one another in a hostile Roman empire. In our increasingly agnostic world, weighed down by individualism, we better realize the power of our faith if, as a believing community, we "lift up our hearts" together in song, in sincere gratitude to God, and in doing so do not fall prey to indifference to the sufferings of our neighbors, near and far. This gratitude leading to a lived response of service is the fruit of a well-celebrated Eucharist.

Conclusion

As long as we focus on what the priest is doing for us, we can remain passive, in mere attendance, and believe that we are achieving the fruits of the Mass. But when we accept that the effect of the Mass relates to our own disposition and depends vitally on our active participation, we see liturgy in a new light. We recognize that, as social beings, we can profit from others' faith-filled participation in the Mass, and that we owe them our full and active participation.

The Mass has always been the school of catechesis for our sisters and brothers in the Eastern and Orthodox Churches. A well-celebrated Eucharist can speak eloquently about our faith, surpassing even what can be achieved in religious education class. A principle stated in the Directory for Masses with Children is that at adult Masses with children present "it is necessary to take great care that the children present do not feel neglected."⁵ Just as important is the experience of the Mass that young people have as they grow up. Does the heartfelt sharing of the community in the Mass warm our hearts each week, so that we will become true witnesses before others of our gratitude for all our blessings and for Christ's promises?

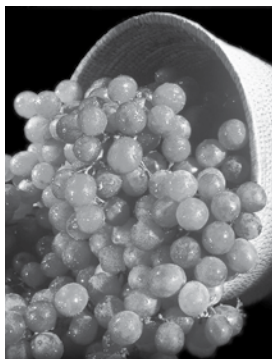


I have tried to imagine what our eucharistic celebration will look like in the future. I have assumed that solid historical and biblical studies will have a continuing influence on the Catholic Mass, even as they did at Vatican II. We will come to judge the effectiveness of our eucharistic celebration by the help it brings to future generations of Christians who wish to experience a genuine sense of community as they strive to present the face of Christ to the world.



Notes

- ¹ Pedro Arrupe, "Eucharist and Hunger," (1976)
https://jesuitportal.bc.edu/research/documents/1976_arrupeeucharist/, Accessed July 9, 2020.
- ² Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology: Spouse of the Word* (Book 2), San Francisco: Ignatius Press, (1991).
- ³ *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, edited by Peter Fink, SJ (New York, Michael Glazier, 1990).
- ⁴ See <https://acollectionofprayers.com/2016/08/01/go-forth-into-the-world/>. Accessed July 9, 2020
- ⁵ *Directorium de Missis cum Pueris* (*Directory for Masses with Children*), Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, November 1, 1973.



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Eymard Along the Journey: Eucharistic Reflections of Saint Peter Julian Eymard

by Jim Brown

November

THE FOUNDATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT of preparing young workers for first communion continued until the end of Father Eymard's life. The preparation of these children for communion and confirmation included several months of catechesis and a three-day retreat which Fr. Eymard typically led. In later years due to his many involvements, Fr. Eymard delegated the work to several of the Blessed Sacrament religious. Lay partners were involved in both the actual ministry and providing financial support.

A number of women, including a Madame d'Andigne, Mme. Fraguier and Mme. de Grandville were among the benefactors who supported Fr. Eymard and his lay associates, especially in providing food, clothing, and other material needs for these young people in need. Writing a thank you note to Mme. Fraguier in 1866, Fr. Eymard wrote about this work:

I don't know how to thank you . . . What a beautiful work to help every year in the first communion of 150 workers who otherwise would probably never do so . . . What then would we have? Miserable members of society, and indifferent Christians who have received only baptism! But once they make their first communion, they have a point of departure for salvation, a step taken towards Christian marriage, a powerful motive to return to God.

Jim Brown is the director of the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing in Cleveland, Ohio, and an Associate of the Blessed Sacrament. He has a Master of Arts degree in biblical studies.

December

December is historically a very important month in the life and legacy of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. In December of 1856, Father Eymard set up plans to inaugurate solemn adoration of the Blessed Sacrament



in the new chapel at the first house established in Paris. He wrote Marguerite Guillot on December 13:

On January 6, the feast of the Three Kings, the first day of the manifestations of our Lord, we shall have solemn exposition for the first time. How blessed is that day, so greatly desired! On that day, it seems to me our Lord will take possession of his family and of his house forever.

On December 5, 1910, a decree was declared to open the apostolic process for the canonization of Father Eymard. December 9, 1962, Pope John XXIII canonized Peter Julian Eymard at the end of the second session of the Second Vatican Council. Likewise it was in December of 1995 that Pope John Paul II inserted Saint Peter Julian Eymard's feast in the liturgical calendar of the universal Church, to be observed on August 2. The Holy Father wrote in the words of the decree:

Font and fullness of all evangelization and striking expression of the infinite love of our divine Redeemer for humankind, the holy Eucharist clearly marked the life and pastoral activity of Peter Julian Eymard. He truly deserves to be called an outstanding Apostle of the Eucharist. In fact, his mission in the Church consisted in promoting the centrality of the eucharistic mystery in the whole life of the Christian community.





PASTORAL LITURGY

The Revised *Order of Baptism of Children* – Part 3

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

WE CONTINUE OUR PASTORAL COMMENTARY ON THE SECOND EDITION OF THE *ORDER of Baptism of Children* [OBC]. We return to the ritual at the Liturgy of the Word. Interestingly, paragraph 44 mentions all are seated for the “Biblical Readings and Homily,” even though the readings given in OBC 44 are all gospels. These are the same readings as the first edition of OBC.

A somewhat confusing rubric is OBC 46. This mentions a Litany [of Saints]. It is actually sung after the Prayer of the Faithful. (It is surprising that with all the advocacy for common terminology, “Universal Prayers” is not the title for this section, as it is in the appendix.) A meaningful custom is to add to the Litany saints of particular importance to the local community and the patron saints of the children being baptized (OBC 273). The Litany ends with a new phrase, “All holy men and women, Saints of God, pray for us.” Many churches that have the space will process during the Litany to the font. This is not mentioned in OBC. Instead, OBC 52 mentions a procession after the exorcism. Since many ministers will omit the exorcism and “first” anointing, this is another example where many rubrics are written after the text is proclaimed or ritual performed.

The next piece, the Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism, may be omitted in the United States (OBC 51), but this rubric is *after* the text. OBC 51 says it is the celebrant who judges if it is a pastoral necessity. Since the required anointing of sacred Chrism is later in the ritual, and the majority of parents do not consider their newborn as needing an exorcism many ministers will omit this part of the ritual. Some theologians and liturgists wish that the oil of catechumens was administered with a similar prayer such as in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), or with only the words at OBC 51, “May the strength of Christ the Savior protect you; who lives and reigns for ever and ever.”

Blessed Sacrament
Father John Thomas Lane, SSS holds degrees in music, education and liturgy. He currently serves as pastor of his home parish, Saint Paschal Baylon Roman Catholic Church, Highland Heights, Ohio. He has also been a pastor in Houston & Albuquerque, vocation minister, and a diocesan director of liturgy. His works have been in numerous publications, including LTP. For questions or workshops he could do for your parish, contact him at jtlanesss@gmail.com or (440) 442-3410.

With the RCIA, the oil of catechumens takes place at the beginning of the process and is even repeatable. Perhaps for the third edition of the OBC, a parallel structure could be adapted from the RCIA and this anointing placed in the OBC at the “naming and signing with the cross.” Like the RCIA, earlier in the ritual would highlight the purpose of the anointing with the oil of catechumens rather than where it is currently in OBC. Some pastors and deacons feel that these two anointings are confusing and too close to each other in OBC. Likewise, some parents think the second anointing is confirmation. Regardless, while the catechumenal oil is optional, if placed differently in the rite, it might be an important piece to highlight and a key element within the sacramental process such as with the RCIA.

After the other rituals are complete, we move into the “Celebration of Baptism.” This continues with:

- A short prayer (two options)
- Blessing of Water and Invocation of God over the Water (if blessed during Easter Vigil, use the formula at 223-224.)
- Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith (with improved instructions)
- Baptism (with an improved wording to address the parents)
- Acclamation by the people (Blessed be God, who chose you in Christ)
- Explanatory Rites
 - o Anointing [with Sacred Chrism] after Baptism
 - o Clothing with a White Garment (and it must be white unless there is a local custom that demands something else – see OCB 63)
 - o Handing On of a Lighted Candle
 - o “Ephphatha” (quotes part of the ritual)
 - o Conclusion of the Rite: Baptized in Christ, you are clothed with Christ, alleluia, alleluia (or another optional song at OBC 225-245)
- [The appendix for Baptism within Mass mentions how the Offertory and other parts of the regular Sunday Mass continue.]
- LORD’S Prayer
- Blessing & Dismissal (mother, father and all present! -with other options at OBC 247-249)

Paragraph 71 has an interesting note about a custom I was unaware of – bringing the baptized infants to the altar [or shrine] of the Blessed Virgin

Mary while the “Magnificat” is sung. While not something many would be familiar with, this might be an excellent song to sing at the end of the OBC as a preparation for the faith/life journey ahead, where all our lives will magnify the LORD. Lastly, while we have stressed the first chapter of OBC and the “Order of Baptism for Several Children,” chapters 2 and 3 focus on “one child” and a “large number of children.” As in the first edition of OBC, the third chapter omits the “Ephphatha” rite, presumably as a time saving device since it is optional in chapters 1 and 2.

We will complete our pastoral review of the second edition of the OBC in our next column, examining chapters 4 thru the appendix.

Organizing for November/December 2020

Key: *Book of Blessings* (BB), *Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers* (CHBP), *Ceremonial of Bishops* (CB)

Regular celebrations during these months:

- **Monday, November 2: Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls)**
 - Visiting a Cemetery (BB 1734- 1754)
 - Visiting a Grave (CHBP)
- **Tuesday, November 3:** Election Day (USA) With all the challenges surrounding this day with the COVID-19 crisis, we pray for a peaceful, just and respectful election day.
- **Wednesday, November 11:** Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours, bishop. Veteran’s Day
- **Sunday, November 22 - Last Sunday of the Liturgical Year: Solemnity of Our LORD Jesus Christ, the King of the Universe:** Some choose to include the RCIA’s Rite of Acceptance into the Order of the Catechumenate during this liturgy.
- **Thursday, November 26: USA Thanksgiving** (votive Mass with special readings and prayers)
 - Blessing of Food (BB 1755-1780)
 - Prayer for Thanksgiving Day (CHBP)


- **Preparation for Advent** – Beginning a new church liturgical year – Sunday, November 29
 - Blessing of an Advent Wreath (BB 1509 – 1540; CHBP)
- **Tuesday, December 8:** Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- **Saturday, December 12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**
 - Patron of the Americas Prayer (CHBP)
- **December 13 – 3rd Sunday of Advent** – Bambinelli Blessing (of manger statues of baby Jesus)
 - Contact me for this customary blessing – practiced since 1969
- **December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent**
 - Blessing of Parents Before Childbirth (BB 225-228)
 - Blessing during Pregnancy (CHBP)
- **Friday, December 25 - Solemnity of the Nativity of our LORD:**
 - The Nativity of our LORD Jesus Christ from the *Roman Martyrology*, page 1293 *Roman Missal*, third edition
 - Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene (BB 1541 – 1569)
- **Sunday, December 27 – Feast of the Holy Family:** Blessing of the Family (BB 40-61)
 - Customary on the Feast of Saint John, apostle and evangelist, which is also this day, to celebrate the Blessing of Wine (BB 1781 – 1804)

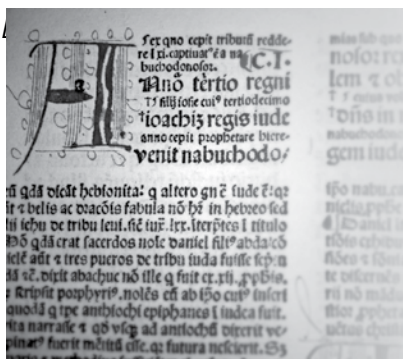
Use the *Lectionary Supplement* for the readings on the following days:

- Tuesday, November 24: Saint Andrew Dung-Lac
- Wednesday, November 25: Saint Catherine of Alexandra
- Wednesday, December 9: Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin

Other days and notes for our services:

- Wednesday, November 18: Optional Memorial of Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne, Religious and Missionary (sent to Saint Charles, MO)

- Sunday, November 29: Anniversary of the death of Dorothy Day
- Monday, November 30: Feast of Saint Andrew, Apostle and Patron of vocations
- Tuesday, December 1: World AIDS Day
- Wednesday, December 2: Anniversary of the death of El Salvador Missionaries Maura Clarke, MM, Ita Ford, MM, Dorothy Kazel, OSU, Jean Donovan, MM Lay Volunteer 



BREAKING THE WORD

Scriptural Reflections — Homiletics

by Sister Lisa Marie Belz, OSU

An Ursuline
Sister of
Cleveland, Ohio,
Sister Lisa Marie
Belz is assistant
professor of
Biblical Studies
at St. Mary
Seminary and
Graduate School
of Theology.

November 1, 2020
Solemnity of All Saints

**Revelation 7:2-4,9-14; Psalm 24:1b-4b,5-6; 1 John 3:1-3,
Matthew 5:1-12a**

"See what love the Father has bestowed on us!" Today's feast commemorates the happy memory of those who lived by *seeing*, those whose capacity for spiritual sight still today inspires in us a desire to see what they saw and to be transformed by it. And what did they see? Their eyes were fixed on the love of God, a love so powerful as to transform them — even as it transforms us — into God's own children.

What does it mean, for the saints, to live as a child of God? Fundamentally, as today's gospel reminds us, it means to be *happy*. Although the Greek word used in this gospel passage, taken from the opening of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, is "makarios," translated here as "blessed," its basic meaning has to do with the happiness that comes from knowing oneself to be most fortunate, even privileged, or enjoying a special advantage. In fact, the word "blessed" is related to the word "bliss," which offers insight into the word "makarios." The blessed are those who possess "bliss," a sort of "transcendent joy" which comes only from God.

Of course, what today's gospel tells us makes for bliss is counter-intuitive: poverty of spirit. Here "poverty of spirit" is knowing oneself to be entirely dependent on God's grace at work in one's life rather than one's own goodness. It means to possess a compassion born of grief, so as to bring about positive change; being "praus" (translated as "meek," but with the meaning of "gentle," "kind-hearted," "considerate"), rather

than domineering or dominating. Poverty of spirit connotes being so hungry and so thirsty for justice as to roll up one's sleeves and work for a better world; tempering justice with the depth of compassion that sees another in all his or her brokenness and need for healing love; doing the hard work of guarding one's heart from anything not grounded in God's love (the recompense for which is the added bliss of being able to "see God"). Poverty of spirit means working for genuine peace and reconciliation, which makes us recognizable as God's children.

Especially happy, Jesus insists, are those who experience opposition, even persecution, for choosing to live by his kingdom values, as these are further described in the Sermon on the Mount. Happiness, apparently, isn't something outside of ourselves, something we experience when everything is going our way. On the contrary, for Jesus, happiness is an "inside job." As the saints themselves learned, expending the efforts to live by Jesus's teachings capacitates us, even in this life, for the deep joy of the gospel, a joy undiminished by opposition or resistance.

Is Jesus's idea of happiness something beyond the reach of most, accessible to only a few saintly elite? Not at all; all of us are created with a capacity for gospel joy. In fact, today's first reading tells us that the saints compose "a great multitude, which no one can count." The number one hundred and forty-four thousand of those "marked with the seal" is symbolic, representing $12 \times 12 \times 1000$. Twelve represents Israel's twelve tribes; multiplying 12 by 12 represents a fullness beyond measure, while 1000 signifies completeness. Thus, "144,000" signals the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to Israel in the "kingdom of our God and the authority of his anointed" (Rev 12:10). Yet Israel is not the only possessor of the kingdom of God; the "great multitude which no one could count" is universally inclusive, composed from "every nation, race, people, and tongue."

Today's first reading reminds us that the saints are not saints because they are "perfect." On the contrary, the saints are those who have "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This to say that they acknowledge Jesus alone as their holiness; they claim no holiness for themselves. For this reason, the saints are those who know where to find well-being and wholeness, what is meant by "salvation." The saints are those who know that Christ alone makes us whole, Christ alone fills us with joy.

November 8, 2020
Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Wisdom 6:12-16; Psalm 63:2-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;
Matthew 25:1-13**

Each November, the final month of the liturgical year, the Church offers a number of sobering scriptural reflections on the “last things,” i.e., the reality of the ephemeral nature of our lives, the fact that we are only here for a limited time, and our expectation, as Christians, of Christ’s return. These annual eschatological reflections offer an opportunity to consider very seriously how we, in reality, are living our lives now, how we should be living our lives, and how best to use whatever time we still have left.

In other words, our lives do indeed have an end point. Yet this thought, for those with faith, should not be cause for despair, as our second reading reminds us. On the contrary, we are people of hope, a hope grounded in the reality of Jesus’s resurrection. Jesus shares his risen life with us. We have access to this throughout our lives through Word and Sacrament, and in the love we give to one another. As Paul, in today’s second reading, reflects on the reality of Jesus’ resurrection, he observes that its effects are not just for Jesus alone at some previous point in time. Quite the contrary, the resurrection of Jesus has a profound ripple effect across time and space, touching Paul and his communities a generation after the first Easter, even as it has touched countless lives ever since. It touches us today as we gather to hear the word and to share Eucharist with each other. And it will continue to touch others after us, until it comes to its fulfillment, known only to the heart of God. As Paul reflects in another passage, “eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, nor has it entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). What we can say for sure is that we shall be with the Lord and this gives us reason to console one another (1 Thess. 4:17-18).

As we reflect on today’s three readings together, we are told that true wisdom consists of combining a sober awareness of life’s finitude with the hopeful, even joyful, expectation of the Lord’s return, a return in the fullness of his Kingdom. Today’s gospel describes Jesus’s return in terms of a wedding feast. Why? A wedding feast is an occasion of

great joy. In Jesus's world, wedding feasts would last for days. Then, as now, there would be plenty to eat and drink, with lively music and exuberant dancing. It's also the occasion of a joyous reunion with friends and relatives not seen for a while. Everyone rejoices in the love of the bride and groom. And the wedding feast marks an occasion of profound change in the lives of the bride and groom, a new and joyful beginning.

At the wedding feast of Christ's return, we, his Church, the members of his body, are the bride and he is the groom (Eph. 5:21-27). In fact, as today's psalm reminds us, our souls thirst for him; our deepest selves pine for him. For those who love him, his return is an occasion of great joy. The wise and foolish bridesmaids (which is the context for the "virgins" of today's gospel) offer a practical lesson in what true wisdom requires: to keep our lamps always lit in joyful expectation; never to allow our "oil" (our life grounded in the love of Christ risen — our source of light, love and joy) to run out. Because of the love of the risen Christ for each one of us, the fact that our life has an end point should not then be a cause for unhappiness, fear or dread; on the contrary, the truly wise seek to live their lives grounded in Christ's love. Then, when life comes to its end, as each life does, that love continues and deepens into the enjoyment of Christ's never-ending wedding feast.

November 15, 2020 Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Proverbs 31:10-13,19-20,30-31; Psalm 128:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30

This Sunday's readings offer additional insights for the Church's eschatological reflections as the liturgical year draws nearer to its close. As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we are reminded that we are "not of the night or of darkness," but "children of the light and children of the day." Yet what does it mean to be "children of the light"?

Notice how this week's readings abound with images from daily life: the work that a wise woman does as she lovingly provides for her family (Prov. 31); a thriving family gathered at table to share a meal (Psalm 128); the rewards of wise investments (Mt 25:14-30). How do these images help us to understand our call today to be "children of

the light and children of the day?”

First of all, these readings applaud and affirm the goodness of the daily, the great gift and extraordinary beauty of ordinary life. For example, in this scriptural context, while a woman's work may go unnoticed and underappreciated by many, Proverbs 31 warmly applauds all that a wise wife and mother does to provide for, nurture and tenderly care for her husband and family. And she has a heart for the poor, sharing with those in need. Proverbs lauds a God-fearing woman as a true treasure, more precious than fine pearls! The wise husband notices with gratitude and appreciation his wife's hard work on behalf of the family's well-being. He saves his heart for her alone. Today's psalm gives similar attention to the importance of a God-fearing husband and father whose loving care causes his wife and children to thrive, with God's help. His handiwork, nothing less than the well-being of his family, is applauded by the psalmist in the same way as the work of the wise woman of Proverbs 31.

In the light of the transitory nature of our lives, today's scriptures invite us to reflect on what is most worth our investment of time, resources, and love. When we think of important work, even great work, we may not think of the work we do at home, or what we do with and for our family. Yet Scripture reminds us that what we do to help our family thrive and grow is not only important, in fact, it's the greatest work we can do. It's God's work. It's holy work. It requires the investment of our lifetime, all our best resources, all our heart's love. Just because it's what we do every day doesn't make it less extraordinary. In fact, the hard work required to preserve and nurture a mutually faithful and loving marriage is quite extraordinary; so, too, is the hard work required to raise children who thrive. But the hard work pays off in great dividends. As today's gospel reminds us, whatever we invest in the gifts God gives us, we will draw out in rich rewards. No investment in those relationships that matter most in life will go without some corresponding compensation. At the same time, today's gospel also offers a warning: If, like the "useless servant," we fail to invest in the gifts God gives us, not recognizing what we can accomplish when we invite God's help, our compensation will be only "wailing and gnashing of teeth"—the deep regret and sadness at opportunities lost for love, joy, and growth.

As today's second reading reminds us, nothing lasts forever. That makes whatever time we are given to nurture those special relationships in

our life and to delight in them even more precious. To be “children of light and children of day” is to recognize, not only the costs — the struggles and hard work of growing relationships and raising a family — but also the joys. And the wisest and brightest among us are those who treasure each “ordinary” moment of life in all its extraordinary beauty, because they know that everything is given but for a time, a passing, fleeting moment, and all is gift.

November 22, 2020
The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universe

**Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17; Psalm 23:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26,
28; Matthew 25:31-46**

Today’s feast of Christ the King, placed at the conclusion of the Church year, invites us to ponder some weighty questions. Our answers to these questions have an impact not only on this lifetime but in the life to come. The first question is: To whom do we belong? As baptized Christians, we might be tempted to offer an easy answer: we belong to Christ, of course! But notice the criteria that Christ uses to recognize those who belong to him. He doesn’t mention any of the things we might naturally suppose, such as being religious or devout, being prayerful, faith-filled, holding to correct Church doctrine, or even going to church (as important as these can be for forming us spiritually). Instead, to belong to Christ requires just one thing: to respond. To respond with care. To respond by showing up. To respond with compassion to human need, and in such a way as to make a positive difference in the life of someone else. Also notice the ones with whom Christ most identifies. Again, it’s not the deeply religious, devout, prayerful or doctrinally-correct. It’s “the least” of his brothers and sisters, the lost, the ones on the margins, the incarcerated, the immigrant (the Greek word is “zenos,” which means “foreigner,” “non-citizen”). By virtue of his profound solidarity with them, they belong to Christ, and the care or neglect we give to them we give to Christ.

This special feast offers a second weighty question related to the first: Where do we claim our citizenship? Clearly, this gospel is not talking about citizenship in terms of nationality or ethnicity. Instead, the citizenship in view here is of a much more universal character: it

is a citizenship of compassion. It is one which not only recognizes a need but is also *moved to action*: “I was hungry *and you gave me to eat*; thirsty *and you gave me to drink*, an immigrant *and you welcomed me*, naked *and you clothed me*, ill *and you cared for me*, in prison *and you came for me*.” To appreciate its significance, count the number of times in this passage that this list is repeated (four!). In Christ’s kingdom, only those who use their resources and time for acts of compassion are true citizens. And while this kingdom has been prepared for all since “the foundation of the world,” it is forced on no one: only those who exercise an active compassion are recognized as true citizens of the kingdom of God.

Lest we imagine that the benefits of citizenship in Christ’s kingdom are to be enjoyed only in the hereafter, today’s psalm reminds us that, in a very real sense, Christ’s kingdom is already available for us to make real here in our lifetime. “The Lord is my shepherd — there is nothing that I lack.” In Hebrew, the verb “lack” is in a grammatical tense that indicates something ongoing in the past that continues into the present and the future. Thus, we could translate it as: “there is nothing that I have ever lacked, or am lacking now, or will ever lack.” And this is true no matter how dark things get for us: “though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, because you are with me, your rod and your staff give me comfort” (v. 4). With this sense of the Good Shepherd’s presence — no matter what — the psalmist can confidently proclaim that “surely, goodness and steadfast love (the Hebrew word here is ‘chesed,’ or ‘steadfast love’) pursue me (more than merely ‘follow,’ the Hebrew verb has the meaning of ‘hotly pursue,’ or not letting up in intense pursuit) *all* the days of my life.” Responding to others with loving care opens us to joy: the joy of living in our Father’s house (v. 6; Jn. 14:2) and belonging to Christ as citizens of his kingdom — all the days of our life.

November 29, 2020 First Sunday of Advent

***Isaiah 63:16b-17, 19b; 64:2-7; Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; 1
Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:33-37***

The word “advent,” derived from the Latin “adventus,” means “coming,” or “arrival.” It translates the Greek word “parousia,” referring to the official visit of an emperor or king. Such a special occasion required weeks of

clean-up and restoration beforehand so that all would be beautiful for his arrival. He would be welcomed with joyful festivities. Coins were minted to mark the occasion and, in some places, local calendars were recalculated so that the ruler's visit was seen as initiating a new and positive era in the history of the city or region visited.

In a similar way, "parousia" is used in the New Testament in reference to Jesus's second coming. For early Christians, more than the official visit of any earthly ruler, Jesus's parousia was yearned for with joyful expectation. Not knowing "the day nor the hour" of Christ's return, to prepare for it demanded ongoing conversion and renewal, the work of a lifetime. In time, the season of Advent developed as a way to prepare spiritually for Christmas, which, of course, is not only the joyful commemoration of the first "parousia," or "advent," of the Prince of Peace, but also the glad anticipation of Christ's second coming as the King of kings. Since at least the Middle Ages, Christians have viewed Advent as a time of preparation for the *three* comings of Christ: his coming as the word-made-flesh born in Bethlehem, his coming at the end of time, and his coming again within time — into the hearts of those who welcome and receive him.

As we begin, once more, this season of spiritual preparation for these three different comings of Christ, we might ask, what difference does Jesus's coming make for us? The image of the vine in today's psalm points to an answer. Just as a vine needs the sun in order to thrive and grow, so we need the light and warmth of God's presence, made real to us by the Son. "Lord, make us turn to you" — like a plant that turns toward the sun, its source of light and life — "let us see your face and we shall be saved" (Ps 80:4). In Hebrew, the verb used is "haer," literally, "to cause to shine": "let your face *shine* upon us!" For biblical writers, "face" connotes presence. To see God's face is to be in God's presence. When God's face shines on us, we are enfolded in the light and warmth of God's presence like a vine reveling in the sunshine. And in the same way that a vine cannot live without the sun's light and warmth, we cannot live without the light and warmth of God's presence.

The prophet Isaiah in today's first reading describes what we are like when we do not seek God's presence: "all our good deeds are like polluted rags; we have all withered like leaves, and our guilt carries us away, like the wind" (Is 64:6). On the other hand, Paul describes what we are like when touched by "the grace of God bestowed on us in Christ Jesus": we are "enriched in every way, . . . lacking no spiritual

gift” as we “await the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:5,7). What is more, we are “called to fellowship with the Son” (v. 9). The word “fellowship,” in Greek “*koinonia*,” means “communion.” We are called to *communion* with the Son. It’s worth noting that Paul is writing, not to an individual, but to a community. The communion that we share with the Son always brings us into a greater capacity for community, for communion with others. Only by living in this communion do we thrive and grow, both individually and as church, as the vine thrives and grows in the sun.

When Jesus comes again, will he find us awake and alert to his presence? Will he find us living in communion with him and each other? May Christ not come suddenly and find us sleeping!

December 6, 2020 Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; Psalm 85:9-14; 2 Peter 3:8-14; Mark 1:1-8

“But according to God’s promise, we await new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pt 3:13). Taking the long view of history, 2 Peter invites us to reflect on the transitory nature of our world. Nothing that we see around us will last forever. We are time-bound creatures limited to this particular place and time in the history of the world. The Creator alone, for whom “one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day,” is beyond time and space. With the reminder that we are here but for a brief moment in time, 2 Peter asks us to consider what matters most. What is most worth our energy, our efforts, our time, our love — for this all too fleeting time that we are here?

Anticipating God’s promise in the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” John the Baptist called the people of his time to a baptism of “repentance” (Mk 1:4), what in Greek is “*metanoia*,” i.e., a change of heart, a change of attitude, a change in the way one perceives reality, a change in the way one lives in order to receive God’s promise. John does this at the Jordan, the spot where Joshua and the Israelites crossed into the promised land (Joshua 3) as a free people, leaving behind slavery and years of wandering to receive the promise God first gave to Abraham (Gen 12:7; 13:15; 17:8). Thus, for John, “*metanoia*” also meant returning

to one's spiritual roots as the way to receive God's promise.

John's hearers had no way of knowing then that within just a few decades their world would be gone forever, the result of Judean infighting followed by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Matthew and Luke preserve Jesus's grief at what awaited a Jerusalem that chose violence over *metanoia* (Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34). Mark, writing shortly after the sad events of 70 AD, composes his gospel with those events in view. He also writes for Christians traumatized by Nero's recent brutal persecution of Christians in Rome. Mark knew what it was to live in a world that was crumbling all around him, and he had no idea what was coming next — except that God's promise could be trusted. A Jew who embraced Jesus as the Messiah, Mark could not have imagined as he wrote his gospel that, despite the odds, Judaism would eventually emerge stronger and in a much different form — because God keeps God's promises. Nor could Mark have seen that the fledgling Jesus movement, so maligned and under attack, would ultimately grow to be *the* religion of the Roman empire and, in time, shape the course of Western civilization.

In other words, while all else passes away, God remains, and so, too, does God's promise. Nonetheless, Isaiah urges us to do our part to receive it, even to become vehicles of God's promise, being ourselves the "good news" that we announce. And the prophet challenges us to remove any obstacles in the way of God's *good* news. This Advent, what mountains of resistance do we need to remove in ourselves? What are the low areas, the gaps and dips and valleys, that we have neglected and need to fill? Who needs glad tidings from us the most? How are we a source of comfort to those who live and work with us? Would they consider us "good news" or bad?

Our readings this Sunday ask us to engage the hard work of growth, of *metanoia*, while there is still time, so that, when Jesus comes, we might be "found without spot or blemish before him, at peace" (2 Pt 3:14). In this way, even as we await the complete fulfillment of God's promise of a "new heavens and a new earth" in an eschaton beyond human imagining, we ourselves become a means by which God's promise touches humanity in time and space as it seeks to incarnate in our own time, our own place.

December 13, 2020 Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-2a, 10-11; Luke 1:46-50, 53-54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Third Sunday of Advent, known as “Gaudete Sunday” (from the Latin for “rejoice!”), calls us to live in joy in view of the nearness of the Lord’s coming. Today’s readings emphasize the importance of joy. In fact, being joyful isn’t something merely encouraged or suggested; for a Christian, joyfulness is a way of life: “Rejoice *always*!” But what does it mean to “rejoice”? And how do we “rejoice always”?

It’s helpful to begin by considering what gives us joy. Does our joy come from within or from some external stimulus? Is it dependent on our mood, the weather, other people, what they do for us or what they give us? Any joy that relies on something outside of ourselves is temporary; it lasts only as long as the stimulus. In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul offers a list of practices for cultivating lasting Christian joy. A few verses before today’s passage, Paul begins by urging his readers to “encourage one another and build one another up” (1 Thess 5:11). Did you ever notice how much better it feels to build someone up, to offer a kind word instead of criticism and complaint? Further on, Paul goes on to insist that “no one return evil for evil” (v. 15). It doesn’t matter whatever harm someone does to us; ultimately, joy — at least the kind of joy that lasts — comes from refusing to enter into a downward spiral of toxic emotions, such as resentment, revenge, or bitterness. These take joy away from us. Instead, we must “*always* seek what is good for each other and for all” (v. 15). *Always* seeking the common good, rather than what we ourselves might desire or prefer, becomes a habit, the kind that predisposes us to joy. Clearly, the joy that Paul talks about is beyond mere moods or whims. To “rejoice always” will require something from us. It will require embracing the hard work and discipline of learning to respond rightly and kindly, in a mutually beneficial way, promoting the good of all, rather than indulging in petty grievances and resentments — which only serve to kill our joy.

So how do we attain the depth of joy that Saint Paul writes about in today’s reading? He counsels us to “pray without ceasing,” and to “give thanks in all circumstances.” Notice the correlation between

"rejoicing always," "praying without ceasing," and "giving thanks in all circumstances." As we grow in our capacity for prayer, there is a corresponding growth in our capacity for gratitude, for viewing *all* as grace and gift, even life's adversities. And as our gratitude deepens, so, too, does our joy. Mary knew this as she sang her "Magnificat." Notice how her song of joyful praise arises from a grateful heart. Mary's joy is grounded in her grateful contemplation of what God has done in her and for her. For Mary, prayer means being "hungry" for God, while joy comes from opening ourselves to God in such a way that God alone fills our heart's deepest hungers, as only God can. God "has filled the hungry with good things." Meanwhile, the rich — those who fill themselves on what is less than God — are sent away empty. The prophet Isaiah's joyful song of praise in the first reading parallels Mary's: "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul." Isaiah exemplifies the joy that comes from serving others, especially the poor: "bringing glad tidings to the poor," "healing the brokenhearted," "setting captives free."

Ultimately, our joy is not for ourselves alone. Instead, it becomes the most convincing and compelling means by which, like John the Baptist, we bear witness to the light of Christ. This Advent, may we embrace the disciplines of prayer, gratitude, kindness and loving service which together deepen our capacity for lasting joy. The world needs our joy. Most of all, the world needs our joyful witness to the light that is Christ.

December 20, 2020 Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Psalm 89:2-5, 27, 29; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

The scriptures for this fourth Sunday of Advent invite our reflection on the kind of home God desires to make in us. Today's first reading describes David's desire to build a "house," that is, a temple, for God: "I dwell in a house of cedar, while the ark of God dwells in a tent!" First appearing in Exodus 25, the ark of God represented God's abiding presence with Israel from Sinai into the promised land. It housed the two stone tablets upon which were written the ten commandments and a golden jar containing manna (Heb 9:4), the "bread from heaven"

that sustained Israel through forty years of desert wanderings. From the beginning, the ark was housed in a special tent, or “tabernacle,” so that it could be a mobile reminder to Israel that God was with them wherever they went. In his time, David brings the ark to Jerusalem, where it remains housed in a tent. But David is uncomfortable with giving God just a tent; he wants to build a “house” for God. In response, God, who is never outdone in generosity, promises to build a “house” for David in the form of an eternal dynasty: “Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever” (2 Sam 7:16).

Yet after David, Israel’s history is a troubled one. Yes, Solomon, David’s son, will build a temple for God, but he will also build, in Israelite territory, temples to the pagan gods of his foreign wives. After Solomon’s death, Israel is divided by civil war; most of David’s heirs have troubled relationships with prophets, and things spiral down until eventually Jerusalem is destroyed in 586 BC and its people taken captive. Never again does a descendant of David rule over Israel. Nonetheless, despite the obstacles and twists and turns in Israel’s history, Luke’s Gospel today describes how God’s promise finds fulfillment in a way no one would have ever suspected, least of all the young Mary, perplexed as she is by the angel’s greeting.

Read together, today’s scriptures point to something more than building physical houses or royal dynasties — even as Luke’s Gospel today assures us that God does indeed keep his promises to David, albeit in a way beyond human imagining. On a deeper level, today’s scriptures speak about God’s profound desire for intimacy with us, for a home among us, even for a home within us. Just as with Israel, our flaws and sins are no obstacle to the One for whom “nothing is impossible” (Lk 1:37); on the contrary, God will use all of these in the work of construction and renovation. As C.S. Lewis once observed,

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the

one you thought of — throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”¹

To allow God to build God’s home in us, we have only to look to the young Mary. She shows us all that is needed: a simple, sincere “yes,” an open heart, a willingness to trust God and God’s word.

December 25, 2020 The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25. During the Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98:1-6; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1-18

What is the greatest gift that any of us can possibly give? To answer that question, it helps to consider who or what we love the most. Whom do we love the most and what do we give them? If your answer is something material, something that can fade, rust or wear out, or become lost or stolen, or outgrown, then you’re not thinking of the very best that you can give, even if in material terms it’s very costly. Instead, to think of the best thing you could possibly give, consider what you love the most. That which you love the most is what you give the most of yourself to. It’s where you put your greatest resources and the bulk of your energy, time, and focused attention. In other words, we give ourselves over to what we love. We give *ourselves*. Or to put it another way, the greatest gift we can ever give is the gift of self, the gift, not of *presents*, but of *presence*.

And this is what we celebrate at Christmas: God’s own total gift of self, the greatest gift God has to give us. This is the gift of the lover to the beloved, the groom to his cherished bride: “As a young man marries a virgin, your builder shall marry you; and as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so shall your God rejoice in you” (Is 62:5). God’s total gift of self is given in complete solidarity with the human condition, meeting us where we are, accompanying us throughout our life’s journey: “And the Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). John uses the verb “skenoō,” literally, “to spread a tent,” to “camp

out": "The Word was made flesh and *camped out* among us." John is here alluding to the "mishkan," the tent of God's mobile presence with God's people "in all the stages of their journey" (Ex 40:38) during their desert wanderings and after (Ex 25ff; Num 9:15; 2 Sam 7:6; 1 Ch 6:17). Now, in the word-made-flesh, God's presence is given in a fresh way, and not for Israel alone, but for all those who embrace the "true light, which enlightens everyone" (Jn 1:9).

To be sure, this gift comes in very humble wrappings, and is thus easy to miss. Notice how when God gives Godself to us, God takes the least place among us, entering into our world as a homeless child with only an animal feeding-box for a crib. God comes as a poor person to the poor, a humble person to the humble, a little one to the little ones. Perhaps this is why the angel's announcement is directed to the shepherds. They are the ones who rush to receive God's total gift of self, given humbly but with great love: "So they went in haste and found the infant lying in the manger" (Lk 2:16). They are the ones who share the good news of God's coming among us in a way that is accessible and available to all: "They made known the message that had been told them about this child" (Lk 2:17). If we can be a little more like the shepherds, we'll have a better chance of not missing out on the greatest gift of all.

Of course, not everyone accepts the gift: "He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own did not accept him" (Jn 1:11). Nonetheless, the gift remains: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn 1:5). The gift remains because God's love is unconditional, always waiting for us, always inviting, always desiring to fill us: "From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (Jn 1:16).

This Christmas be attentive to receiving and giving the greatest gift of all, the gift that comes in ordinary, even humble wrappings, but given unconditionally and with total love.

December 27, 2020
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or Genesis 15:1–6, 21:1–3; Psalm 128:1–5

or Psalm 105:1–9; Colossians 3:12–21 or Colossians 3:12–17 or Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19; Luke 2:22–40 or Luke 2:22, 39–40


What makes a family happy? It's easy to fall into the illusion that happiness can be found in bigger houses in better neighborhoods, special travel, Disney vacations, expensive gifts, or home entertainment centers. These things, however, don't provide happiness in and of themselves. The truth is, happiness doesn't have a price tag on it and isn't for sale. Although this seems counterintuitive, genuine happiness, thankfully, is free and doesn't cost any money. That said, raising a happy, thriving, holy family does require something from us. There is a personal cost involved. What insights do today's scriptures offer families about how to be happy?

Although the Church provides different options for scripture readings today, together they point to a number of traits of a happy family, of which we will focus on four: 1) faith — including active participation in a community of faith; 2) prayer together as family; 3) proper attention to growing quality family relationships; 4) a grateful openness to the joys of family life. Today's gospel offers a "snapshot" of the Holy Family's faith and prayer together, and how these enrich their ordinary life at Nazareth. Joseph and Mary actively participate in the temple prayer and liturgy as faithful, Torah-observant Jews who make beautiful connections with Simeon and Anna, other faith-filled people who offer them loving, caring Godly support. Joseph and Mary's own faith and prayer would have been buoyed by that of Simeon and Anna. The child Jesus also benefits from the faith and prayer of his parents, who provide a loving, faith-filled home for him to "grow and become strong, filled with wisdom, with God's favor" (Lk 2:40).

Colossians 3:12-18 offers a list of important family virtues necessary for growing quality family relationships. A healthy and happy family life is a great grace; so, too, is a healthy marriage. But these must be worked at; they don't come from nowhere. So, too, must the virtues that sustain them have to be worked at, practiced, cultivated, developed. It's worth remembering that virtues don't simply spring from somewhere deep inside us, as if they were natural to us or had a source in ourselves. Their source is in God, and so we have to ask God for these family virtues. Only with prayer and much effort can virtues grow in us. The prayer that Colossians recommends is to "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus," in other words, to cultivate a sense of Christ's presence in ordinary family life. Some days we fall short; those are the days

we have to “bear with one another and forgive one another”; other days, we do better. The important thing is to keep trying and never to give up. Notice Colossians’ emphasis on gratitude, mentioning it twice. This is to say that it’s important not to overlook the ordinary joys of family life but, instead, to be attentive and grateful for them.

Of special note to preachers:

Colossians 3:18-21 should be read and preached alongside their parallel in Ephesians 5:21-33, which develops a wife’s subordination in Col 3:18 into the mutual subordination of husband and wife in Eph 5:21, in conformity with Galatians 5:13: “For the sake of love, be slaves to one another.” The subordination in view in Ephesians is primarily a subordination to Christ (v. 21). However, the subordination to Christ is expressed through the mutual subordination of the members of his body. Thus, husband and wife, equally members of the Body of Christ, show each other mutual subordination. Also, in Col 3:21, the word “fathers,” in Greek “pateres,” should be read as “parents” (which is how the same word is translated in Heb 11:23): “*Parents*, do not provoke your children, so they may not become discouraged.” 

Notes

¹ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, New York: Touchstone, 1996, p. 176. For the insights into 1 Samuel 7, particularly the link between 1 Samuel 7 and this passage from C.S. Lewis, I am indebted to my student, David Verbsky.



EUCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •
Poetry • Books

Grandmothers, mothers and children, we are all somehow connected within that web of relationships. Christian art and theology may have been slow to embrace this basic reality, concerned as it was for centuries with Christological distinctions and controversies. It seemed that icon representations of Christ depicting his divine and human natures, or Christ as Pantocrator — judge and ruler of the universe — were commonplace. The thirst was for the divine and the exulted. Mary too was given theological and aesthetic grandeur, as Theotokos — the God bearer — with her image raised high into the upper dome of churches and basilicas. These images no doubt have their historical importance as well as theological merit. But when we encounter Duccio's famous Madonna and Child from 1300 Italy, where the Christ child held by his mother Mary, still surrounded in the gold-leaf of an icon, breaks with convention and reaches out to touch his mother's veil, we glimpse something new and something as old as humanity itself. We glimpse a very simple and relatable human gesture of a mother and her child.

Some historians see these types of details as the beginnings of the Italian Renaissance with its penchant for humanism, the full flowering of which can be seen in Leonardo Da Vinci's *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and Saint John the Baptist*. Here we see a family, formal in its visual composition, but at the same time not unlike a scene we might observe in our own family gatherings. Leonardo's preparatory drawing for this painting, known as *The Burlington Cartoon*, with its focus more upon the manner in which the figures are relating to each other rather than the setting makes this subject all the more relatable.

How often have you seen a mother sit closely to her daughter and her daughter's newborn child at a family reunion or Christmas gathering? The newborn baby draws the attention of young cousins and toddlers. It's a delightful scene which loses nothing for being commonplace.

Art Review



THE
BURLINGTON
HOUSE
CARTOON - THE
VIRGIN AND
CHILD WITH
SAINT ANNE AND
SAINT JOHN THE
BAPTIST
Leonardo Da Vinci
c. 1500
charcoal on paper

John Christman,
SSS

Here Leonardo, like in Michelangelo's famous Pieta, pictures a mother with her adult child on her lap. Saint Anne conveys strength and wisdom as a new grandmother, her daughter Mary seated upon her knee. For her part, Mary supports her child as he reaches out to his curious cousin, John. It's a beautiful moment, captured in time almost like a snapshot, and kept alive and fresh with the energy of Leonardo's line. It's lovely to observe how Leonardo's lines are at times searching and elsewhere as natural as the drapery he depicts.

For those seeking Christological distinctions in such a family portrait, Leonardo offers some symbolic gestures. Saint Anne points to the heavens, and in a sense, to the author of all things, as she gazes with a smile upon her daughter. Jesus reaches out to John the Baptist, his hand raised in the gesture of a blessing. Christian symbols are there to be seen and they create a deeper meaning and context. But there is also the unfolding human drama, a journey from childhood, to adulthood, to maturity and wisdom; all portrayed in an atmosphere of love and belonging.

Belonging is so important. We can feel adrift or lost in the world without a sense of belonging; belonging to a community, belonging within a faith tradition, belonging to a family. We seek this sense of belonging, so evident in Leonardo's drawing... woven together from grandparent, to parent, to child. Of course, we cannot forget, belonging begins first and foremost within the loving embrace of God. With God we always belong. What's beautiful about the incarnation, about Jesus' birth within the human family, is that God chooses *mutual* belonging. Jesus wants *belonging* among us. And in Leonardo's drawing, we see a glimpse of the love, peace, and trust that this belonging brings.

Poetry

Child's Reflection

I remember a day when my son was two
I remember him looking at a picture
as though it were a face he clearly knew.
Squealing and clapping with delight thrilled at the sight
of the loving glance of the child pictured on the wall.

I couldn't help thinking that a mere two years before
my son embraced that child, the source of us all.

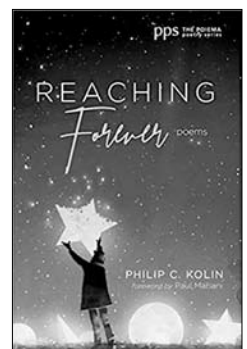
Now, when life blurs Jesus's caring face,
I stop and remember that day long ago
when my son was two and the lesson he taught me
To pause and recall
The promise of joy in our original birthplace.

Dr. Patricia Chehy Pilette

Book Reviews

Set aside any preconceived notions of poetry for none will hold when it comes to Philip Kolin's *Reaching Forever*. If you're looking for meaning as in looking for keys or looking for a bargain, step away from those preconceived notions about poetry. Immerse. Plunge. Dive-in and fold into the poems, for therein lies a source of understanding of our Christian faith as experienced in water, the seasons, wolves, sheep and God's voice — all heading titles of sections, familiar subjects to Christians. But then comes the poetry.

Kolin takes the ordinary and mystifies it through analogy and metaphor. It is quickly understood but lasts ... well ... forever. For example, the very first poem "Baptism" imagines God's work from above. Waters surround continents and at the waters' high point are coral reefs and fins and seagrasses. We must submerge ourselves to see the work on



**REACHING
FOREVER**
Philip C. Kolin
Cascade Books/
Poem Poetry
Series 30
Eugene, OR
2019

canvass of God-the artist. Let the meditation begin.

Kolin writes in a stream of water flowing gently then ripples over stones attracting our attention. "The Betrayer" places Judas in the scene after his betrayal hiding from sunlight and finally, "Judas spent his soul for a halter to hang himself." His "unclaimed body is flung into a nearby ditch, filled with slime, not worth the price of a plot." Kolin's poetry has that strong hit that keeps you on the page long after the words have run-out.

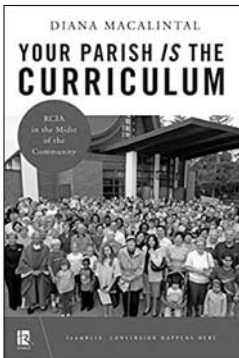
"Pentecost on the Beach" brings a variety of people to a beach, a Jamaican, Vietnamese, Serbian boys, tourists, and "Each heard what the waves were saying." In the words of Edmund Wilson, American writer and critic, "Art gives meaning to experience." We would be a dense, pile of observers if we didn't give meaning to what is always before us. Kolin captures a moment; we transform the moment into a narrative of our own making without words. So, sit-in, listen and relish his takes on Old and New Testament passages giving them another life for our contemporary world.

The title, *Reaching Forever*, images startling phrasing taking us to 'forever' and there lies much to give us pause.

Joe McCormack

Former teacher of writing and literature

Highland Heights, Ohio



**YOUR PARISH
IS THE
CURRICULUM,**
Diana Macalintal,
The Liturgical
Press,
Collegeville,
Minnesota
2018

I have read a number of books about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) over the years. Many are very good and provide a wonderful theological foundation as well as liturgical understanding of the various rites related to the RCIA. Diana Macalintal's work, however, in a very good way, is in a class onto itself. The book is relatively easy to read, without being simplistic. It presumes the reader has a basic understanding of the RCIA and more than likely has had some experience on the parish level with the RCIA. That being said, the work does not stand on high ecclesial language, demand a strict adherence to a process that has been traditionally used in pastoral settings, nor does it demand specific content being covered as would be the case in most academic programs.

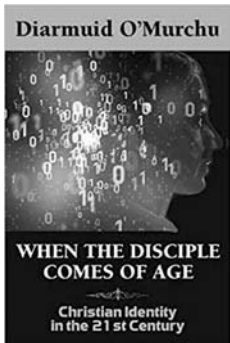
Rather, the author understands that the content of faith, while

important and necessary, is best learned not in the traditional presentation model, but rather an adult learning style of experience, dialogue, and opportunity for engagement. The premise of the book is that each and every parish has a curriculum already designed for the RCIA by simply using the rhythm of parish life as the opportunity for teaching. Engaging the inquirer in the life and ministry of the parish, steeping people in the day to day experiences of parishioners can and will teach more abundantly than we dare imagine. Macalintal does not suggest that experience alone will help the candidate come to an understanding of what it means to be Catholic. But, walking with them through the experience, providing the candidate with mentors, partners on the journey, will go a long way not only teaching the Catechism of the Catholic Church, but will also so engage people that they will stay involved in the parish long after they step from the waters of new life.

I found chapters 3, 4, 5, to be enlightening and practical. Reading and re-reading these three chapters has helped this reviewer look again at the way the RCIA is handled in at least one local parish. The practicality of the book, born out of Diana Macalintal's own lived experience with the RCIA, brings new insight, fresh perspective, and an approach that can truly interest maybe not everyone in the parish, but certainly more than we might think could be involved.

I believe this is an excellent resource for a parish staff, parish pastoral council, and those who are presently engaged in ministry with RCIA candidates and catechumens. It is a relatively easy read and if even only a few suggestions make it to the table, they can prove to be fruitful on two counts. First, for those who seek our way of life in the Catholic Church, they will find a welcome not to a "class or process," but into the life of the community. Second, and equally as important, the parish community is bound to find blessing in recognizing the power of their witness through their involvement in the parish.

Rev. Thomas M. Dragga, D. Min,
Pastor of Church of the Resurrection in Solon, Ohio
Director of Office of Ongoing Formation Formation for Clergy,
Diocese of Cleveland



**WHEN THE
DISCIPLE
COMES OF AGE:
CHRISTIAN
IDENTITY
IN THE 21st
CENTURY**

Diarmuid
O'Murchu
Orbis Books,
Maryknoll, N.Y.
2019

O'Murchu's mantra is "coming of age." Reading the signs of the times in many countries, working with indigenous peoples, drawing insights from psychology and spirituality O'Murchu believes another level of human consciousness is birthing. Instead of using the phrase, "we come into the world," he says, "we are going out to the world, the whole cosmos." For some of us this may stir memories of Anthony de Mello, SJ, repeatedly saying, "Wake up!"

The book is divided into two parts: Setting the Scene, and Revisioning Our Christian Story. The chapters have sections that have a rippling effect. The first part has twenty-nine. The second part has many more. Each section takes a theme: human development, the importance of the wisdom of the elders, Jesus as a human archetype, the subversion of parable narrative, miracles, new companionship of empowerment, and dozens more. He ripples them to affect a deeper understanding of what's happening in us and the cosmos.

I'll mention five of them, with the realization that I'm not even scratching the surface of his multifaceted wisdom. First, to repeat, "more than coming into the world, we are going out to the cosmos." Our helpers in this are the elderly, the wisdom of the aged. We've forgotten that truth as we move so fast in the technological world. O'Murchu's work with indigenous peoples opened his mind again to the wisdom of the elderly. Wisdom comes with age, not technology. The indigenous peoples have retained the knowledge and experience of the Great Spirit, Spirit persons, and they can help us into a relationship with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's movement today and throughout our history.

Think here of the "nones" and the nuns that are now becoming part of our social history. "Nones" state that they are not religious, but spiritual. Reflection and contemplation are part of their spiritual journey. "Nones" have gravitated to religious women who are in their 70's, 80's, and 90's. Working together the nuns have invited the "nones" to days of reflection at their convents. "Nones" are spending days even weeks with the nuns to search together for a deeper contemplation in community.

The author places great importance on archetypes. He explains that archetypes are more than instinctive. They are an intuitive part of our being. Throughout history, authentic humans rediscover the deep reality of water, fire, air, earth, ether — symbols of the collective

consciousness. O'Murchu has a long, involved, interpretation of the serpent in the Bible drawing from many different cultures. It is one of the most important and misunderstood archetypes (187-188). Especially interesting is his explanation of Jesus as the archetypal human.

In the second part, one section stresses the understanding of Jesus' instruction, "Seek first the kingdom of God." The Catholic Church needs to stress this more. Jesus spoke once in a temple. He was outside, on a lake, with a crowd, at meals, etc. Sometimes the Church can become myopic or closed in on itself. That can limit the Church and its mission. "Seek first the kingdom of God." That was Jesus' mission.

O'Murchu also takes a deeper biblical understanding of the role of women in the early Church. He uses Phoebe as an example. She worked closely with Paul. Paul even sent her to Rome with his letter to the Romans. O'Murchu stresses that Phoebe didn't just take the letter to them. She read it to many different groups and explained it to them. Women were very involved in the spreading of Christianity in the early Church. This changed after the Jewish-Roman War of 66-73.

O'Murchu closes his book with a plea, a need to recover the ancient wisdom of closeness to nature, and to extend our vision of the Spirit's movement beyond ourselves, our nation, and into the cosmos. Of the ten or more books I have read as to where we are moving as Christians, this is the best.



Marie Vianney Bilgrien, SSND
El Paso, TX



EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS

John Thomas Lane, SSS

Highland Heights, OH

In my prayer life I can be very “literal” with God, basing my prayers on the sacred Scriptures as well as the many liturgical terms that surround my life. When I first learned in kindergarten that the Greek word “Eucharist” translated into the English word “thanksgiving,” I was struck by how a beloved USA holiday and our most sacred liturgy of the Roman Catholic life share the same word.

Knowing this fact helped me develop a spirituality where each day, each Eucharist becomes a chance for me to say “thank you” to God. It also helped me to have gratitude for the many blessings in my life. As I have aged, I have noticed that, as I feel more grateful, things that used to annoy or frustrate me affect me much less than they used to. The Eucharist and my prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament each morning as I begin my day helps shape me into being a person of gratitude. Even if trials and tribulations come my way, there is something to learn in the moment. Living a Eucharistic life, specifically looking at the blessings and giving thanks in the moment, helps me to have a positive, optimistic attitude. I always say to myself in the moment: “There is a reason why God is giving me this blessing or this experience. What may I learn from it?”

Each morning, in my prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the Liturgy of the Hours, and Eucharistic liturgy (Mass), I am blessed to focus first and foremost that, as one of God’s faithful stewards, I have so much for which to be grateful. It makes every day Thanksgiving for me! I’ve never liked cranberry sauce or yams. However, the other fixings that are part of a Thanksgiving meal and the meal of life — the Eucharist — reminds me that I am very satisfied and filled on the blessings and stuffing that God offers to me. These “stuffings” make every day a moment of grace, gratitude, and more. Starting my day in this routine helps me to see God’s purpose and relevance in my life. Thanksgiving is one of the “four-ends” of Saint Peter Julian Eymard’s spirituality, and the primary “end” of mine. It is a guidepost for the joys and challenges of daily living.



General Index 2020

PAGINATION

I-68	JANUARY/FEBRUARY
69-136	MARCH/APRIL
137-208	MAY/JUNE
209-276	JULY/AUGUST
277-348	SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER
349-424	NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

AUTHORS

Bergant, Dianne	Image of God: Icon or Idol?.....	147
Bevans, Stephen	Images and Ideas of Prayer.....	101
Billy, Dennis	Caryll Houselander on the Eucharist.....	83
	Flannery O'Connor on the Eucharist.....	11
Brattston, David and Christman, John	Why Do We Use the Title "Father" for a Priest? The Challenge of Matthew 23:9.....	358
Camiré, Bernard	Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Faithful and Wise Servant (Mt 24:45-51).....	36
	Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Mt 25:31-46).....	241
Christman, John	John Zizioulas and the Priesthood of Creation.....	153
	Keeping Time: Jazz and a Eucharistic Perspective of Time.....	7
DeSanctis, Michael	Advice to Pastors on Preserving a Legacy of Artistic Expression.....	222
	Chalkware Catholicism: The Aims and Art of Catholic Statuary Reconsidered.....	377
	Church Buildings and the Disciplining of the Mind: Bringing an Un-Churched Generation into Sacred Spaces.....	29
	Of What Use are Church Buildings in Times of Calamity?.....	306
	The Truth About "Cold" Modernist Church Architecture.....	92
	Topiary, Aviary, Bestiary, Breviary: An Organic Reading of Church Architecture.....	159
Emmanuel Contributors	Stories of a Eucharistic Fast.....	280
Falardeau, Ernest	Frequent Communion: Reward or Spiritual Need? The Continuing Relevance of the Eucharistic Teachings of Pius IX and Pius X.....	21
Kroeger, James	Discovering the Dynamic Spiral of Ministry: Exploring Insights of Recent Popes.....	292
Lane, John Thomas	Built of Living Stones at 20.....	27
Ligas, Martha and Menkhaus, James	Poetic Contemplation: Trees as a Model of a Sacramental Reality.....	175
Lothes Biviano, Erin	Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Sacramental Act of Love of Neighbor.....	369
Maslen, Darren	Triangularity: The Shape of Eucharistic Hospitality.....	231

AUTHORS (continued)

McCann, Mark	The Eucharist and the Dance of Death.....	317
Menkhaus, James	Scars of Brokenness and Transformation.....	72
Muehle, Marybeth	Hospice: Walking a Sacred Journey	286
Nanko-Fernández, Carmen	The Unity That Only Eucharist Can Achieve?.....	217
Ostdiek, Gil	Care of Creation: A Eucharistic Call to Action.....	140
Parachin, Victor	Forgive to Live	78
Peko, George and Peko, Anna	Living the Eucharist through Holy Matrimony	352
Riley, Patrick	What Have We Learned from the Eucharistic Fast?	300
Ruane, Dennis	Pain as Prayer	99
Schineller, Peter	Two Books or Three Books to Read?	364
Smiga, George	A Refugee Family.....	229
Stark, Robert	Experiencing Eucharist by Sharing with Migrants on the Margins: Transforming Vulnerability Through Hospitality.....	212
Tragon, Julie	Living Laudato Si’	166
Zupez, John	Ongoing Renewal of the Eucharistic Liturgy.....	383
	Our Goods Deeds Follow Us: A Reflection on the Secondary Joy of Heaven	4
	Praying the “Our Father” in its Scriptural Context.....	237
	Soul of Christ: Reflections for After Communion.....	313

TITLES

A Refugee Family	George Smiga	229
Advice to Pastors on Preserving a Legacy of Artistic Expression	Michael DeSanctis.....	222
Built of Living Stones at 20	John Thomas Lane	27
Care of Creation: A Eucharistic Call to Action	Gil Ostdiek.....	140
Caryll Houselander on the Eucharist	Dennis Billy	83
Chalkware Catholicism: The Aims and Art of Catholic Statuary Reconsidered	Michael DeSanctis.....	377
Church Buildings and the Disciplining of the Mind: Bringing an Un-Churched Generation into Sacred Spaces	Michael DeSanctis.....	29
Discovering the Dynamic Spiral of Ministry: Exploring Insights of Recent Popes	James Kroeger	292
Experiencing Eucharist by Sharing with Migrants on the Margins: Transforming Vulnerability Through Hospitality	Robert Stark.....	212
Flannery O’Connor on the Eucharist	Dennis Billy	11
Forgive to Live	Victor Parachin	78
Fossil Fuel Divestment: A Sacramental Act of Love of Neighbor	Erin Lothes Biviano	369
Frequent Communion: Reward or Spiritual Need? The Continuing Relevance of the Eucharistic Teachings of Pius IX and Pius X	Ernest Falardeau	21
Hospice: Walking a Sacred Journey	Marybeth Muehle.....	286
Image of God: Icon or Idol?	Dianne Bergant.....	147

Images and Ideas of Prayer	
John Zizioulas and the Priesthood of Creation	
Keeping Time: Jazz and a Eucharistic Perspective of Time	
Living <i>Laudato Si'</i>	
Living the Eucharist through Holy Matrimony	
Of What Use are Church Buildings in Times of Calamity?	
Ongoing Renewal of the Eucharistic Liturgy	
Our Goods Deeds Follow Us: A Reflection on the	
Secondary Joy of Heaven	
Pain as Prayer	
Poetic Contemplation: Trees as a Model of a	
Sacramental Reality	
Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Faithful and	
Wise Servant (Mt 24:45-51)	
Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Sheep	
and the Goats (Mt 25:31-46)	
Praying the "Our Father" in its Scriptural Context	
Scars of Brokenness and Transformation	
Soul of Christ: Reflections for After Communion	
Stories of a Eucharistic Fast	
The Eucharist and the Dance of Death	
The Truth About "Cold" Modernist Church Architecture	
The Unity That Only Eucharist Can Achieve?	
Topiary, Aviary, Bestiary, Breviary: An Organic Reading	
of Church Architecture	
Triangularity: The Shape of Eucharistic Hospitality	
Two Books or Three Books to Read?	
What Have We Learned from the Eucharistic Fast?	
Why Do We Use the Title "Father" for a Priest?	
The Challenge of Matthew 23:9	

POEMS

the lost coin, found	
My Mother's Hands	
In Memoriam: Patricia Treece	
The Fattened Calf	
SOUL TRIP	
Child's Reflection	

EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS

Eucharistic Witness	
Eucharistic Witness	
Eucharistic Witness	
Eucharistic Witness	
Eucharistic Witness	
Eucharistic Witness	

Stephen Bevans	101
John Christman	153
John Christman	7
Julie Tragon	166
George Peko and Anna Peko.....	352
Michael DeSanctis.....	306
John Zupez	383
John Zupez	4
Dennis Ruane.....	99
Martha Ligas and	
James Menkhaus	175
Bernard Camiré	36
Bernard Camiré	241
John Zupez	237
James Menkhaus	72
John Zupez	313
Emmanuel Contributors	280
Mark McCann.....	317
Michael DeSanctis.....	92
Carmen Nanko-Fernández.....	217
Michael DeSanctis.....	159
Darren Maslen	231
Peter Schineller	364
Patrick Riley	300
David Brattston and	
John Christman.....	358

Lou Ella Hickman	61
Joan Lerman.....	61
Joan Lerman.....	207
Philip Kolin.....	269
Kay Kay.....	347
Patricia Chehy Pilette	415

Philip C. Kolin	68
Nicole Mlakar	136
Catherine Marie Caron	208
Daniel Krenicki, Jr.	276
Maria Huong	348
John Thomas Lane	420

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

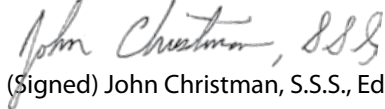
(required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Date of filing September 2020. Emmanuel, (ISSN 0013-6719) is published bimonthly with 6 issues a year, at 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092, at an annual subscription price of \$35.00. Editorial office is at 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Editor: Rev. John Christman, S.S.S.. Publisher: Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Sole owner is the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. There are no known bondholders, mortgages, or security holders. Contact person is Elizabeth Zaller (440) 449-2103. Non-profit tax status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.

Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: Total copies - 983; mailed outside county paid subscriptions as stated on *PS form 3541* - 605; Mailed in county paid - 0; other paid distribution outside USPS mail - 39; paid distribution by other classes of mail through USPS - 85; Total paid distribution - 729; Free or nominal rate mail distribution outside county included on *PS form 3541* - 0; Free in county copies - 0; Free copies mailed at other classes through USPS - 0; Free distribution outside mail - 10; Total free distribution - 10; Total distribution - 739; Copies not distributed - 244; Total -983; Percent paid - 99%

Number of single issue copies published nearest to filing date: Total number copies - 900; Mailed outside county paid subscriptions as stated on *PS form 3541* - 590; Mailed in county paid - 0; and other paid distribution outside USPS mail - 39; paid distribution by other classes of USPS mail - 88; Total paid distribution - 717; Free or nominal mailed outside county - 0; Free in county - 0; Free or nominal rated mail through other USPS classes-0; Free distributed outside mail -0; Total free or nominal distribution -0; Total distribution - 717; Copies not distributed - 183; Total - 900; Percent paid - 100%

I certify that the statement made by the above is correct and complete.



(Signed) John Christman, S.S.S., Editor, Emmanuel.

Emmanuel Subscriber Service

- change your address
- inquire about gift subscriptions
- inquire about the status or payment of your subscription
- inquire about missing issues

NEW SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

U.S. Rates 2 yr. - \$65.00 1 yr. - \$35.00

Canadian and Foreign Rates (U.S. currency)

2 yr. - \$75.00 1 yr. - \$40.00

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ - _____

TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Send us an address label from a recent issue together with your new address, or fill in the information below. Please give us 6 to 8 weeks advance notice.

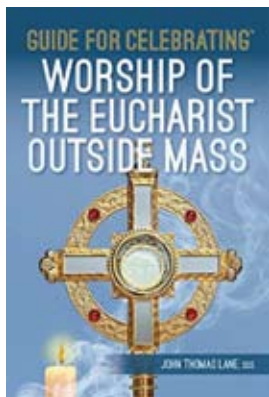
Old Address

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

New Address

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

This Christmas give the gift of prayer and understanding
with these books from some of
Emmanuel's most valued contributors!



**Guide For Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist
Outside the Mass**

By John Thomas Lane, SSS

Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, IL, 2015

"A balanced and thorough presentation that combines both rich theological insight and practical pastoral advice so that parishes may properly celebrate Eucharistic Worship outside Mass. Its strength lies in moving beyond expressions of personal piety and devotional elements, keeping proper emphasis on the liturgical and communal elements of the rite."

-Msgr. Joseph DeGrocco, Pastor
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church
Lindenhurst, New York

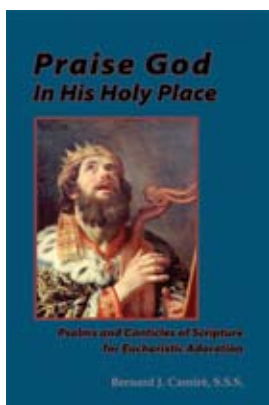
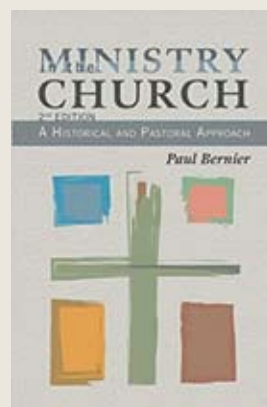
Ministry in the Church

By Paul Bernier, SSS

Orbis Books, New York, 2015

"Paul Bernier's *Ministry in the Church* has been a standard in the field for decades. This new edition will ensure that position for decades to come. There is virtually no single volume on the market with this scope and range of learning."

-Edward Foley, O.F.m. Cap.,
Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality
Catholic Theological Union



Praise God in His Holy Place

By Bernard J. Camiré, SSS

Emmanuel Publications, Cleveland, OH, 2019

"Father Camiré has created a wonderful tool for those who find the psalms inspirational or who might want to delve into the psalms and see if they are helpful in Eucharistic prayer. I intend to introduce this prayer aid to the members of my parish who have expressed an interest in resurrecting Eucharistic adoration as part of our centennial year celebration. Copies of it could be left in a parish's adoration chapel with a brief introduction on how the book can be used."

-Patrick J. Riley, DMin
Book Review Editor, *Emmanuel*

Contact us at emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com
or (440) 449-2103 for further details!

God loves us personally with a great benevolent love,
with an infinite and eternal love. This benevolent love
consists in willing purely and exclusively what is good
and what is best for the person who is so loved.

In God, benevolent love is personal.
God loves a person, loves you...
because God's love is one and infinite.

To Mrs. Camille d'Andigne - March 4, 1856



Rymard
Apr. 1. 56