Emmanuel

Eucharistic Spirituality

May/June 2021

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. ©2021

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

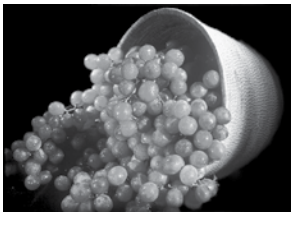
emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com

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 127 Number 3



FROM THE EDITOR

Saint Peter Julian Eymard loved the priesthood and he loved the Eucharist. In fact, there are three stained-glass windows in a chapel that bears his name in his hometown of La Mure d'Isère, a small town in southeastern France, that beautifully make this point.

The first window memorializes a popular story from Saint Eymard's childhood. It depicts in vibrant and cheerful colors Peter Julian as a child with his ear pressed to the tabernacle. The story behind the image recounts how young Peter Julian wandered away from home one day. His older sister Marianne anxiously went to find him. She had an inkling that he might be in church, and when she entered the church, she was startled to find him sitting on the altar with his ear pressed to the tabernacle. When she asked him what he was doing he famously responded, "I am near Jesus, and I am listening to him."

The second stained-glass window depicts young Peter Julian studying Latin while working in his father's shop. Here we see him engrossed in his study while work goes on behind him. Although his father was reticent to give him permission to go to the seminary to study for the priesthood, Peter Julian nevertheless held out hope that he would one day become a priest. So, he taught himself Latin to help make that dream come true.

The third window, which is placed prominently behind the altar and is often bathed with light, is of Peter Julian Eymard in liturgical attire holding a monstrance. Here we see these two great loves come together in a celebratory depiction of Saint Eymard. Saint Eymard the priest and Saint Eymard the "apostle of the Eucharist."

In fact, it was during a Corpus Christi procession in Lyon, France that Saint Eymard seemed to make this profound connection and began to ponder founding a religious order dedicated to the Eucharist. He later wrote of this experience:

> On May 25, 1845, Corpus Christi, I had the special privilege of carrying the Blessed Sacrament at St Paul's, and my soul derived great benefit from it. It was penetrated by faith and love of Jesus in his divine Sacrament. Those two hours seemed but a moment to me. I laid at the feet of our Lord: the Church, France, Catholics, the Society (of Mary), myself. What sighs, what tears! My heart felt crushed as in the winepress! How I could have wished at that moment to have all hearts in my heart! The zeal of Saint Paul!
>
> This is what I promised our Lord. Since the beginning of this month I have felt a great attraction towards our Lord, never have I experienced it so strongly. This attraction inspires me in my preaching, in my spiritual counselling, to bring all the world to the knowledge and love of our Lord; to preach nothing but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Eucharistic!
>
> Saint Peter Julian Eymard
> (*Notes personnelles*, AP.SS., O. 4, p 309,
> translated by Donald Cave, SSS)

As we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) this June 6th may we experience such eucharistic love and zeal! May our ministries be nourished by God's infinite love manifested in the Eucharist. And may our apostolates help build up the eucharistic body of Christ among us.

John Christman, SSS

In This Issue

In this issue we have a number of articles that weave together a eucharistic spirituality with a spirituality of the priesthood. We are honored to present an article by Retired Brigadier General Patrick Dolan who reflects upon his priestly ministry as a military chaplain and offers "lessons learned" from an exceptional life of service. Father Richard Gribble, CSC remarks upon responsible leadership within the Church and the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom. Father Dennis Billy, C.Ss.R. continues his examination of literary figures and their understanding of the Eucharist, this time delving into the work of Graham Greene and his observations of humanity and the priesthood. To these we add Michael DeSanctis' exploration of the relationship between sharing meals and sharing the Eucharist, as well as Father Paul Bernier, SSS's excellent scriptural reflections.

Eucharistic Dimensions of Catholic Military Chaplaincy

by Patrick Dolan

Retired Brigadier General Patrick Dolan shares his experiences as a military chaplain and offers "lessons learned" from an exceptional life of service.

Retired Chaplain (Brigadier General) Patrick Dolan was senior chaplain in the US National Guard, responsible for all the states and territories including 1500 clergy and 365,000 soldiers. He holds a PhD in Chemistry and an STD in theology. He is current chair of the Louisville section of the American Chemical Society and "visiting scholar" at Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium working on integrating science and theology. He has recently authored the fiction series Traces of Magic (available on Amazon).

In describing my more than 27 years as a Catholic priest in the US Army, I can offer only one tiny snapshot from the wide variety of service opportunities there. The key facets of priestly military chaplaincy that stand out for me are Eucharist, community togetherness, uplifting spirituality (sermons and ceremonies), and sacred power in sacramental grace. While other denominations may have great music and sermons, and differing nations employ laity as Catholic chaplains, the US military only has priests as Catholic chaplains. This is due to the need for Eucharist and availability for anointing and confession on the battle front. Just as in civilian life, not only are there different styles of priestly service, ranging from deeply engaged diocesan clergy to very detached styles like the Trappists, so also there are three types of military service (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and the three components (Active, Guard, and Reserve), leading to a wide variety of styles of "following Christ" within any military framework.[1]

Types of Catholic Military Chaplaincy

Priests seem to enter the military for a variety of reasons: family history, national crisis, request by their bishop or superior, friends who had served, etc. If one passes the physical and the security clearance, and has the certified four years of accredited college and a Masters of Divinity or recognized equivalent, a priest can be directly commissioned as an officer (usually a Lieutenant) in the Air Force, Army, or Navy at the pay grade of O2 just like other officers with a professional background.[2]

In the Air Force, the priest acts much like a pastor in a civilian parish — but in a military setting and in a uniform instead of clerical attire.

Though the dynamics are a bit different than a normal diocese (due to evaluation by commanders and senior chaplains who are likely to be of a different denomination who determine one's promotion over the years) the lifestyle is closest to typical parish life — but with a bit more movement to exotic places and a bit more consequent sense of adventure. One can even do this "part time" by being in the Air Force Reserve or the Air National Guard. In such cases, one works in his own diocese or religious apostolate, but two days a month (working around parish schedules if necessary) and two weeks a year, the priest gets to do something quite different from ordinary parish life in a different setting. This often becomes a wonderful break from parish duties because of the camaraderie with the other airmen and the sense of accomplishment that comes with advancement in rank over the years. Yet, bringing the Eucharist and the other sacraments is still the center of one's ministry.

The Navy has a wide variety of apostolates. Their bases on shore have chapels, which operate much like the Air Force, with the same interaction with all denominations and its parallel challenges. Though the Navy has no National Guard component, the Naval Reserve has chaplains who often operate much like the Air Force Reserve: substituting for Active Duty chaplains for a period of time during their two-weeks duty each year, and two days a month near their home parishes for all kinds of preparatory duties. However, the Navy is focused on ships, and active duty Navy chaplains concentrate on care for sailors at sea. This means that priests are often gone for months and, though assigned to a rather large ship, are responsible for all the souls on the other ships in that contingent — often including large numbers of marines on some of them. As one can imagine, young marines with lots of energy and cooped up in small compartments can get bored and frisky. Chaplains are thus often tasked by commanders to help focus those energies into positive recreational activities. This is not too different than working with a high school or a parish youth group. Finally, marines can also be deployed onto land in many and varied environments — and their chaplains go with them much the way Army chaplains accompany their units. Yet, though counseling and recreational care might occupy a good portion of the Navy priest's day, providing the Eucharist and sacraments remain his primary focus — even when on land with a marine task force.

My own military experience was in the Army but included providing Eucharist and sacraments for any military nearby — such as on board a ship that might be docked in our area that had no priest. However, unlike the Air Force or the Navy where chaplains were most often

expected to be a "pastor in uniform" of whatever denomination, my experience was that the best Army chaplains were deeply integrated into their units even though their office might be in a chapel building. My time of service pushed me to be a real soldier as well as a real priest — which made my bringing God to the other soldiers more acceptable. Even though everyone knew I was a Catholic priest (and thus not very acceptable to some soldiers because of their denominational upbringing), they could connect with me as someone who tromped through the mud like they did and could "help them get closer to God *their* way, not my way." In the process, many got exposed to a variety of Catholic flavors — and had less trouble with it than they thought possible.

A Life of Service

Because a priest needs his bishop's permission to enter the service because we are "loaned" to the Archdiocese for the Military Services which "endorses" us, it took nine years from the time I first asked to join just the Army Reserves till I was sworn in. I spent 14 months with them experiencing what ordinary soldiers go through by helping with basic training for two weeks, conducting services all over central Kentucky, and going through Chaplains' Officer basic training. In the process, military "instincts" awakened in me from somewhere deep in my personal heritage.

In 1987 my archbishop felt a need to send a priest on to Army active duty because two had retired, and I was the only one available. Immediately sent to Germany for two months, I joined a unit from Ft. Hood, TX, that ran a clinic, repaired army vehicles, and distributed supplies. As they were short on officers, I learned how to help in those areas all while providing Catholic Mass and sacraments there and in Holland (and helping with tours and translations because I spoke German and was familiar with Europe from my seminary studies in Rome). My two years at Ft. Hood included three tough exercises in Death Valley, CA, some brutal training in Air Assault (helicopter) tactics, promotion to captain, and my teaching a year-long course in sacred scripture. A highlight of that time in Texas were the Cultural Training Exercises (CTX) the chaplains arranged in San Antonio that accented what was worth fighting to defend in our nation's heritage and values.[3] This included day trips at no cost to special locations, which also provided lots of bus travel time for one-on-one chances for soldiers to talk with a priest. These continued in Korea and Georgia and at every location I was sent.

From Texas I was trained as a paratrooper on the way to a year's duty at the DMZ in Korea, where bitter cold winters and Monsoon summers are common. There the CTX trips included visiting the local Korean historical sites like palaces and temples, but also interaction with their Catholic shrines (such as Choltusan) where thousands of Korean Catholics had been martyred over a century ago. Our Catholic soldiers grew to appreciate the universality of the eucharistic celebrations and sacraments; for, unlike the Protestant services which had community through fellowship activities and uplifting spirituality in their sermons and singing, these Catholic services had all those — but also had sacred actions that infused divine grace and power.[4]

Again, the Eucharist drew us together, for the faithful worshipping in the Ecuadorian churches looked and acted just like those in any Catholic church in Chicago or Pittsburg or Topeka — and received the same graces.

After Korea, the Chaplain's advanced course, Pathfinder training, and a year at Ft. Gordon, GA, with a signal unit, I returned to the Louisville Archdiocese in 1992 and transferred to a National Guard Field Artillery (FA) unit. This became an opportunity for evangelization; for, although the northern tip of that unit's territory was in Springfield, KY, where I was pastoring a rural African American parish, the main part of the FA unit had three armories along the Tennessee border. Catholics were very sparse there and were never part of the "movers and shakers" of those counties. However, the National Guard is central to that area's identity. Nearly all of my soldiers there had never met a Catholic priest and were surprised that I was a competent fellow soldier and that I cared for and helped them. By using the Archetypes of Value materials along with the Red Cross Assist program to help these soldiers find ways to prevent suicide, as well as helping them understand how to succeed in the Guard, within a few months they were able to confide in this priest with their deepest issues.[5]

That small Springfield parish I was pastoring also had many families whose children had entered the service after high school. That helped me be accepted there as well. The Eucharist continued to draw us together. In the six years I served there, which included some required strategic training, deployment to Europe for Bosnia in 1996, promotion to major, moving my mother to Kentucky near me, and completing my

STD degree via distance learning from the Angelicum in Rome in 1997, I also got to know and appreciate the entire Kentucky National Guard.

From May through September 1998, I served with the KY Guard, army and air, in Ecuador in ways I would never have dreamed possible as a parish priest. This included negotiating between US news reporters and the Ecuadorian president and working with the US embassy. Though my skills in Spanish became improved during that time, the people were very patient and understanding with me. Again, the Eucharist drew us together, for the faithful worshipping in the Ecuadorian churches looked and acted just like those in any Catholic church in Chicago or Pittsburg or Topeka — and received the same graces.

Instead of my having to search for soldiers to come to Mass, they gathered their buddies whenever I was coming to their area. It seems that immanent fear of death can help us examine our priorities.

Returning to Kentucky, I was assigned to St. Christopher's parish in Radcliff, just outside of Ft. Knox, where my military background and contacts could help a number of families understand the often-confusing military paperwork they would receive. After some training and certification as a chemical officer (where I could actually use my PhD in chemistry from 1974) I was assigned to a FA Brigade in Lexington and promoted to lieutenant colonel in June of 2001. Then the world fell apart on September 11th. At first, my task included helping prepare soldiers to deploy to the middle east and also helping them reintegrate when they returned. These return efforts included a two-hour interactive event a few days after they were back home and helped reduce problems significantly.[6] Not only did we continue to care for families and connect them with each other while their soldiers were deployed, during that two hours when the soldiers were going through the reintegration their families were helped by Veterans Affairs social workers. That reintegration program consisted of three phases: (1) hearing from a trusted authority, like the mayor of the city, that their sweat, tears, and even blood made a worthwhile difference, (2) reducing fake guilt ["why could I not have stopped my buddy from getting hurt…"], and (3) paring the soldiers up by rank to tell their stories to one another to find "lessons learned" and to help them know, deep down, that someone understands your struggle.

Activation in the spring of 2003 and months at Ft. Campbell were followed by sending my brigade home, but activating me because they needed another priest in the middle east. It was truly the best duty I had ever had, because the need was great. I got to go to exciting places, and felt no guilt (indeed, no one was eager to switch places with me). Moreover, instead of my having to search for soldiers to come to Mass, they gathered their buddies whenever I was coming to their area. It seems that immanent fear of death can help us examine our priorities.

Within a few months of returning home from that duty, which included Mass in Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, I was chosen to attend the Senior Service School at Harvard University. While there, I spent my Christmas Vacation in Iraq providing Mass and sacraments (including two adult baptisms) for hundreds of soldiers who had not seen a priest in months. The six months follow-up duty after Harvard was in Kuwait, Egypt, and Qatar as the senior priest in that area. This responsibility included not only providing Mass at several locations, but also making sure the other three priests in that large area had access to one another monthly for encouragement and the chance for confession for themselves.

Perhaps the most interesting event during that time was having to quiet the ghosts of Kuwait. Many Kuwaiti military had been viciously murdered by the Iraqi forces at the Kuwaiti Naval Base, and some of the ghosts were restless. They manifested themselves either by moving things abruptly, holding our soldiers under water in the pool, or in a variety of more subtle ways in June of 2005. Bullets could not quiet them, but authorized prayers and assurances from the base commander that we would remember them and that we are on their side did indeed let them leave our soldiers alone to do their job or right the wrong they had endured. This was a chaplain-specific kind of combat where the Eucharist and holy oils helped.

Back in the US and working full time at our Joint Force Headquarters in Frankfort, KY, from Advent 2005 through Lent 2007, my duties included more reintegration events, patrolling the Arizona-Mexican

border, and the very sad duty of helping 14 death notification soldiers inform families that their soldier would not be coming home alive. This heart-wrenching duty was supposedly to simply assist the young soldier delivering that shattering message; but most often it meant picking up the pieces of broken lives — and helping the message deliverer recover from that necessary but terrible duty. During that same period, I was promoted to Colonel and often represented the Adjutant General at various functions. Another three months in Iraq, travelling all over the country to provide Mass and sacraments over holy week and Easter in 2007 concluded with a special Mass on Pentecost that served as a memorial for three soldiers in a unit I was with who had been killed earlier that day. Putting a unit back together after an attack is one of the basic functions that only a chaplain can accomplish — and the Eucharist helped the surviving soldiers focus beyond their immediate anguish.

From June 2007 through September 2010, my duties continued part time in Frankfort guiding the chaplains and assistants in the Kentucky National Guard and training 15 non-Catholic chaplain candidates attending seminaries in Kentucky. A main focus of that time was conducting marriage retreats designed at the University of Denver and adapted to military circumstances.[7] The material is non-denominational, but lends itself well to scripture references (Jewish and Christian) as well as sacramental additions for those who wish them. Using the Value Archetypes listed above as the foundation for the structure of this material rooted it even deeper.

Putting a unit back together after an attack is one of the basic functions that only a chaplain can accomplish — and the Eucharist helped the surviving soldiers focus beyond their immediate anguish.

With my promotion to Brigadier General in 2010 my world changed again — for there is only one general officer chaplain in the Army National Guard (ARNG) for the entire nation. Though still pastoring two parishes in Casey Co, KY, where being in the Guard made me more culturally acceptable, I was often gone a day or two during the week either (1) preparing chaplains for combat duty at deployment sites, (2) mentoring the senior (colonel) chaplains in each state or territory, or (3) pastoring all the 300 or so general officers in the entire ARNG.

Helping with deployment gave assurance not just because a general was visiting them, but because I had been in the DMZ in Korea, in Bosnia, and four times in Iraq and could calm some of their fears. When necessary, I even deployed a short time with some of them — as when I covered for a Navy priest for two weeks in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa or in Kosovo.

Mentoring the senior chaplain in each state or territory meant being the one person from whom they could get chaplain-specific advice or encouragement. This duty also often included introducing the state chaplain to the local bishop(s). Because both the state chaplain and the bishops had the same primary focus of caring for the faithful in their mutual territory, especially during times of crisis, it was a delight to witness how well they naturally connected.

The most unique aspect of this three-year duty was the "pressure release" I could be to the other general officers in the ARNG. Though only about 25% were Catholic and though they had their own civilian clergy at home parishes, my connection to them from within their system could reach their inner core with a friendly and knowledgeable ear. The pressures at the top of command never cease; but I could be the release valve not only when visiting but anytime by phone — for I was their equal who understood them, but never a competitor. They all loved getting a blessing — even when just passing in a corridor — whenever we were together.

"Lessons Learned"

In 2013 my three-year tour of duty was complete and I had to retire so that others could have a chance at promotion; nevertheless, the military remains in my blood. Helping still with military funerals, speeches or special blessings, and even with Mass or confessions when no military priest is available lets the power of the Eucharist and sacraments continue to reach families and places where it would not have otherwise penetrated. That was one of the "lessons learned" from the military duty in the National Guard (while pastoring a variety of parishes). Three other lessons stand out, which may apply at least partially to more "normal" priestly ministry in one's own parish.

First is the need to push for what is good when the opportunity is there, even against some resistance. Often the CTX opportunities (even when only on a two-week deployment withing the US) would not have happened had I not insisted with the commanders that we had the time and his soldiers deserved this opportunity *now* — not "maybe" in a few days. Parallel options were inviting soldiers (sailors, airmen, and marines) waiting for a military flight overseas to join in a prayer, scripture, and blessing service in that waiting room. Though never forcing my perspective on anyone, pouncing on the chance when it is presented worked time after time. In a parish, there are some "windows of opportunity" either with individuals or groups (like a chamber of commerce) that will close quickly and need our immediate action to incorporate into God's plan.

Second is having an "ongoing project" in one's pocket when stalled with other things. The military is filled with lots of "hurry up and wait" occasions, where I would be stuck somewhere with nothing at all to do for hours. I could sit and watch innocuous TV with other soldiers, but instead I would pull paper out of my pocket or rucksack and write. In the process I completed a doctoral dissertation for Rome and wrote a four-book series of adventure stories called "Traces of Magic" which is an American counterpart to *Lord of the Rings* or the *Narnia Chronicles* (available on Amazon); but it is so filled with actual Catholic sacraments, and in particular the Eucharist as a defense against diabolical power, that it is being used in prison ministry and religious education. In a parish setting, having some kind of ongoing project that one can pull out of one's pocket when stuck somewhere lets frustrating times not become problematic — and might indeed be part of God's permissive will for the delay being experienced.

The final lesson learned is an appreciation of the breviary (Divine Office) as a way to connect me to other clergy when I was isolated from them for weeks or months at a time. It became my lifeline to them, at least a connection in prayer when nothing else was available. It also made the times when I could catch another priest for even a few minutes for confession and part of the Divine Office together a special treat. Back home, it would sweeten any priests' gatherings to be able to say vespers together — knowing that there was some isolated priest somewhere depending on us to connect with him and hold him in fraternal love. Similarly, saying the rosary in critical circumstances brought reassurance, as did celebrating Mass, even by myself in hiding lest I be discovered and killed (in various parts of the

middle east), made that daily duty a treasure to be sought after rather than a burden. It remains so even now at home.

Recent encyclicals have called us all to be evangelists, and at least for me the military was a ripe field, ready for God's grace. It was also a wonderful tool to relate to communities where the National Guard was connected to their heart-strings but Catholics were strangers. May you be blessed with such wonderful opportunities, and to God be the glory — always.[8]

Notes

[1] See "Land, the Key to Diocesan Priestly Spirituality", Dolan, P., Emmanuel, Vol 102, # 4, May 1996, p. 237

[2] This includes lawyers, many medical people and some others. Most "line officers" who are commissioned right out of college come in at pay grade O1; but most of them have had their college paid for via ROTC scholarships.

[3] "Cultural Training for Free", Dolan, P., ARMY, Vol 70, # 1, Jan 2020, p. 3

[4] These included a baptism, a wedding, and even a Korean military bishop's ordination

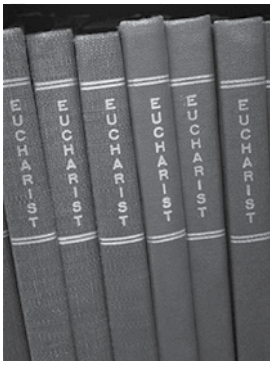
[5] Value Archetypes: A Multi-faceted Spirituality, Dolan, P., Emmanuel, vol 99, # 4, May 1993, p 203.

[6] These claims were verified by comparing the number of incidents of trouble before the implementation of the program and after its adoption.

[7] Markham, H., & Stanley, S., "PREP for Strong Bonds" © program, see www.PREPinc.com, Dec 2005 version

[8] Cf. *Evangelii Gaudium, Fratelli Tutti, etc.*

Photographs courtesy of Patrick Dolan.



EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Following the Lead of the Spirit

by Richard Gribble, CSC

How can those involved in pastoral ministry and Church leadership manifest the Spirit's gift of wisdom?

Father Richard Gribble, a member of the Congregation of Holy Cross, is on the faculty of the Department of Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Eaton, Massachusetts.

A GROUP OF YOUNG STUDENTS WAS SAILING FROM THE MAINLAND OF NICARAGUA to the island of Utila, some 40 miles to the northwest of that Central American nation. The students had never been there and when the trip began, they could not see the island. One young man asked if he could steer the boat. The captain of the vessel agreed telling him, "Just keep the needle of the heading at 335°." The young man was a bit wary, blindly going in a direction with no ability to see the destination. However, in a few hours they saw the island directly ahead of them. How did the student steer the vessel to the correct location without being able to see the destination? The answer is simple, he simply followed the directions that were given him. It's not always easy, but our life of discipleship is ultimately following direction given us by the Holy Spirit. We cannot see the destination, but we believe it is there. Following the direction provided by the Spirit will eventually bring us home to God.

Praise and worship of God must always be our highest daily priority, but most must admit that the direction of their prayer, quite naturally, is directed to Jesus, the Son of God and second person of the Blessed Trinity. After all Jesus became incarnate, lived among us, and provided a message that is presented in the gospels and amplified throughout the New Testament. Our faith, "Christianity," bears his name. At times we invoke the Father, especially in our common recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Unfortunately, short shrift is often given to the Holy Spirit. Yet, it is God's Spirit, present from the beginning of time, but even more present now after the Pentecost event, who sanctifies our world as the presence of God.

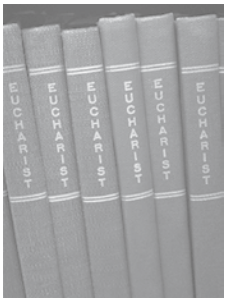
The presence of the Holy Spirit in our world, while too often taken for

granted, provided the guidance necessary for the nascent Church to coalesce, gain converts, and to spread throughout the then known Western world. After Christ's ascension, the apostles and other disciples of Jesus were basically lost. Their teacher, mentor, and friend, the one upon whom they all counted, was no longer physically present. But Jesus promised to send the Spirit. Recall the conversation between Jesus and his apostles when he informed them about his forthcoming death, resurrection, and ascension. He told them, "For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come" (John 16:7). Surely the apostles were confused as to what precisely Jesus meant, but he kept his promise. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit entered the lives of those first followers of "The Way," providing them with special gifts and making a significant impression upon the many visitors from various parts of the world who found themselves in Jerusalem at that time. The Spirit came to guide and to sanctify, but God's Spirit offered more. The Spirit came to direct our lives, placing us on the proper road that will lead to Christ and the Father, and eventually to eternal life.

Scriptural Themes of the Spirit

Scripture offers four major actions of the Holy Spirit in our world. The Spirit is clearly the presence of God in our world. The Pentecost event is most illustrative. Acts 2:1-13 describes how the Spirit was sent by God in a magnificent and powerful way, allowing un-learned people to speak in languages with which they were not familiar. The Spirit's presence is one of power and the bestowal of gifts, not only tongues, but many others, as Saint Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The gifts of the Spirit include expressions of wisdom and knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy, discernment, languages and the interpretation of those languages. We are told that "[T]he same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes" (1 Cor 12:11). Acts 2:33 tells us that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father and is poured forth upon us.

The Holy Spirit is one who provides instruction and information. Wisdom 1:7 reads, "For the Spirit of the Lord fills the world, is all embracing, and knows whatever is said." The Spirit instructed Peter to follow three men sent to him from Caesarea. The Spirit brought the good news of the annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and informed her of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy. Jesus spoke to Peter, James, John, and Andrew about the end times and how persecution would be their lot. But Jesus went on to say that they should not fear what they might say at that hour, for they would not be speaking, but the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11b).



God's Spirit is also a source of great wisdom. Isaiah writes to the Hebrews after their return from exile stating, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God, to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:1). God provided Isaiah with the knowledge he needed to carry on his ministry of prophecy. The Lord knew that the Hebrews needed a positive message, one that would help them as they returned to their homeland to rebuild their lives, institutions, and society in general. The Holy Spirit is described by Jesus as the manifestation of wisdom. Speaking to the disciples about prayer, Jesus says, "If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

It's not always easy, but our life of discipleship is ultimately following direction given us by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit manifests the power of God. The famous "dry bones" passage of Ezekiel 37:1-14 is a good example. The prophet speaks metaphorically of the Hebrews in exile as dry bones in the desert that, through the power of the Spirit, will be joined, augmented by flesh and muscle, and eventually brought back to life. The prophet proclaims, "I prophesied as he told me and the Spirit came into them [the dry bones]; they came alive and stood upright, a vast army" (Ezekiel 37:10). Again, the annunciation story in both Matthew (1:18) and Luke (1:35) speaks of the power of God to make Jesus, the Word, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, incarnate in the womb of Mary. It was the power of the Holy Spirit, as Paul reminds us, that raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11). Additionally, the authoritarian power of the Spirit is described by Paul: "For God did not call us to impurity but to holiness. Therefore, whoever disregards this, disregards not a human being but God, who [also] gives us this Holy Spirit to you" (1 Thessalonians 4:11).

Following the Lead of the Spirit

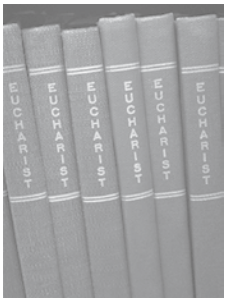
The Holy Spirit's four-fold action presents both an opportunity and a challenge to all the faithful to follow the Spirit's lead. Being present to others is a fundamental ministry for those who bear the name

Christian. Today, the busyness of our world often pulls us away from this basic attribute of the Spirit and Christian action. We may think that presence is marked in quantity of time. Certainly, taking the time to be with people is extremely important, but quality rather than quantity is what is necessary. People generally do not ask for huge blocks of time, but rather for us simply to be present at important moments. This may mean visiting someone who is sick, down on his or her luck, in need of counsel or correction, or celebrating a triumph in life. However, presence can be as simple as listening to a person for five minutes. Generally, people do not expect remarkable answers, but simply hope we can slow down long enough to listen. This is true in every Christian vocation, but especially in religious life. One wise religious once told me, "Ninety percent of community is just showing up." We must be present to others in imitation of the Spirit.

To utilize the power of the Spirit means to choose wisely in utilizing the authority and power we have, gifts that differ depending on position, opportunity, and judgment.

We are all called to provide instruction and information to others. This may be through institutional ways such as the classroom and preaching or formal ways such as public speaking and writing. Again, however, often the best lessons we have learned in life have come simply through example. Saint Teresa of Calcutta was not a great scholar, and did not teach in institutional ways, but her example provided both instruction and information internationally. How could one not learn from observing what she and her religious community have done through their ministry for the poor and destitute of the world? People are not neutral in their observations of us; they are either drawn closer to Christ or pushed further from him by what they hear and observe in us. The example we set is critically important and serves as a basic way to manifest the Holy Spirit's action of instruction.

How can we manifest the Spirit's gift of wisdom? It is true, I believe, that wisdom often comes with age; it is not a product of "book" learning but rather experiential. All people who have reached the age of maturity have had many experiences that have taught them important lessons. These lessons, some that are great and highly significant, others minor but nonetheless important, should be shared with others. We have

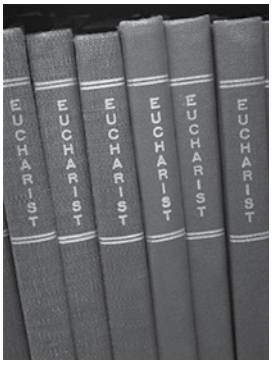


certainly learned many important lessons from both the triumphs and failures of our family members as well as former teachers and mentors of various sorts. Sharing the wisdom that we have gained from our experiences in life can assist others to avoid certain pitfalls, learn how to properly negotiate various hurdles, and help others to travel a more direct path to Christ.

Exercising the Spirit's gift of power in our lives is an important action in judgment and prudence. All people have some power and authority, but priests and religious, because of their position in the Church, may have more than most Christians. Right judgment and prudent utilization of the power and authority we possess are critically important. We have been placed in positions of authority and given certain "power" in order to build the kingdom of God in our world. Unfortunately, there are far too many examples where authority and power have been utilized to dominate individuals or groups or to preferentially aid one at the expense of the whole. Thus, to utilize the power of the Spirit means to choose wisely in utilizing the authority and power we have, gifts that differ depending on position, opportunity, and judgment. The proper utilization of authority and power can bring much good to the Church and our world. It is necessary, however, to consider closely how we have used power and authority in the past, correct our mistakes as necessary, and continue forward in ways that will benefit the common good.

Conclusion

What does it mean to be guided by the Spirit? It is certainly true that we cannot see the Spirit and rarely, I suspect, are people granted the privilege of such direct contact, but we can look at Scripture and have a good idea of what it means to follow the Spirit's lead. We are called to be present to one another in positive ways, to instruct our brothers and sisters, especially through example, to teach others and provide wisdom from our own experience, and to properly exercise authority and power as it has been bestowed upon us. While it is understandable that our prayer is generally directed towards Christ, or in some cases to the Father, we must not forget the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, who was sent by the Lord into our world to be God's presence. Following the lead of the Spirit will bring us home, to God's promise of eternal life. Saint Paul has described well, "What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).



EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Graham Greene on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R.

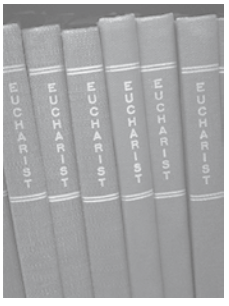
What do three powerful stories about the priesthood and the Eucharist reveal about Graham Greene's sacramental worldview?

Redemptorist Father Dennis J. Billy is a regular contributor to Emmanuel. He has authored or edited more than 30 books and 300 articles in a number of scholarly and popular journals.

Graham Greene (1904-91), one of the leading English novelists of his generation, was born in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, studied at Berkhamsted School, where his father taught and later became headmaster, and went on to graduate from Balliol College, Oxford in 1925 with a degree in history. Upon graduation, he worked as a journalist for the *Nottingham Journal* and later for *The Times*. An agnostic in his early life, he converted to Catholicism in 1926 and remained a member of the Church for the rest of his life. Recruited by British intelligence and stationed in Sierra Leone during the Second World War, many of his novels were spy thrillers and what he sometimes liked to refer to as "entertainments." Although he disliked being called a "Catholic novelist,"[1] he authored some twenty-five novels, many of which dealt with themes revolving around the Catholic faith. Nominated twice for the Nobel Prize in Literature, his books were widely acclaimed for their character development, atmosphere, plot, and wide popular appeal. His most popular works include *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Confidential Agent* (1939), *The Power and the Glory*, (1940) *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), *The Quiet American* (1955), *Our Man in Havana* (1958), *The Human Factor* (1978), and *Monsignor Quixote* (1982).[2]

Greene's Religious Outlook

Many of Greene's novels contain religious themes dealing with some of the most basic questions of human existence: the meaning of life, the struggle between good and evil, the seemingly irresistible allure of sin, the need for hope and redemption — to name but a few. His characters, many of whom reflect his own personal struggles, have



complex inner lives that, haunted by deep-seated conflicting voices, lead them into compromising circumstances with no clear way of determining the right path to take. Unconscious forces, mixed intentions, and unruly passions move them to peer more deeply into themselves, look beneath the masks they hide behind, and get a glimpse of what is really there. What they see is often sometimes frightening. The inability to change what they wish to change about themselves leads them either to hope or despair. Sometimes the two are strangely mixed. Redemption and damnation, sin and grace, hope and despair overlap in the lives of his characters and, as can well be imagined, also in the lives of his readers.

Greene's religious sensibilities changed during the course of his life. An avowed agnostic in his younger years, he was a member of the Communist party for a short while, before converting to Catholicism. His struggles with some of the doctrines of Catholic orthodoxy are sometimes reflected in his novels. The whiskey priest's drunken perseverance in *The Power and the Glory* and Scobie's dreaded fear of damnation in *The Heart of the Matter* are but two examples of how a strange mixture of good and evil, sin and grace, virtue and vice can exist side-by-side in life's daily circumstances. The characters who inhabit, "Greeneland," as the landscape his characters inhabit is sometimes called,[3] have at one and the same time both saintly aspirations and demonic obsessions that help to shape their identities and guide their faith experiences (or lack thereof). Greene's own struggles with Catholicism led him later in life to describe himself as a "Catholic agnostic," someone who believes but does not believe, who identifies with a particular religious tradition but is uncertain about its truthfulness and the extent of his own allegiance to it tenets.[4] His turn toward humanism in his later fiction demonstrates his disillusionment with some of the principles of Catholic orthodoxy, possibly brought on by his marital problems, separation from his family, drinking, numerous extramarital affairs, and inability to get a divorce from his wife due to Catholic teaching.[5]

Catholicism, for Greene, became deeply embedded in his psyche and thus in his writing. He uses its principles to draft the main contours of the religious world his characters inhabit. He also uses them as a way of crafting some of his thoughts on the nature of language and its impact on human experience.[6] Although Greene may not have liked being called a "Catholic novelist," it is clear that, at least in his early fiction, he used the novel form to explore the mystery of belief and

unbelief from within the mindset of the believer and, in doing so, set the standard for the genre for years to come. Because the Eucharist is so central to the practice of the Catholic faith, it should not be surprising that it plays a prominent role in much of his fiction.

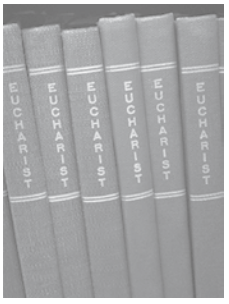
Greene on the Eucharist

The Eucharist plays a prominent role in several of Greene's stories. In *The Power and the Glory* (1940),[7] for example, a nameless priest, a drunkard who has also fathered a child, misses his chance to leave the secularized Mexican state because of his love of brandy and his sense of priestly duty. Angered by the very people he serves and who cause him to miss his chance of escape, he must keep on hiding from the government authorities, who have outlawed the priesthood under penalty of death.

The whiskey priest, as he sometimes refers to himself, is torn between his fear of being captured and his sense of duty, since he is the only remaining "ministering" priest in the entire country. He has dedicated his life to both the bottle and the chalice — and reverences both. He is well aware of his unworthiness to celebrate Mass yet does so out of the recognition that the people, though themselves unworthy, are desperately in need of it.

Many of Greene's novels contain religious themes dealing with some of the most basic questions of human existence: the meaning of life, the struggle between good and evil, the seemingly irresistible allure of sin, and the need for hope and redemption.

In the end, the whiskey priest is betrayed by his own sense of priestly duty. His face, for example, is known only because a photograph of him at a First Communion celebration is posted by the police on their wanted board. Despite his reluctance to celebrate Mass for the people, on account of his own sinfulness and fear of being caught, he does so because he understands that he alone can give them what they so deeply desire. He alone in all of Mexico can give them the Eucharist, which even he, despite his sins, still recognizes as a conduit for God's grace. The inner struggle he has between his desire to flee and his sense of priestly duty is heightened by the scarcity of wine



that is needed to celebrate Mass and the availability of brandy, the cause of his priestly downfall.

As the novel unfolds, the whiskey priest becomes a hesitant penitent and a reluctant martyr, totally unlike the sentimental martyrs presented in the popular hagiography of the day. Although the people refuse to disclose his whereabouts to the authorities, he is betrayed by a crafty *mestizo*, who sets a trap by asking him to hear the confession of a dying criminal. The priest agrees even though he distrusts the *mestizo* and suspects a betrayal, yet embraces his fate, goes to hear the outlaw's confession, and accepts the consequences of his actions. Unable to receive the last rites for himself at the novel's end, he confesses his sins into the air with a strange mixture of sincerity and pure formality before going to his death by firing squad.

Some Further Insights

Although this brief presentation of how the Eucharist appears in *The Power and the Glory* does not do justice to the role it plays in Greene's fiction as a whole, it does point to some of the general themes he develops in some of his later works. The following remarks seek to identify some of these themes that help form the religious atmosphere in which much of his fiction would eventually unfold.

To begin with, Greene is not so much interested in the Catholic teaching on the Eucharist itself as in the impact it has on the inner world of his characters. In *The Power and the Glory,* the sacrament's hold over the whiskey priest is so strong that it has penetrated his own identity and self-understanding. Despite his many sins and human frailties (of which he is keenly aware), he recognizes that he has been given the power to confect the Eucharist, something relatively few others can do (and now, except for him, no one at all in all of Mexico). This knowledge of the power of the priesthood is deeply embedded in his psyche and pushes him to do things that he himself otherwise would seek to avoid. In many ways, he embodies the words of the Apostle Paul who said, "I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 9-11).[8]

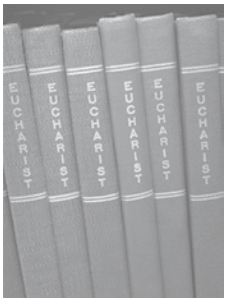
Throughout the novel, Greene sets up an interesting parallel between the wine needed to celebrate Mass and the brandy that has played such

a large role in his soiled reputation. Although wine is always scarce, he always seems to get his hands on a ready supply of brandy. This parallel resembles that made by the Apostle between a life lived according to the Spirit and one lived according to the flesh (Gal 5:16-26). The difference between these two potent and intoxicating beverages is that one has been specifically ordered by God to be part of the sacramental matter of the Eucharist, while the other is not. One points to the realm of grace; the other, to the realm of nature (the implication being *fallen* nature). Together, the wine and brandy point to the struggle going on within his own soul. Although this struggle is never fully resolved, the novel ends with the priest confessing sins, even though he knew he would likely succumb to again if the opportunity arose.

Catholicism, for Greene, became deeply embedded in his psyche and thus in his writing. He uses its principles to draft the main contours of the religious world his characters inhabit.

Another interesting parallel is the one Greene sets up between the whiskey priest and Padre José*, a priest who has sold out to the government, renounced his priesthood, and no longer exercises his ministry.* The whiskey priest readily admits that Padre José was always the better priest. Such an admission stems from his deep awareness of his own sinfulness and unworthiness to celebrate the sacraments. The difference between the two of them is stark. Before the suppression of the Church and its ministers, Padre José was a model priest, someone who made no waves, played by the rules, and was generally well-liked by the people. When the circumstances changed, however, and when it was no longer easy to profess the faith, let alone exercise the powers of the priesthood, the most important of which was to celebrate Mass and bring the Eucharist to the faithful, he recanted his faith, got married, refused to administer the sacraments, and even denied hearing the confession of the whiskey priest before his execution. The whiskey priest, by way of contrast, who was never considered a good priest by the people, by other priests, or even by himself, finds the courage, despite his many flaws, to exercise his ministry of bringing the Eucharist to the faithful in the face of grave danger and the threat of death.

Another parallel in the novel is the contrast between the whiskey



priest and the American outlaw, Calver, the man whom our nameless protagonist visits near the novel's end to hear his confession. Both are wanted men. One is a fugitive from American justice and has fled to Mexico; the other is trying to elude the Mexican authorities, has reluctantly decided to exercise his priestly powers even though it puts him in harm's way. Each man has his moral failings; each man has his own inner demons to deal with. Since the criminal's name, "Calver," so closely resembles the word, "Calvary," the place where Jesus died, one is first led to think that he might represent the good thief, who in Luke's Gospel hangs on the cross next to Jesus and repents of his sins (Lk 23:39-43). As it turns out, he resembles more the bad thief, since he is unrepentant and pleads with the priest as he nears death to take his weapons and use them against the police and possible escape. The priest, in turn, shows up drunk and cannot properly administer the sacrament. When seen in this light, the two characters represent an inversion of the event that took place on Calvary.

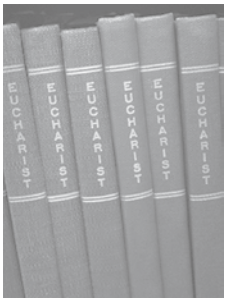
In confronting the story of the "whiskey priest", priests reading the novel are brought face-to-face with their own priestly narratives and need to ask themselves what kind of priest they wish to be.

The fact that the whiskey priest is nameless throughout the novel is yet another parallel that Greene sets up in the novel. By having no name, he has every name. Every priest has sins and weaknesses, some of which may be deeply rooted in his mind and heart and difficult to uproot. In confronting the story of this particular priest, priests reading the novel are brought face-to-face with their own priestly narratives and need to ask themselves what kind of priest they wish to be. Will they dwell on the level of appearances like Padre José and, when difficulties arise, take the path of least resistance, or summon the courage to stand up for the faith in difficult times and face whatever comes? There is a bit of the Padre José and the whiskey priest in every priest and, by way of extension, every believer. Perseverance is a virtue that requires deep soul searching, the kind that delves beneath appearances and struggles to name what one truly believes. For all his human failings, the whiskey priest does what Padre José is either incapable of or unwilling to do. He confronts his dark side and is able to quiet his inner demons and, despite his fears and inadequacies, do what a priest is ordained to do: bring the Body and Blood of Christ to God's people.

The role of the Eucharist in Greene's novels, however, is not limited merely to The Power and the Glory. In *The Heart of the Matter* (1948),[9] for example, he probes the internal world not of a priest, but this time of one of the faithful. Major Henry Scobie, a police officer in a British colony in East Africa, finds himself in an unhappy marriage, has had an affair with another woman, and acting out of pity for both his wife and lover resolves to come up with some sort of a solution. His answer is to commit suicide and making it seem as though he died from natural causes. As the novel unfolds, Scobie is haunted by his fear of death and eternal damnation on account of his affair. Having promised his wife that he would go to Mass with her upon her return from South Africa, he goes to confession but is refused absolution because he is not fully repentant of his affair. Believing he is damned anyway, he receives Holy Communion with his wife at Mass, knowing full well that he is in the state of mortal sin. His plan to kill himself stems from his being caught between two irreconcilable forces in his psyche: his desire to protect his wife and his desire to preserve his relationship with his lover. The Eucharist, in this instance, is an incarnation of the sacred that accuses him of his broken marriage and infidelity. Because neither one can be salvaged, his only solution is to exit the scene. In this instance, the Eucharist functions as a mirror that forces Scobie to enter into himself and make an honest assessment of his situation. The guilt it imposes on the man leads him to despair and the taking of his life. At the same time, it leaves him with a small glimmer of hope in Fr. Rank, the local priest who refuses him absolution and says he would pray for him, who understands that, in the end, God alone has the authority to judge a person for the life he or she has lived.

The Eucharist represents the incursion of the sacred into the outer world Greene's characters inhabit and the inner worlds of their conscious and unconscious minds.

One final example of the role the Eucharist plays in Greene's fiction comes in his short story, "The Hint of An Explanation" (1949),[10] which deals with the impact the sacrament has on the inner world of a child. The story begins with two strangers on a long train journey in a compartment that they have all to themselves. As the time passes, they begin talking to one another and discussing a number of topics, finally coming to the topic of God. The narrator of the story is an agnostic, while the



other traveler is a Catholic. When the Catholic hears the complaints of the narrator regarding his lack of faith in a God who would allow so much agony in the world, the Catholic responds that we have no answers in this life and have only hints. He then goes on to relate one of his early childhood memories about a baker named "Blacker" who was a free thinker with a deep hatred for Catholics and all that they stood for. As the plot unfolds, Blacker, an embodiment of evil, tries to befriend the young boy by inviting him into his store, letting him play with an electric train set, and telling him that he could have it if he brought him one of the hosts from Sunday Mass. At first, the boy says no, but eventually he succumbs to the allure of play and succeeds in taking the host from his mouth when at Mass and placing it between two small pieces of paper and putting it in his pocket. He then nearly forgets all about it until night fall when he finds the host in his pocket as he undresses for bed and puts it on his nightstand. It is at that point that he realizes that he cannot do what he said he would. The idea of transubstantiation is no longer an abstract theory but is now lodged deep within his psyche. He now realizes that what he had laid beside his bed was "something of infinite value."

When he hears Blacker's whistle outside, he takes the consecrated host lodged between the two small pieces of paper and swallows it, paper and all. When he asks for the host, the boy tells him that he has swallowed it and tells him to go away. Blacker goes away distraught (and weeping), for as the embodiment of evil, he was probably going to put it under a microscope to assure himself that it was merely a piece of bread, before desecrating it.

As the story ends, the narrator tells the Catholic that he probably owes a lot to Blacker, and the Catholic responds that he does, for he is a happy man. It is at that point that the narrator notices that, when his fellow traveler rises at the end of the journey to take his bag from the rack, his coat collar opens and discloses the collar of a priest. The story demonstrates the powerful sway the Eucharist has on the inner world of children and, in this particular instance, brought happiness and a firm direction to a child's life.

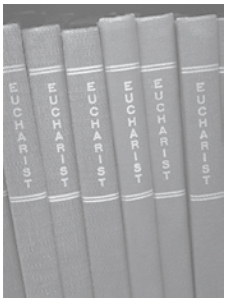
Conclusion

Graham Greene was one of the preeminent English novelists of the twentieth century and his impact on novelists continues to this day. A convert to Catholicism, he used the underlying contours of the faith

— the God question, the conflict between good and evil, humanity's sinful condition, redemption through Christ, the mediation of grace through the Church and her sacraments, and more — to create the spiritual and psychological world that the characters of his novels inhabited. This atmosphere penetrates the mindset of his characters and leads them to the decisions they make regarding God, life, others, and ultimately themselves.

Greene's own spiritual journey brought him from being an agnostic to a practicing Catholic to what he would later call a "Catholic agnostic." His attitude toward the Church changed over time and was due, at least in part, to his own struggles with the faith as they applied to his personal life and his exploration of ideas that often led beyond the pale of Catholic orthodoxy. Be that as it may, it is clear that the Catholic faith influenced him to the point that it had penetrated his own inner world and those of his characters. It would not be far afield to suggest that many of the inner personal struggles of his characters reflect those which he himself experienced and dealt with varying degrees of success and failure. When seen in this light, his fiction is a way he sought to understand and deal with the vying voices in his own inner world.

The Eucharist represents the incursion of the sacred into the outer world Greene's characters inhabit and the inner worlds of their conscious and unconscious minds. For some characters, as in the whiskey priest of *The Power and the Glory*, it is an instrument of healing and self-discovery that calls forth the best in what, by all others counts, would be deemed a failed life, a failed faith, and a failed priesthood. For others, as in Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter*, it has become a dreaded sign of judgment for a life lived out of misplaced pity rather than an authentic search for truth. For the priest in "The Hint of An Explanation," it stands for the childhood discovery of the sacred and the happiness it brings him throughout his adult priestly life. Although these diverse influences stem from Greene's imagination, they also likely point to tensions within his own inner life and his intense (yet precarious) relationship with the Catholic faith. Although the Eucharist stands for the objective presence of the sacred in the world, the characters of "Greeneland" (and perhaps Greene himself) perceive it and react to it differently, depending on where they stand in relation to the faith and the one sacrament that, above all others, represents its source, summit, and very lifeblood.



Notes

[1] See, for example, Bernard Bergonzi, "The Catholic Novel: Is There Any Such Thing?" *Commonweal* April 30, 2007), https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/catholic-novel.

[2] For more bibliographical information on Graham Greene, see "Greeneland: The World of Graham Greene," http://greeneland.tripod.com/bio.htm.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See, for example, Chilton Williamson, Jr, "Musings of a 'Catholic Agnostic,'" *Crisis* (February 11, 2020), https://www.crisismagazine.com/2020/musings-of-a-catholic-agnostic. See also, Joseph Pearce, "Graham Greene: Doubter Par Excellence," *Catholic Authors*, http://www.catholicauthors.com/greene.html.

[5] For a treatment of Greene's personal problems, see Michael Thornton, "The Decadent World of Graham Greene—The High Priest of Darkness," *Daily Mail* (March 19, 2008), https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-539011/The-decadent-world-Graham-Greene--high-priest-darkness.html.

[6] See Emily R. Brower, "'If I Were in a Book:' Language and Sacrament in Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter," Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature* 69/4(Fall, 2017): 240-53,73, https://search.proquest.com/docview/2085067284?pq-origsite=gscholar .

[7] Graham Green, *The Power and the Glory* (London: W. Heinemann, 1940).

[8] All quotations from. Scripture come from *New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[9] Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* (New York: Viking. Press, 1948).

[10] Graham Greene, "The Hint of An Explanation," *Commonweal* (February 11, 1949), https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/hint-explanation.

In Christ's Peace
Deceased Members

Rev. Ronald Sayes
Archdiocese of Detroit

Rev. Andrew Beaudoin, SSS
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 J, K, L, and M are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during May and June.

EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

The Domestic Table and the Lord's Table: Rehearsing the Habits of a Eucharistic People

by Michael DeSanctis

What does the Eucharist teach us about how we share meals and what do our family meals contribute to our understanding of the Eucharist?

"[T]the Lord of hosts will provide for all peoples
a feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines."
Isaiah 25:6

Early Experiences of Eucharist and Eucharistic Devotion

I CONSIDER MYSELF BLESSED FOR HAVING BEEN BORN TO PARENTS WHO FULLY embraced the changes in Catholic worship issued by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). My father, a man of considerable piety who'd leave his bed on certain Saturday evenings to participate in the rites of the Nocturnal Adoration Society, impressed on me and my siblings at an early age the importance of fearing God. Never, however, were we to fear the immense mystery of the Eucharist, which was, after all, God's way of holding God's people in a tight embrace. My father impressed upon us that it was Jesus himself who instituted the sacrament, the same Jesus whose smiling face and ever-outstretched arms we took from Bible pictures at bedtime, yet somehow Christified beyond the limits of our senses. In my father's mind, eucharistic prayer was the *antidote* to the feeling of shame or inadequacy that often prevents Christians from drawing close to their God, not its cause. He knew deep down that even the outward extravagance of the Mass for which the Church liked claiming responsibility was, in some roundabout way, God's own doing. It was the handiwork of a divine parent as eager to set a beautiful supper-table before his children as any other mother or father might be.

One of my earliest memories of my father's high regard for the

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).

sacrament involves the time he welcomed into our home the chaplain for his adoration group, a good-natured monsignor known widely for his talent with a basketball or tennis racket. At some point during his visit, the priest produced a monstrance from the velveteen satchel he carried with him. At my father's encouragement, he placed the object atop the boxy console of our TV, a makeshift altar of sorts from which it could be admired. The two agreed that it would look even better displayed on a proper altar in a church. The circular frame of the *luna* at its center served not only as a temporary home for Christ's round and wafered Presence but also as a window through which their fellow adorers might glimpse heaven itself.

To me, the monstrance looked fine where it was, a golden sunburst-of-a-thing, more brilliant in its own way than any episode of "Bonanza" or "Hogan's Heroes" that found its way into our modest living room by way of a glowing cathode tube. What the occasion sealed in my mind, however, was the inseparable connection between home and church, a reality to which I'd been introduced much earlier in life through my paternal grandfather's work as a professional church painter-decorator. Ecclesiastical goods were a regular sight in the duplex-style house that doubled as his business address and in whose upper flat I was raised until the age of five. The elaborate stenciling and faux-marble treatments he'd applied to its walls and ceilings weren't terribly different from those I'd watched him use to beautify the interiors of dozens of area Catholic churches. To have beheld in that household the sight of a glittering monstrance, then, was not altogether unique for me. Our house and God's house were simply two parts of an enchanted landscape through which I assumed every family moved as fluidly as mine.

Marveling at the surface luxury of things was *not* part of my mother's approach to the faith, I hesitate to note, not even those deemed "sacred" by Catholic practice. As one of eight children born to Calabrian immigrants, the contents of her religious imagination were drawn more from pictures of olive-skinned Madonnas and the divinations of Italy's peasant class than any canon or catechism promulgated by the Church. Her parents rarely succeeded in taking their children to Mass on Sundays, for example, but were certain every Monday morning to visit the altars of genial San Antonio, San Rocco, and San Rosalia to be found in the basement-grotto of a nearby church. Hers was a piety inherited from people of little means who worked the fields and farms of those on whom *fortuna* had apparently smiled more favorably.

They could hardly imagine the rites of the Church as belonging to them in any practical way. Baptisms, weddings, and funerals were the business of well-groomed priests with uncalloused hands, the sons of wealthier families better suited to titles like *don* or *monsignore*. One watched them work their "magic" from afar, as laypersons did almost every other action reserved for the interior of a Catholic church. It was enough that God, the divine *Signore*, noted their presence there and rewarded it as any earthly landlord or paymaster would at the end of the day.

The whole of life, it seemed to me then, as it does even more now, amounts to a banquet laid before us by our creator and presided over by Christ, a vast table of the choicest foods meant to nourish and sustain our souls.

These things notwithstanding, my mother was one of the first laywomen of our parish in the early 1970s to receive Communion in the hand, a gesture she adopted with unapologetic enthusiasm. She'd been raised in a household where people spoke with their hands, after all. Seldom in that place would a person pass up the opportunity to caress the face of a loved one or deliver "*uno scafo in capone*" — a swat to the head — to any misbehaving child who deserved it. The fleshy, *gnocchi*-shaped body-parts of infant children were meant not only to be diapered and dressed with affection but endlessly kissed, pinched, stroked, patted, and tickled, their fannies and toes nibbled on with a playful "*Ti mangerò*!" — "I'll eat you (up)!" She knew that to consume the wafer-borne Jesus at Mass was somehow to be consumed *by* him, too. Yet, burying her head in her hands upon returning to her pew after receiving Sunday communion she showed little interest in such heady theology. It was enough simply to take Jesus at his word, let his flesh and blood comingle with her own, this Savior who promised never to abandon those whom he loved (John 14:18). She would no more regard herself "unworthy" of holding in her hands the little, white host-presence of her Savior in the Eucharist than holding in her womb the children she birthed at the Church's urging and dutifully presented for rebirthing through the sacrament of baptism into what Saint Cyprian of Antioch (4th c.) is known to have called "other Christs."

Dining in the Kingdom of God

I present all of this to set the scene for describing the so-called "house

Masses" my parents hosted several times in our home when I was a teen. Consistent with the spirit of openness and solicitude that possessed the Church in the years immediately following the Second Vatican Council, they invited a variety of family members, friends, and neighbors (many of whom weren't even Catholic) to gather in our living room for a celebration in the vernacular of what was being called the "new liturgy." A well-worn card table placed in the center of the room served as the altar, its blemishes only partly concealed beneath a freshly-ironed tablecloth. Though our pastor and his associate priests had brought with them a Mass kit containing the requisite chalice and paten, they did not disapprove of letting a paper plate serve as a ciborium for those communion hosts awaiting consecration during the service. Fully vested for the ceremony and as crisply synchronized in their gestures as they'd appear together any Sunday morning in the sanctuary of our church, they wasted little time transitioning into greatly relaxed versions of themselves when our worshiping gave way to the minor feast of Italian delicacies and light conversation that awaited us afterward at other locations throughout the house.

Once more, it was the blending of formality and informality, the merger of the sacred and "profane" marking the event, that mesmerized me at the time and contributes still to my appreciation for what Blessed Sacrament Father and former *Emmanuel* magazine editor Eugene LaVerdiere, SSS (1936-2008), long ago described as "dining in the kingdom of God."[1] The whole of life, it seemed to me then, as it does even more now, amounts to a banquet laid before us by our creator and presided over by Christ, a vast table of the choicest foods meant to nourish and sustain our souls. And the sacrament we Catholics encounter at our altar-tables, in which Christ makes food for us of his own body and blood, expresses this reality most concretely.

Now in my mid-60s, I'm more desperate than ever to pass along these convictions to my own four children, all young adults with spouses or housemates of one sort or another whose connection to the Church and its rites, I must confess, is tenuous at best. Years of parochial school education were simply not enough to stave off the effects on their minds of the wider culture surrounding them. From all appearances, the latter chose decades ago to abandon the ritual-laden art of dining in the company of one's closest acquittances, let alone the citizenry of some aethereal "Kingdom of God." More often than not, what passed for family meals in the households of schoolmates they entered during routine sleep-overs, for example, amounted to catch-

as-catch-can affairs in which food was seldom consumed among others but instead alone, before a TV screen, computer, or in transit, through some version of "grazing." The communal act of "dining" had effectively been replaced by the purely biological act of "eating," and with it any expectation of mealtime social interaction of the sort that has historically distinguished the intake of nourishment by human beings from the habits of lower animals.

So lively are the table rituals that bind the members of my family, that I can only wish the same were true of worship within the parish to which my wife and I belong.

Nevertheless, sitting with their companions today at the meals my wife and I place before them on holidays and special occasions, my children can't help but offer me insights into the sort of divine banqueting that Father LaVerdiere wrote about so movingly. Never do they arrive at our table lacking in appetites, nor depart without carrying large quantities of food home with them in the restaurant-style takeout containers my wife is always sure to keep in great supply. In fact, their perpetual hunger reminds me of the deep longing for fulfillment by something beyond themselves exhibited by deeply religious people. Our hope is that some part of who *we are* goes home with them, bound up in the food-tokens we've prepared to sustain their presence on this earth for another week or two.

Like all acts of love, however, this one exposes us to the possibility of rejection. By opening our home and table to the horde that bears our name, we extend them permission to scrutinize us at our most domestic and vulnerable. Responsible for every slice of overcooked meat they're expected to swallow, or fancy desert idea gone awry. We likewise come face-to-face with the sacrificial dimension of meal-making reflected in the toll it takes on our checkbook and the time spent housecleaning, fetching groceries, and cooking it ultimately requires. This is not to mention the most obvious sacrifice that every meal entails, owing to the fact that an array of perfectly healthy animals, fruits, and vegetables must perish in order that we might feast on their remains. Every meal, we've come to realize, amounts to a transmission of life-giving energy from one of God's creations to another, a solemn transaction in which loss and gain, diminution and increase, death

and life are real and inseparable. What we call "metabolization" is the body's way of reducing the dead to their elemental state, a thoroughly corporeal "Rite of Committal" that reverences and inhumes the deceased within the nooks and crannies of the body of another, like the early Christians catacombed their dead.

Prefiguring of the Heavenly Banquet

As for what my children literally "bring to the table" in our home, I can say that they are essential to the riotous, laughter-filled prefiguration of the heavenly banquet that our meals together inevitably represent. There's a seeming irony here, given their current estrangement from anything resembling formal religion.[2] Yet, nothing becomes plainer to me as I behold my children and their respective partners engrossed in dinner-table conversation, in their own candid vulnerability, that Christ is using them to teach *me* something important about the nature of the kingdom of God. The sheer diversity of lifestyles, habits and interests they reflect challenges any assumption I maintain about who can or cannot claim inclusion in the vast flock of the soiled and stiff-necked that Christ deigns to shepherd for the sake of redemption.

Sitting at one corner of the table, for instance, one son, the shyest of my offspring and in some ways the most cautious, sits beside the lovely, bi-racial girl he's brought into our circle, fearless of the stares that might still cost him in some settings. On the other side of the relish dish is his sister, a behavioral health nurse whose childhood persona still shows through the hardened veneer of her grown-up self. Another son, a restaurant manager and part-time musician and his wife, a lab technician and part-time artist, are there, too. Together they form a matched pair if ever there was one, the body art so liberally applied to their exposed parts as much an expression of their unity as it is any gesture of individuation. Sitting beside each other, with their inky filigree seeming to extend beyond the limits of their flesh, they evoke depictions in art of Scripture's first couple, Adam and Eve, whose fallen selves nearly always appear bound together by tendrilous vine-growth of some sort. Closing out the group is my daughter and her fiancé whose recent decision to share a house will soon persuade them, I hope, to share a more formal union, a name, and the blessing of children of their own. Both are hardworking and destined for professional success, she as a social worker, he as a financial adviser.

At our table each bears a name and a place, each a story to contribute to the general conversation that proceeds organically over second helpings of honeyed ham or my wife's famous mashed potatoes. The sole condition demanded of their presence there is that they luxuriate in the love we extend them.

From Our Homes to God's

So lively are the table rituals that bind the members of my family, that I can only wish the same were true of worship within the parish to which my wife and I belong. A meal of unmistakable importance routinely unfolds at the center of its regular place of gathering too, infinite in its effect on our souls. For it, Christ stands aproned as "Host and host," (I like to say, divine "Wayfarer and wafer" in one) who assumes such vulnerability as to make a meal of himself for those he loves. By self-immolation he feeds his flock, the response to which rightly entails some measure of solemnity. Supping on the flesh of one's savior *should* be regarded "serious and dignified" business, as any dictionary definition of the term suggests. Nevertheless, a solemn demeanor need not be mistaken for the overly glum appearance some believers prefer to adopt at the moment the focus of the Mass in which they're participating turns from the action at the ambo to that of the altar. Pope Francis himself has encouraged Catholics possessed of an overly-sullen disposition concerning all matters religious to consider the example of the saints, for whom "funeral wake faces"[3] or a visage resembling "pickled peppers,"[4] he argues, were unfamiliar things.

We ought to bring to our involvement in every sacramental rite enacted by the Church — but especially to the Eucharist — the lessons of the home regarding love's breadth and generosity.

The only gloomy looks at the table in my household seem to be those that appear *after* family celebrations, as dishes are cleared, handsome platters and bowls full of food are transferred to Tupperware, and our guests begin to fret about returning to the workaday lives that await them beyond the limits of our time together. We Catholics can greatly benefit from bringing to every domestic meal the same appreciation for the sacramentality underlying all existence that has been one of the Church's great charisms from the start. Likewise, we ought to

bring to our involvement in every sacramental rite enacted by the Church — but especially to the Eucharist — the lessons of the home regarding love's breadth and generosity. Christ abides at its table as surely as he does the altar-tables of our churches and calls us to each in ways both bold and subtle.

The Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) famously argued that "the Eucharist makes the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist." Traditionally, at least, a similar reciprocity has operated within our families, whose members find such value in "breaking of bread" together that they end up perpetuating this action in various forms throughout their lives. At both the "table of the Church" and the "table of the home," each of us enjoys a name and a place, each a true sense of kinship with those gathered there. Our baptisms make this so. The great hyphen-of-a-thing at which we gather leaves *us* hyphenated, bound to each other in spirit and love, and occupants in the end not of two households but one.

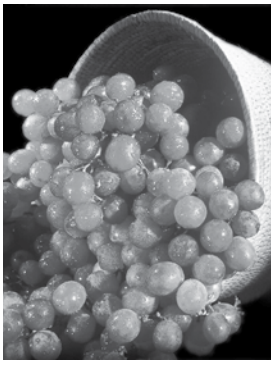
Notes

[1] In his *Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist According to the Gospel of Luke* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1994) Father LaVerdiere systematically examined the collection of meal stories from Luke in which Jesus is presented either as guest or host, all of which in some way point to the heavenly banquet we call "Eucharist." Such stories are pertinent to the Christians even today, LaVerdiere argued, who constitute "a people on a journey, a people of hospitality, both offered and received" (9).

[2] As I've noted previously in the pages of Emmanuel, however, the professional goals my children have adopted suggest that they benefitted in less obvious ways from the sacramentality and concern for meal symbolism that characterized the home in which they were raised. See Michael E. DeSanctis. "My 'Death Metal' Kids: Closet Sacramentalists." Emmanuel, March/April 2018, pp. 72-77.

[3] See the pope's Mass homily at Casa Santa Marta Chapel, December 21, 2017 (https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-chronicles/pope-redeemed-christians-are-joyful-dont-have-funeral-wake-faces).

[4] Mass homily at Casa Santa Marta Chapel, May 10, 2013 (https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-sad-christian-faces-are-like-pickled-peppers).



EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-8)

by Bernard Camiré, SSS

What does the parable of the Friend at Midnight (Lk 11:5-8) teach us about perseverance?

Blessed Sacrament Father Bernard Camiré, SSS is the parochial vicar of Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City. His most recent book is entitled, Praise God in His Holy Place: Psalms and Canticles of Scripture for Eucharistic Adoration. This reflection on the Parable of the Good Samaritan originally appeared in the Saint Jean Baptiste Church parish bulletin.

The Narrative of the Parable

THIS PARABLE, WHICH ILLUSTRATES THE ATTITUDE THAT SHOULD CHARACTERIZE Christian prayer, is found within a collection of sayings attached to the evangelist Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer. It is often compared to the parable of The Widow and the Judge (Lk 18:1-8), which also is found in a context that has to do with prayer and features characters who do not give up in the face of resistance.

The parable of "the friend at midnight" narrates a rather simple story. A man receives the unexpected visit of a friend at midnight — not an unusual occurrence, since travelers often journeyed in the evening to avoid the heat of the sun. In keeping with the demands of hospitality, the man must offer his visitor not scraps of food but an ample meal. Since he has no food on hand, he goes to the house of another friend, a neighbor, who is fast asleep with his family, and asks for three loaves of bread. The neighbor, obviously annoyed by the request, initially refuses; he does not want to disturb his sleeping family. Though the request is eventually supplied, its granting is not recounted. Instead, the narrative rapidly shifts to an application, namely, that the man of whom the request was made will respond to his neighbor's importunity not out of friendship but because of his persistence.

The Meaning of the Parable

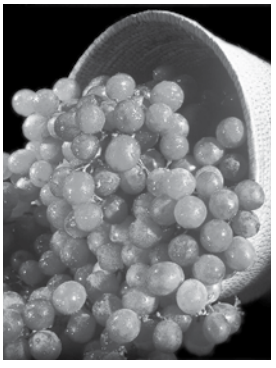
While the parable appears to be quite simple, scripture scholars are divided as to its exact interpretation. Does the parable's message

hinge on the actions of the persistent friend, or is the focus on the man who is roused from sleep and eventually answers the friend's request? Some interpreters maintain that the parable's emphasis is on the man who is awakened and importuned. They base their stand on the supposition that Jesus sets before his disciples: that though someone, disturbed from his sleep, might be reluctant to grant a friend's request for food, he will furnish whatever is needed because of the friend's persistence. The message, here, would be that if a cranky individual will in the end supply a request, how much more will God answer our persistent requests.

Jesus teaches that if perseverance achieves its end in everyday human relationships, how much more in our relationship with God.

Other scholars are of the opinion that the above interpretation has merit only if the parable is read in isolation from its context. The parable, in fact, is situated by Luke between a prayer of petition and a saying on the need for petition. The specific request for "loaves" echoes the petition for "bread" in the Lord's Prayer (v.3) that immediately precedes the parable. The verses that follow the parable (vv.9-13) stress the need for "asking," "seeking" and "knocking," the very actions of the persistent friend in the parable. The persistence of this individual, then, is the parable's focus.

This parable, like all parables, intends to teach only one truth; the details are incidental. God, here, is not compared to an unwilling neighbor, any more than is God compared to an unjust judge in the parable of The Widow and the Judge. The lesson, here, is the importance of trust and persistence in prayer. Jesus teaches that if perseverance achieves its end in everyday human relationships, how much more in our relationship with God. We must never desist in asking our gracious God to grant our worthy requests. Genuine prayer is always fruitful.



EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

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

by Michael Perez, SSS

Brother Michael Perez, SSS has been a formator for the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for more than 30 years and is an expert in Eymardian spirituality.

May

"FINALLY, I ARRIVED HERE, HAPPY, CONTENT, AND QUITE WELL. I WAS WELCOMED... with fondness, like a brother…hurry up, come, we are in heaven here." During the months of novitiate with the Society of Mary, Father Eymard again expresses the joy of his soul as follows: "I felt a strong attraction to live the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to study constantly her obedience and divine love. O Mary! What have I done to deserve to be a Marist?"

Saint Peter Julian Eymard
Letter to a friend August 20, 1839

Peter Julian Eymard expressed such great joy upon entering the novitiate of the Society of Mary in 1839. Reflecting upon the joy he expressed in his letters brought back the memories of my own experience of entering the novitiate of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, on the night of August 7, 1963. We were brought to the chapel to visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Then I was brought to my room, where my eyes caught sight of a small black book with the word "Constitutions" written on the cover. I immediately started reading it. The following number revealed the beauty of the group I was joining: "Let all our religious fully understand that they have been chosen and have made profession primarily to serve the Divine Person of Jesus Christ, our God, and King, truly, really and substantially present in the Sacrament of His Love." (Const. #6.1). These experiences of "the call" are beautifully described in the Gospel of John: "The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where

are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So, they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon" (Jn 1:35-39).

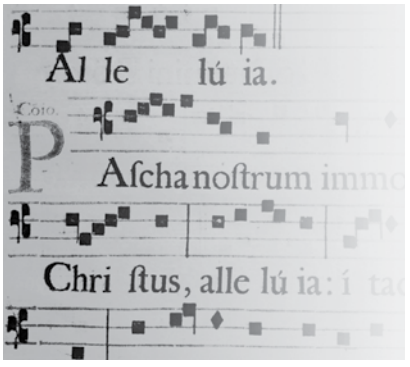
June

"We don't want to bear the name of reparation, but rather Religious of the Blessed Sacrament. We wish to embrace the Eucharistic idea in all its aspects. We want to include the active and contemplative aspects: active to spread the Eucharistic circle through Associates, to undertake retreat work, the First Communion of adults and later the Association of Retired Priests."

Saint Peter Julian Eymard
To Father Raymond DeCuers: March 31, 1856

Peter Julian Eymard wanted our exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as a perpetual Corpus Christi Feast. In his day "Reparation" was a national awareness of the French Revolution and it's affects upon the Catholic Church in France. In particular, amongst the groups Father Eymard encountered which were gathering to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, there was a desire to organize around this central idea of eucharistic "reparation." Instead, as the excerpt above from a letter Father Eymard wrote to his earliest eucharistic companion Father Raymond DeCuers indicates, Eymard's vision of Eucharist was much broader.

In the method of prayer he set out for the religious orders and associates he established what he called the "Four Ends of Sacrifice," namely: Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation and Petition. At the same time, he wrote in the founding "Constitutions" of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament number 17, that the "best" manner of eucharistic prayer for each individual religious comes from the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit" in a "humble and upright heart."



PASTORAL LITURGY

The Revised *Order of Baptism of Children* – Part 6

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

We have been sharing pastoral commentary on the second edition of the *Order of Baptism of Children* [OBC] these past months. The new "order" became mandatory last Easter, but due to COVID, many leaders have not seen or used the new rite. Regular *Emmanuel* readers may be familiar with our website (emmanuelpublishing.org) where this author also has a blog providing additional resources that complement this column. Take a moment to download resource with a detailed outline of the table of contents and readings listed in the OBC. This column reviews the commentary's appendix and highlights important portions.

Many pastoral liturgists, including myself, are puzzled by the placing of important pieces of rituals in an appendix. For example, we note that in the *Roman Missal,* the Sprinkling Rite is in the appendix, yet it is a regular part of Easter Time. This placement makes rituals relegated to the back of liturgical books seem unimportant. OBC has the order within Mass as the bulk of the appendix. It is important to note that the previous chapters are *not* celebrated within Mass. By situating the chapters as such OBC, in essence, has baptisms outside of Mass as the norm. Many parishes, however, have baptisms *within* Mass to fulfill what OBC 250 states:

> To illustrate the paschal character of Baptism, it is recommended that the Sacrament be celebrated at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday, when the Church commemorates the Resurrection of the Lord. Furthermore, on a Sunday, Baptism may be celebrated also within Mass, so that the whole community may be able to take part in the rite and so that the connection between Baptism and the Most Holy Eucharist may stand out more clearly.

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 and 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.

Sadly, for this pastoral liturgist, a caveat is added to end this paragraph: "Nevertheless, this should not happen too often (See OBC, Introduction 9)." This statement flies in the face of the more profound theological views stated above, and plays down the importance of having the community present to witness with joy, as the new rite says: "the Church shared your happiness. Today this joy has brought you to the Church to give thanks to God for the gift of your children" (OBC 259). One would hope that the authors of the OBC were intending the broader theological view that a "church" building represents the people, but without the people of God, there is no Church.

OBC 251 reminds us of some differences between a baptism within Mass and outside of Mass:

- For Mass, the ritual begins with the Sign of the Cross (OBC 258), whereas for outside of Mass, the ritual differs because the signing of the cross for the first time takes precedence as an important ritual moment.
- The Rite of Receiving the children is done at the beginning of Mass and the regular Mass Greeting and Penitential Act are omitted.
- The Gloria is sung or said.
- There are many options for readings (see OBC 269).
- The Creed is not said due to the profession of faith in the ritual before baptism.
- The Universal Prayer is taken from the OBC with addition of prayer for the needs of the Church and world.
- The blessing at the end of Mass is from the rite (for the parents and community).

Some other notes that are key to the ritual during the Mass.

- The entrance (song) is done while the priest goes to the door of the church to greet the parents, godparents and child where the opening rite is done (257).
- After the opening greeting and reception, with newly composed statements of welcome, the celebrant then asks the parents the questions about the name of the child, their intentions, and the responsibilities of their faith.
- The rite has Psalm 85 or another suitable song as a processional song from the doors of the church to the altar, with the family and ministers processing too (266).
- The "Glory to God" may follow after the celebrant has gone to the chair (266).

- When the font is outside of the view of the congregation, there is a procession to it (277). Also, in this paragraph there are other choices for pastoral adaptation due to the nature of the liturgical space. The procession may be accompanied by Psalm 23.
- During Easter Time, the water has already been blessed (279). Other times, the water is blessed with the formula in this paragraph. One could argue, that for some churches, this *is* where the holy water is always used and always blessed. Therefore, the blessing would be omitted at other times of the year.

The second piece to the appendix is the Order of Baptism for One Child within Mass. This is the same as the other appendix ritual within Mass with multiple children.

We have completed a brief overview and pastoral review of the second edition of the OBC. The texts have been revised to clarify what is happening, to better reflect the theology, and express the pastoral realities more lyrically. In the July/August column, I will identify some key issues yet to be addressed by OBC, and some pastoral adaptations that are not in the ritual but are commonplace across the globe.

Organizing for May/June 2021

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

A few regular celebrations during these months:

- Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker, Saturday, May 1
- Feast of Saints Philip and James, apostles, Monday, May 3
- Cinco de Mayo, Wednesday, May 5
- National Day of Prayer (USA), First Thursday of the month, May 6
- Holocaust Remembrance Day (USA), First Friday of the month, May 7
- Mother's Day (BB 1724-1728), Second Sunday, May 9 (6th Sunday of Easter)
- Optional Memorial of Saint Damien Joseph de Veuster of Moloka'i, presbyter, Monday, May 10
- Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament/ Our Lady of Fatima, Thursday, May 13
- Feast of Saint Matthias, apostle, Friday, May 14

- Saint Paschal Baylon, religious and eucharistic saint, Monday, May 17
- **Solemnity of the Ascension of Our LORD** (On Sunday, May 16; Thursday, May 13 only in ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Philadelphia and the State of Nebraska.)
- **Solemnity of Pentecost, Sunday, May 23**
- Memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church, Monday after Pentecost, May 24
- Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Sunday, May 30
- Feast of the Visitation and Memorial Day (CHBP), Order for Visiting a Cemetery (BB 1734 – 1754), May 31
- Rogation Days; Blessing of Fields and Gardens (CHBP)
- Confirmation of children baptized as infants
- First Holy Communion
- **Devotion to Mary**
    - Regina Caeli; Eastertime Marian Prayer (CHBP)
    - Crowning an Image of Mary (CB 1033-1055 and Rites Book)

- **Older Americans Month**
  - Blessing of Elderly People Confined to their Homes (BB 363 – 368)
  - Anointing of the Sick (PCS)

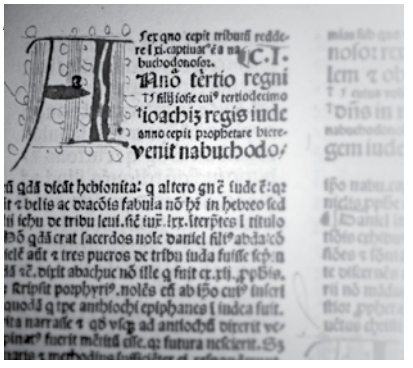
June

- Memorial of Saint Justin, martyr, Tuesday, June 1
- **Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Sunday, June 6**
    - First Communion Children process during special Exposition/Procession with the Blessed Sacrament (See *Holy Communion & Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* for procession details: Paragraphs 101 –108)
- Friday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost: Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 11
- Saturday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost: Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, June 12
- Father's Day: (CHBP or BB 1729 – 1733), Third Sunday, June 20
- Solemnity of the Nativity of John the Baptist, Thursday, June 24
- Memorial of Saint Irenaeus, bishop and martyr, Monday, June 28

- Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, apostles, Tuesday, June 29

Please note that the *Lectionary Supplement* has readings for the following days in May (none for June):

- Monday, May 10, Saint Damien
- Thursday, May 13, Our Lady of Fatima (Contact this author for the readings for Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament)
- Friday, May 21, Saint Christopher Magallanes
- Saturday, May 22, Saint Rita of Cascia



BREAKING THE WORD

Scriptural Reflections — Homiletics

by Paul Bernier, SSS

Blessed Sacrament Father Paul Bernier is a popular writer, preacher, and director of retreats. His most recent book is *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral Approach.* Second Edition (Revised and Expanded), published by Orbis Books, 2015.

May 2, 2021
Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:26-31; Psalm 22: 26-28, 30-32; 1 John 3:18-24; John 15:1-8

Saint John stresses the importance of our *abiding* in Jesus, even as he abides in us. Today's gospel passage, as well as the priestly prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper from which it is taken, is suffused with a stress on the unity that should exist between God and ourselves — along with a unity with each other. We can dwell on the intimacy that this implies. However, it goes far deeper than that: this is an identity rooted in the life we enjoy in Christ. To use a Pauline expression, we are the body of Christ. As the image of the vine implies, the very life we enjoy is because of the life-giving sap we receive from the vine. Without this, we shrivel and die.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna, in her wonderful book *God for Us,* states, "he [Jesus] is who and what God is; he is who and what we are to become" (HarperCollins, 1993). This very Johannine theology expresses that to be in Christ is to draw our lifeblood, our identity, our purpose in life from that relationship. Outside that relationship there is no life — at least not if we're speaking spiritually. Just as the sap runs from vine to branches, so the life-giving Spirit runs from Jesus to us. Jesus is our way to the Father. We experience communion with God in and through our communion with Jesus, for we are his branches.

Our Christian life is to bear fruit. Jesus says that unless we bear fruit we will be cut off and burned. We should not use this to prove the reality of hell or purgatory. But Jesus goes on to say that "whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit." Bearing fruit is the purpose of Christian life; it is not simply to avoid sin and enjoy heaven someday.

We are told that by bearing fruit God will be glorified. Jesus expects his disciples to be fruitful precisely because he will be acting in and through us — if we but use the grace and strength he gives us. The first reading, that introduces Saul (Paul) to the Jerusalem community, has probably been chosen to show Paul as an example of one who bore much fruit. He was able to say that "the grace that was given to me has not been wasted. Indeed, I have worked harder than all the others — not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

The image of the vine invites us to consider how we experience communion with God in Christ. The prime means we have for this today is the Eucharist that we celebrate at least weekly. All of the prayers there are offered to God the Father through Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. There also we share in the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, a covenant made possible because of the deep love that God has for us, thus making us God's people. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that "The Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being. It is the culmination both of God's action sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship men (and women) offer to Christ and through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit" (1325).

Finally, we should ask exactly what kind of fruit Jesus expects us to bear? Probably the main fruit, from which everything else will flow, is love. It is the one commandment Jesus left us at the Last Supper: that we love one another with the same love that Jesus himself demonstrated throughout his entire life, and especially in his suffering and death on a cross. "I give you a new commandment," Jesus told us, "love one another. You must love one another just as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognize you as my disciples" (John 13:34-35). The damning corollary here is that if we do not have love for one another, no one will even suspect that we are followers of Jesus. 1 John 4:7-8 takes this a step further: "Let us love one another, since love is from God and everyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever fails to love does not know God, because God is love."

As the memorial of Jesus' sacrificial love for us, the Mass reminds us that when Jesus was scourged and nailed to the cross, he did not curse those who put him there. But he loved and prayed for his persecutors: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Saint John also tells us that "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water" (John

19:34). The Fathers of the Church have interpreted this to refer to the twin sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. Each time we share in the Eucharist we nourish ourselves with that saving blood, that life-giving sap that enlivens and strengthens us so that we might truly abide in Christ and Christ in us.

May 9, 2021
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Psalm 98:1-4; 1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17

Today's gospel passage is exceedingly rich. There are a number of themes to choose from (all of which are related to one another): the confidence that we are loved by God; the challenge to remain (abide) in that love; the assurance that our lives can be filled with joy; the one commandment Jesus gave us; that we have been chosen to bear fruit, and so on.

I've chosen to focus on the commandment Jesus gave us as he was coming to the end of his life: that we love one another as Jesus loved us. In one sentence this sums up everything it means to be a follower of Christ. Jesus tells us succinctly that we should love one another; but he then gives us himself as the model for that love. Jesus goes on to note that the depth of his own love for us will be shown in his willingness to lay down his life for us. Jesus, of course, showed us his love throughout his public life; it was not something restricted to the cross. However, his willingness to truly lay down his life for us is such a powerful proof of the actual depth of that love, that it becomes enormously psychologically compelling. There is no way to doubt that Jesus meant what he said and that, as Saint John tells us, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved us to the end (John 13:1).

The love of Jesus for us is the source of our love for one another. Jesus' love is the model for our love. He calls us to the same kind of radical love that he himself shows. This is not really a commandment. It is as if, being bathed in the love of God, our own lives become capable of loving as Jesus did. It is the natural consequence of being loved — in the same way that children who sense they are deeply loved by their parents are enabled to love others in return. Our ability to love is more than simply a Christian obligation; through grace it becomes a way of life. God's love for Jesus, and Jesus' love for us, makes us people who

can love one another. And, as Jesus tells us in John 13:35, this love is how people will know whether or not we are actually his disciples.

This is the genuine fruit that Jesus expects from us: to behave as disciples, that we become loving people. When we abide in the love of Jesus for us and for all people, then our love for one another will flow as naturally as water from a fountain. Christian love embraces many other obligations, of course. Loving others is obviously demanding. If everyone were lovable, things would be easy. But true love requires sacrifice, forgiveness at times, thoughtfulness, and a sensitivity on our part to the needs of the other. It might be helpful to realize that Jesus loves us even though we may not be so lovable at times. One might say that love embraces all the other commandments.

Today's gospel passage follows last's week's parable of the vine and the branches. There we were reminded of the source of our own true life in Christ. That central idea is reinforced today when Jesus tells us to remain or abide in his love. One key way in which we do immerse ourselves in the depth of Christ's love for us is in our participation in the Eucharist. There we actualize the love that Christ manifested on the cross in each liturgy we celebrate. Our call to be one with Christ, to be his body, is brought home to us especially when the communion minister offers us the sacred bread and tells us: "Body of Christ." Saint Augustine expressed the mystery of communion beautifully in his 272nd sermon: "The priest says, 'Body of Christ,' and you answer, 'Amen.' It is your own mystery you place on the altar. You say 'Amen' to what you are. Be, therefore, the body of Christ so that your amen may be true."

That is followed by the challenge of receiving the blood of Christ, which tells us *how* to make our amen be true. The symbolism of reception from the cup is a powerful one. It tells us that our ability to truly be Christ's body here below hinges on our willingness to do what Jesus himself did: that is, by a willingness to do whatever is required to be faithful to our Christian commitment, by sacrifice, by total commitment.

May 13, 2021
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9; Ephesians 1:17-23 (or Ephesians 4:1-13); Mark 16:15-20

The reality of the ascension is not something we should try to imagine. Luke tells us in Acts that it took place 40 days after the resurrection, although his gospel places it on Easter itself. The longer ending of Mark places it on Easter Sunday, as does John. This should suffice to tell us that we are grappling with a theological reality. We are dealing here essentially with nothing less than the exodus of Jesus from the earth, and his exaltation and glorification in heaven. Jesus' ascension mirrors the mysterious ascension of the prophet Elijah, whose exit from this world is graphically described as involving chariots, horses of fire, and a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:8).

Recall that in Luke 9:31, when Jesus was transfigured, both Moses and Elijah appeared talking about his "exodus" that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem. And Luke begins the second part of his gospel — where Jesus began his journey to Jerusalem to suffer, die, rise and ascend to heaven — with the phrase, "when the days for his being taken up were fulfilled...." Luke thus connects the events of Jesus' ascent to God with a similar experience in the Hebrew Bible and joins Jesus with the quintessential prophet of justice, Elijah. By so doing, Luke in his unique literary way, uses the ascension motif as a way of preaching to us a sermon about the identity of Jesus, recalling his many roots in the sacred past of Israel's story.

As a practical reality, the ascension is what separates the time of Jesus from the time of the Church. This is captured well in Acts of the Apostles by the two men (angels?) who ask the disciples "Why are you standing there looking at the sky?" Most probably this was for Luke the same two who in the gospel met the women when they went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus (Luke 24:1-7). "Why do you seek the living one among the dead," they are asked. Jesus was no longer dead, and not to be found in a cemetery. In the same way, Jesus is not to be found by looking up to heaven, but in his continued presence in the Church.

Acts begins with Luke reminding Theophilus that his first book dealt with "all that Jesus did and taught up to the day he was taken up"

(Acts 1:1-2a). For Luke this "taking up" is the hinge that holds his two books together. The general scene that will play itself out in Acts is what the Spirit of Christ continues to do in and with his Church. There is no need to look to the past or hope for the days when Jesus was physically present with them. Luke/Acts has structured the two parts of his story of Jesus in this way. Part one deals with the life of Jesus on earth, and part two deals with the growth of the Church after Jesus' ascension into heaven. (I'm sure Luke was surprised when someone put John's gospel in the middle of his two-part work.)

One of the second readings chosen for the Mass implies the same scenario. The Letter to the Ephesians notes that Jesus continues to make provisions for his Church. It details the various ministries Jesus provides for his Church for the purpose of building up the body of Christ (4:12).

In Acts Jesus promises the disciples that the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon them. He then commissions them to witness to the good news to the ends of the earth. In the gospel Jesus had instructed them to proclaim repentance and forgiveness in his name to all nations. In Acts they are simply told to be his witnesses. He then rises up into the air and disappears. What a way for Jesus to emphasize his words: disappearing from sight!

"Why do you stand looking into heaven?" It is too easy to long for the magic return of Jesus in order to set all things straight. Rather than gaze into the sky, waiting for Jesus to come back to continue his ministry among us, our Lord commissioned them, and calls us, to act in the power of the Holy Spirit in order that we might become witnesses of his truth. For the celebration of Pentecost next week, we will stress the role and power of the Holy Spirit in the growth of the early Church. The time of the Church is the time of the Holy Spirit.

May 16, 2021
Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15-17, 20-26; Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20; 1 John 4:11-16; John 17:11-19

This Sunday, coming between the Feast of the Ascension and that of Pentecost, looks back as well as forward. The first reading, from Acts,

follows the account of the ascension of Jesus. The gospel passage takes up part of the prayer of Jesus for his disciples at the Last Supper, asking the Father to consecrate them in truth for their coming mission when they will receive the Spirit promised them by Jesus.

The reading from Acts makes us realize that shortly after Jesus had ascended, the disciples set about reconstituting themselves for the mission he had given them. Peter takes the initiative to replace Judas — giving a rather shaky exegetical foundation in defense of finding a successor for him. Judas' death is left out of the reading, although the gospel passage will mention Judas disparagingly in Jesus' prayer. The replacement of Judas was thought necessary to bring the number of the apostles to twelve — obviously symbolic of the twelve tribes over whom the apostles were to preside and because Jesus himself had chosen twelve from among his disciples who would benefit from his special care and teaching (Luke 22:28-30). It was thought important to maintain the symbolic unity of the old and the renewed Israel by having twelve specially chosen disciples to guide this. This would have had a special significance for the early believers, all of whom would have been Jews.

It is interesting that the "Twelve," the only structure Jesus had given his followers, was considered important enough that it was thought necessary to find someone to take Judas' place. However, that was the last time this was ever done. When that group of Twelve began to die, they were never replaced by others. The only structure that Jesus had left them did not survive the first generation. This goes to show that as time wore on, the Church was able to read the signs of the times and begin to determine its own structures, those best suited for the mission that was theirs.

The choice of Matthias took place in the "Upper Room," where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper — a place big enough for at least 120 people. Three things are important here. First, he was one of those proposed by the entire assembly. Second, the basic qualification was that he should have been a witness to the public life of Jesus and "a witness with us of his resurrection." A witness, after all, must be someone who has personally experienced the thing about which he or she bears witness. Third, before making either choice they prayed, casting lots only after they had done their best to choose worthy candidates.

If the disciples prayed in the Upper Room, the gospel shows Jesus

in that same room praying for his disciples at the Last Supper. Part of what is known as his high priestly prayer, Jesus prays on behalf of those to whom the Father has authorized him to "give eternal life." One of the main things Jesus prays for in this part of the prayer is that his disciples might always be one as he and the Father are one. Unity has been a desiderata from the earliest days of the Church.

Of all the things that Jesus could have prayed for, we might have thought he would ask for their success, or their safety. But he prayed for unity just as he prayed that they might truly love one another. Unity matters to God. And not simply because our witness is more effective if we are united. Unity is what characterizes God himself. Father, Son, and Spirit are one God with no sense of division between them. The Christian model for unity is God. We read in Acts of the early Church that "they were one in mind and heart..." (4:32). This was the ideal from the beginning.

This prayer of Jesus animates the Church's continual search for unity *(koinonia)* and is at the heart of the modern-day Ecumenical Movement. Maintaining Christian unity (or restoring it, as the case may be) is always the ideal for which to strive. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it: "Christ always gives his Church the gift of unity, but the Church must always pray and work to maintain, reinforce, and perfect the unity that Christ wills for her. … The desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit." (820)

Unfortunately, unity is almost as hard to find in the Church today as in our country. Yet, it is something for which we pray in every Eucharist during the *epiclesis*, asking the Holy Spirit that we might truly be "one body, one spirit in Christ." This unity, this charism is the purpose of the Mass — something we might well ask the Holy Spirit to grant us as we approach Pentecost.

May 23, 2021
Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-31, 34; 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13 (or Galatians 5:16-25); John 20:19-23

Pentecost brings the 50-day Easter season to a close. But it also points forward to new beginnings, for it is when Christians celebrate the

coming of the Holy Spirit and the new horizons this opens up in the story of God's commitment to the world. The gift of the Holy Spirit on the Church was poured out to inaugurate and establish the body of Christ as a representative beginning of the new creation. This new creation is badly needed to reverse the process detailed at the beginning of the Book of Genesis. There we were given a series of "original sins" that have plagued the world from the beginning. Starting with Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the people in the days of Noah, and the Tower of Babel, we have a series of evils typical of our world. At Babel we are told that the language of the people was confused "so that no one will understand the speech of another" (Genesis 11:7) — perhaps the typical sin of cities.

The two alternative readings for the epistle detail a number of virtues that are meant to characterize God's people. Vices to be avoided are also enumerated. These virtues are to characterize a people now filled with the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Spirit, then, is to remind us of what Jesus said and did during his life that we might do likewise, bringing to memory teaching that the disciples were only able to comprehend after the coming of the Spirit. All of us now, who live in the time of the Spirit, have that same ability. As the gospel writers were able to reflect back on the life of Jesus and form their narratives according to the needs of their community, our own ability to be open to the fire of the Holy Spirit can bring to mind the teachings of Jesus so we might understand what it is God intends us to know and follow today.

Pentecost begins the effort to change our inability to communicate meaningfully with one another. The Holy Spirit is poured out to establish a community of faith, in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It is poured out for the sake of the gospel message, especially the ability to live in harmony with one another and to forgive one another's transgressions, as the gospel tells us. Peter proclaims the Spirit's coming on all flesh and the coming together of people under the gracious sovereignty of Christ. That "coming together" is what we find in Paul's theology of breaking down the wall of enmity that had separated Jew and Gentile, bringing them together in the blood of Christ (cf. Ephesians 2:11-23). Having Christ in common, the enmities and prejudices that tend to keep people separated begin to break down. This process begins when people can speak the same language and begin to understand one another.

In the homily that he gives when he has the attention of the people,

Peter quotes a passage from the prophet Joel, part of which says: "I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:18). This is not some foretelling of the future, but rather an assertion that the Spirit helps us make sense of the present. Because that's what his whole Pentecost speech does: it offers an explanation of what God is making possible in the here and now. He's naming places and ways in which God is active or visible in the world now that Jesus has ascended, and the Holy Spirit has arrived.

The gospel reading from John 20 details an appearance of Jesus to the disciples on Easter Sunday. There Jesus breathes on them and tells them to receive the Holy Spirit so that they can forgive sins. Forgiveness is something that is meant to characterize Jesus' followers. We hardly need mention the many instances in the gospels where this is a central aspect of Christian morality. The expression that we should forgive seventy times seven is well known.

At any rate, this gospel passage is commonly interpreted that Jesus is giving his apostles the power to forgive sins. While this is a legitimate interpretation, we have no way of knowing if this is the only interpretation. We have no way of knowing who was in the Upper Room when Jesus appeared (we know Thomas was not). It is equally possible that we are being told that when we refuse to forgive others, sin remains and is multiplied in our world. Forgiveness is a responsibility for the entire Christian community. For when we do not forgive, anger and resentment begin to fester and act as a poison in society. That is not why the Holy Spirit has been poured out in the Church.

May 30, 2021
The Most Holy Trinity

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40; Psalm 33:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22; Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 28:16-20

Finding an adequate explanation and model to describe the Trinity is an exercise in frustration. For nowhere will we find one spelled out in the Scriptures. What the Lectionary gives us year by year are examples of the action of God in our world and the experience we have of that action in our lives. Today's first reading, from Deuteronomy, reminds the Israelites of all that God has done for them, their experience of having been saved from the slavery of Egypt and chosen by God as

a covenant people. As a result of this experience, they are asked to observe the commandments God had given them.

In the reading from Romans Paul mentions both God as Father and the Holy Spirit. "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:15-17a). Along with the assurance of being heirs with Christ, they should be filled with courage, a courage that drives out any fear.

The gospel focus is on Jesus who, having risen from the dead, gives his disciples the commission to make disciples of all nations. He also promises to remain with them until the end of the age. The result of this final encounter with Christ is a sense of mission. All three readings note a particular aspect of how the Godhead has interacted with the world, and thus gives us some insight into the One who has cared enough about the world to enter in and touch our lives.

These are the readings chosen to speak of the Trinity. Neither the Old Testament reading nor either of those from the New Testament — or even all three together— are probative. They suggest, however, that at the heart of our understanding of God as essentially triune is the notion that as a result of God's various interactions with us, we can't fully understand God without thinking about relationships. The readings suggest that God is so full of love, that God cared deeply enough about us to love and care for us in so many ways. This notion that God as loving, as concerned about us, suggests that relationships are, in a sense, what characterize what God is all about. This love is not only for what God has created, but is actually the inner reality of the Godhead itself.

There is something enormously satisfying about the notion of God as triune, compared to thinking of God as some lonely monad who created the world to have some company in heaven. Instead we are invited to think of God as having a rich life of love within the inner reality of the Godhead. For one thing, it means that we are not an afterthought, but that we were loved into existence. But the reality of Trinity is even more, saying that from the very beginning of time the dynamic power of love that is at the heart of God's identity and character can only be captured by thinking of the various ways that

love has been shared. God's essential and core being has always been a giving and sharing of love that finally has spilled out into the whole of the universe, inviting us all into it. First through creation and God's covenant, then sending God's Son into the world to demonstrate in word and deed just how much God loves us, and now as the Spirit bears witness to God's ongoing love for us and all creation.

God is obviously more complex than this, and beyond the limits of human understanding. On this day we recognize the Holy Trinity and the relational power of God, and we celebrate that reality in every Eucharist. All prayers are addressed to God the Father through Christ. The Holy Spirit is invoked to transform not only the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, but those of us who share that bread and wine so that we might truly form the body of Christ here on earth. The scripture readings that we share are continual reminders of this. We read there passages like "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that everyone who believes in him might not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). And as Saint Paul tells us today, Jesus came so that we might become co-heirs with him to the joys of heaven through the power and witness of the Holy Spirit.

This goodness on the part of God is to show us how to imitate that same goodness in our own lives. The example of Jesus' own life and teaching demonstrates how we ourselves can (and should) join with Christ by living lives of compassion, presence, love, and commitment for the well-being of all. Like God, we are not meant to live for ourselves but for one another.

June 6, 2021
Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

Exodus 24:3-8; Psalm 116:12-13, 15-18; Hebrews 9:11-15; Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

In all three readings the emphasis is on the biblical significance of blood, specifically, covenant blood. It is important here to remember that for the Israelites, blood signified life, not death. Blood was offered to God because God was the author and giver of life. The blood ritual in the Exodus reading constitutive of the Mosaic covenant was symbolic of the shared life the Israelites had as God's chosen people — a reality symbolized by the fact that half the blood was poured on

the altar and the rest sprinkled on the people. Likewise, in Hebrews, the author asserts that the new covenant is far more effective than the old because it was ratified in the blood of Christ, not simply that of bulls and goats. And in the gospel reading, Mark has Jesus say that his was covenant blood, blood that would be shed "for many."

Jesus tells us that his blood will be shed for us. Many people have strange notions about the meaning of Jesus' death. It is as if God was so angry at the sinfulness of humanity, that God sent his son into the world so that he could crush him on that cross in our stead. In other words, if Jesus had died of old age, we would all still be in our sins, unredeemed. The Cappadocian Fathers theorized that the devil had won a decisive victory in Eden and gained power over all of us until Jesus ransomed us on the cross. His cruel death on the cross was the essential condition set by God enabling us to gain heaven. This is not the biblical picture. There Jesus' death is the result of a life of total commitment, of fidelity to the mission given him. The only way he could have avoided aggravating the religious powers that were and the secular state as well is by being unfaithful to his mission.

Christ's total commitment to the Father made him willing to give up his life for us. Our sharing in his cup, like the disciples at the Last Supper, reverses the process of cowardice and misunderstanding that runs through Mark's Gospel. If we participate at Jesus' table today, it is so that we can become sources of life for others by our own commitment to our Christian vocation.

On the cross Jesus truly poured out his life for us. But not as a ransom or as a price demanded by God to free us from our sins. It was an act of love, of complete fidelity. Jesus' willingness to pour out his blood is a powerful sign of his commitment to forging a new relationship between God and God's people, one based on his own commitment to unity, to breaking down whatever polarizes and divides people from one another and from God. The sign of receiving from the cup is a powerful symbol that evokes all of salvation history: God's desire to save and to give us significant roles in the world's salvation. It is only through us that Jesus' blood can continue to be poured out for "the many."

Covenant life is at the heart of our relationship with God and with each other. The common life implied here should make us realize that we were redeemed by being made part of a people, a family to whom God has promised guidance (the commandments), true life

(celebrated and deepened in the liturgy), and a mission (to live a life of charity). Our baptism/Eucharist/confirmation has made us sisters and brothers of Jesus and, of course, sisters and brothers of one another.

This aspect of the covenant is especially needed today. We have barely concluded an extremely difficult year. The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated what was called social isolation. In an individualistic country, this had the unintended negative consequences of increasing individualism. Then also, the political polarization that we have experienced is still not healed. So it is that we who call ourselves the new covenant people might well recall what has saved us. What has led us through the desert of life and given us food and drink? What truly liberates us? These are the deep questions of our unity — our history, our common faith. It is the covenant that gives us cohesion and unity, that gives flesh and blood to our faith. Because the source of our unity is Jesus Christ. Our source of unity is not liberal or conservative, not wealth or poverty; it is Christ.

Corpus Christi, the body and blood of Christ, is the marriage of God and us. This union took place not only in the incarnation; it is reenacted in our Eucharists, whereby God in Christ is made one with our very flesh, the living sign that God is with and for us now and always. But if the Eucharist is the celebration of our unity, it is our remembrance, our being re-membered, put back together as one body in the Christ who shared our flesh and blood. Our solidarity in this faith is greater than all our differences when we partake of one food and drink, to nourish us on our way.

June 13, 2021
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92:2-3, 13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34

Resuming Ordinary Time with the 11th Sunday, we begin with chapter four in Mark's Gospel. In this chapter, Jesus gives four parables of the kingdom: the Sower (4:1-20), the Lamp under a Bushel (4:21-25), the Growing Seed (4:26-29), and the Mustard Seed (4:30-32). Only the last two are in today's reading. He then explains his use of parables (4:33-34; see also 4:10-12). Though he speaks the parables in the presence of the crowds, he explains them only to his disciples (4:10 ff.; 4:34). As

we are aware from other gospel passages, the reason given for this is so that the crowds will not understand.

However, Jesus, great teacher that he was, was hardly out to confuse people, or prevent them from understanding what he was teaching. Parables need no explanation. Their beauty lies in their ability to engage the imagination, and to be open to various applications depending on the situation and need of the hearers. Do we need to explain the Good Samaritan, or the Prodigal Son?

Mark gives little indication of what sparked the parables in today's gospel. We need not assume that they were told this early in the ministry. Be that as it may, they are filled with confidence. Despite the seeming lack of progress in the coming of the kingdom, with people getting discouraged at how few were flocking to Jesus, they exude a deep trust in God. Despite modest beginnings or outright opposition, there is a confidence that there will be an abundant harvest. Both parables emphasize the final outcome, which God will bring about in a wondrous way in God's good time, without even a proportionate cause. For Jesus, striving for the kingdom is what inspired and drove his ministry. Everything he did was geared to inspiring a community that would break the power of evil in the world. Despite setbacks, he never doubted that good is more powerful than evil, or that love would ultimately conquer hatred and indifference.

We have no real insight into how Jesus felt about the success of his ministry, or whether he himself was tempted to discouragement. He surely never achieved all that he labored for. However, he was willing to make a beginning, trusting in God and in those he would inspire to bring his work to completion. Keep in mind that in all the gospels Jesus begins his public ministry by recruiting help, choosing disciples to work with him in bringing about the reign of God.

Parables like this are perhaps even more necessary today than they were in the time of Jesus. We can easily become paralyzed by the pervasiveness of evil in our world, and even within the Church. What can we do to overcome the entrenched forces of greed, power, and human corruption we can see all around us? We worry about climate change, or the environment being destroyed before our eyes. Abortion is now encouraged by the government. We are still suffering from the ravages of Covid-19. It is easy to feel that we are dwarfed by forces much bigger than we are, and that there is little or nothing that we

can do. The temptation is to give up and do nothing.

The worst thing that we can do, however, is to feel that we are too insignificant to do anything constructive to change the world for the better. We are not on our own. God wants to use us as instruments for the world's salvation. In the Church, at least, we can help build a microcosm of a world in harmony and peace, a true fellowship where all love one another. Is this not what the Eucharist inspires us to do?

June 20, 2021
Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Job 38:1, 8-11; Psalm 107:23-26, 28-31; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17; Mark 4:35-41

Mark's entire gospel is structured to tell us who Jesus really is. At the same time, it also stresses the incomprehension of almost everyone, including his own disciples. We have an especially striking example of this in today's gospel reading. Described in our pericope today is perhaps one of the most powerful images of chaos: a storm at sea — especially for people in Jesus' day. His calming of the sea was not only a demonstration of his power over nature, but his equal mastery of the chaotic elements in our own lives. This is a combined reminder of the tenuous faith of the disciples.

Mark's account of this incident echoes some of Israel's psalms. Facing a storm on the sea, ancient sailors cried out to the LORD in their trouble. Then the LORD made the storm be still, "and the waves of the sea were hushed" (Psalm 107:28-29). Just as Israel's God can still the storm and hush the waves, so does Mark's Jesus. Psalm 65 is also suggestive here. God silences "the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples" (Psalm 65:7). This psalm links God's authority over the sea with God's authority over human affairs. Just as God can still the storm, so can God bring peace among the peoples of the earth. Mark wants to tell us that when we are in Jesus' presence, we're in the very presence of God — the unspoken answer to the disciples' question, "Who then is this that even the wind and sea obey?"

Graphically manifesting Jesus' total control over everything, we are told that he was calmly asleep in the back of the boat. In a demonstration of the fear and incomprehension of the disciples, they complain to Jesus

"Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" This hardly reflects a deep faith in Jesus. No wonder he reproached them, "Why are you terrified? Do you not yet have faith?" Matthew's version eliminates the disciples' reproach found in Mark and simply has the disciples beg, "Lord save us!"

The fear of the disciples in face of the storm is understandable. Biblically, their lack of faith reflects many moments in the Old Testament as well. How many times do the people complain against God? From the time they left Egypt, they complained that they had no food, no water, nothing tasty. Their cry is the ultimate cry of fear, of doubt, and abandonment by God. We see this reflected in many of the psalms, where we hear the psalmist ask where God is in the midst of distress. They ask whether God has abandoned his people. This was especially true after the destruction of the temple and the exile.

This is a cry repeated in so many ways in the midst of the terrors and distresses of our world today. If God is so great and powerful a creator, if God really cares about this world, then why do events in the world (and in our lives) go so badly? The easy answer is that either God has no power, or that God does not care for us or for creation. This reflects an age-old question but is perhaps even more pertinent today when the society in which we live does not support faith. In times of tumult or grave danger, the natural human reaction is to wonder whether there is a God and, if so, whether God is even aware of our problems, or even whether God cares. And so, we cry out in the midst of our storms, "Don't you care?" All the while Jesus is there in the boat with us, even when we are unaware.

The stilling of the storm serves to reassure the Church that Jesus is Lord, the ruler of nature and history, and that Christ is present to us in our anxieties. The agnosticism and atheism of the world around us can make us doubt our own faith at times. The scandals within the Church, along with opposition to the reforms of Vatican II, or to the present papacy, these can reinforce our doubt that God cares as well. Perhaps we all need to focus more on Jesus and on the mission he has entrusted to us, and less on the things that go wrong all around us.

June 27, 2021
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43

Last week's gospel reading saw Jesus heading into Gentile territory across the lake, when they encountered a storm. In the Decapolis he exorcized the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). Jesus now returns to the Jewish side (again across the lake) to find a large crowd waiting for him. There a synagogue leader, Jairus, begs him to heal his daughter, who is ill. On his way to do so, he performs another cure on an unnamed woman. He then resumes his journey to Jairus' house. This is a favorite technique of Mark: to begin one story, interrupt it with another, and then return to the original story. In today's gospel we might think this is simply to indicate a passage of time, during which Jairus' daughter had time to die. But this Markan "sandwich" technique is meant so that we interpret both accounts in light of each other.

The woman who was convinced that even touching Jesus' clothing would assure her healing approached Jesus secretly. She did so for two reasons. First, she was a woman, and to touch a holy man without permission was taboo. Secondly, her very illness rendered her "unclean," and touching Jesus would render him unclean as well, let alone all those she may have touched in getting through the crowd to Jesus.

As soon as she touched the tassels of Jesus' clothing, however, she felt that she was healed. At the same time, Jesus felt that "power" had gone out from him and looked around to see who had caused it. When Jesus persisted in questioning who had touched his clothes, the woman came forward. The woman was quite bold to approach Jesus in the first place; this time she did so "in fear and trembling." She dreaded disapproval from Jesus and the public shame of having what she had done be revealed by this healer. She confessed what she had done and why. Jesus' response to all this was simply to address her with the consoling, comforting words: "Daughter, your faith has made you well!"

The narrative then returns to the journey to Jairus' house. Bad news arrived, however, the news that "your daughter has died." Jesus challenges Jairus not to lose faith, a faith that led him to Jesus in the first place, and that had also motivated the woman who had been ill

for 12 years. Jesus continued on to Jairus' house, braved the ridicule of the mourners, took the girl by the hand and brought her to life. Here also, the kindness of Jesus is shown by his further requesting food for the girl he had just raised from the dead. This reveals also the holistic mission of Jesus, his care for the whole person. Perhaps this is the reason he asked for silence about this miracle. He did not want to be known simply as a physical healer, but as one who had concern for all our needs: spiritual, physical, emotional, psychological — the whole person.

One perhaps unsuspected thing shown in this gospel is that, contrary to the common assumption in Jesus' day, what was ritually unclean did not necessarily contaminate what it came in contact with. For Jesus, what was clean, pure, could neutralize what was unclean. An unclean woman touching Jesus did not render him unclean; rather he was able render her clean. Also, for Jesus to touch a dead body did not render him unclean. His own purity was life-giving for her. Jesus' life, his very presence, grants life-changing healing to those who come to him in faith.

Secondly, Jesus' healing power is one that crosses boundaries. He had just come from curing a Gerasene. He was not constrained by either ethnic boundaries or gender ones, as today's gospel proves. Contact with Jesus in faith, no matter who the person, does not leave people in the conditions in which he finds them. He has the power — and the desire — to heal our ills.

This raises the question of whether we as the Christian community set conditions on those to whom we minister. Jesus has entrusted to us the power and the responsibility to alter the conditions of people's lives. Do we, individually and as a community, bring healing into a troubled world? Are we not called, like Jesus himself did, to cross boundaries (whether they are related to ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, politics, or any other boundaries that divide our society) and advocate life-giving meaning and change? The Church's mission goes beyond saving the saved; it is to reach out to the disadvantaged, those in need, as Jesus himself did throughout his public ministry.

Art • Music • Film • Poetry • Books

Art Review

Anyone with a love of Christian art would be fascinated by the catacombs of Callixtus. Named after Pope Callixtus I, these ancient Roman catacombs were the burial place of early Christians for centuries. Walking their dark meandering corridors one feels an intimate connection with our earliest Christian ancestors. This sense of communion is enhanced by the images they painted on the cavern walls. They were not artists per se, but Christians like you and me who desired to mark these solemn places of their beloved dead with images that spoke of their deepest values and hopes.

Along one of the oldest passages of the catacombs of Callixtus one can find a beautiful ancient Christian image of Eucharist. It depicts in grey-blues and gentle greens a fish. And atop this fish is a basket of bread. Our early ancestors who painted this eucharistic image on the walls of their underground cemetery believed in a God whose love exceeds expectations. Like the super abundant gift of loaves and fishes that fed the multitudes, Eucharist spoke to them of God's unencumbered generosity. This same sense of unencumbered generosity informs Scott Erikson's simple but dynamic print entitled, "Divine Hospitality."

DIVINE HOSPITALITY
Artwork by Scott Erickson
scottericksonart.com
@scottthepainter

John Christman, SSS

Divine Hospitality depicts bread and fish in the tradition of the earliest depictions of Eucharist such as the image in the catacombs of Callixtus. This allusion to history is not accidental as this print is part of a series Erikson entitles "New Icons." Thus, there is a deep sense of continuity with the past. However, there is also insight and innovation.

The title along with the image evokes a number of scriptural passages. Certainly, the feeding of the 5000 in John's Gospel (Jn 6:5-15) or the feeding of the multitudes in the synoptic gospels (Mt 14: 1321, 15:32-39; Mk 6: 34-44, 8:30-44; Lk 9: 10-17) come to mind. At the same time, especially because of the title, Genesis 18: 1-15 and its portrayal of mutual hospitality between Abraham, Sarah, and their three guests

also seems fitting.

Divine Hospitality portrays two fish and one loaf of bread, each broken in half. The style and composition are clean and simple. Neither fish nor bread are excessive in detail, lending themselves more to a symbolic interpretation. The flat bold black contours of the fish, somewhat reminiscent of Native American pacific northwestern art depicting animals, adds to this symbolic and spiritual reading.

Were the work of art simply to portray bread and fish then scriptural allusions, comparisons with similar artworks of the past, and stylistic analysis would be the primary means of interpretation. However, Erikson has given the viewer something more intriguing that greatly enriches the theological meaning of the piece. Where the bread and fish are broken, in preparation for sharing, the bodies of the fish and the loaf of bread intersect. It is at this intersection that the abstract and minimal stylistics of the piece reveal their potential. For the interior of the broken bread and fish reveal not crumb or flesh, but simple flat planes delineating the shapes. Cleverly, when resting together, they form overlapping circles. Those familiar with Christian symbols will quickly identify these three equal overlapping circles as a traditional symbol for the Trinity. Each circle has its own integral shape but likewise takes equal part in shaping the larger whole: Father, Son, and Spirit.

Those with eyes attuned to the importance of the Eucharist will immediately see what is being offered here. By symbolically etching the Trinity into this gift of bread and fish, the "hospitality" is significantly enhanced. This is, in fact, a sharing in the divine life itself. It is truly an offering of "communion" with God. As such Divine Hospitality reveals, as many icons do, a glimpse into the nature of God. Here God is eternally triune, self-giving, and nourishing. And as the title helps convey with the word "hospitality," the viewer is welcomed into that life through the sharing of this sacred food.

Our early Christian ancestors who painted the eucharistic image of bread and fish on the walls of their underground cemetery held a hope of being raised to eternal life through Christ. Sharing in the Eucharist expressed their belonging to "the body of Christ." Erikson's Divine Hospitality makes that hope explicit in its creative use of symbolism. Perhaps it would not be out of place on our own tombstone?

Poetry

an unexpected poem for a child

At the root of all war is fear: not so much the fear men have
of one another as the fear they have of everything.
thomas merton

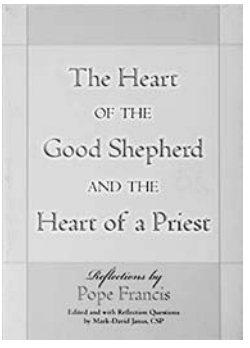
dear child,
how can i explain
that i had no desire for you
even more tell you
that i could not understand
  the singular ache
of those driven to ragged places
    in order to give you birth
but i *have* longed for you in my own way
i have ached hot tears as i sat in the silence
  waiting for you
the unknown of everything emerging
from the womb of infinite tenderness
that face of God too many people fear most
i have waited for your cry that first suck of breath
then the touch of your bloodied flesh against my own
i have waited for you to come during some dark night
and you will
bringing with you
the scalding radiance of Another's patient, sacred desire

i have waited

i wait still

Lou Ella Hickman, I.W.B.S.

Book Reviews



THE HEART OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND THE HEART OF A PRIEST
REFLECTIONS BY POPE FRANCIS
Edited and with Reflections by Mark David Janus, CSP
Paulist Press
Mahwah, New Jersey
2018

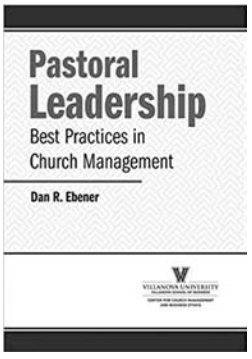
Pope Francis dedicated several days to meditation and reflection on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Contained on the pages of this 53 page book are "some of his intimate thoughts on the love of God, the life of the priest and the universal call to holiness." Pope Francis who has been known for being challenging and harsh on priests offers some deeply insightful reflections and shows his hand as a compassionate and merciful shepherd and pastor to the priests of the Church.

The overall theme that is presented by Pope Francis is the mercy of Christ and the priest's cooperation in the merciful gaze. Engaging the theology of the Church, embracing the merciful love of Mary the mother of Jesus, and highlighting the saints of the Church, our Holy Father calls priests to be instruments of mercy for a world that is hurting.

Mark David Janus, keenly aware of the denseness of the Holy Father's writing, advises the reader to: "not read the reflections all the way through, but rather to begin with a page and read until a specific thought, image or word strikes you." I wish this reviewer had read the introduction prior to turning immediately to chapter one. It might be the very reason this short, concise book took more than six months to complete.

While the Holy Father's reflections are worthy of reflection, the richness of this book can be found in the reflection questions that Janus poses. His questions are not easily answered, nor are they for the faint of heart. I envision this short book as a good tool for personal reflection, conversation between a priest and his spiritual director, or priest to priest conversation in prayer groups like Jesus Caritas. Fr. Janus offers three to six questions in each of the four chapters. These are certainly enough to spark thought provoking conversation that would move the reader to reconciliation and mercy and the heart and compassion of the Good Shepherd.

Rev. Thomas M. Dragga, D.Min
Pastor, Church of the Resurrection, Solon, Ohio.



PASTORAL LEADERSHIP: BEST PRACTICES FOR CHURCH LEADERS
Dan Ebener
Paulist Press
Mahwah, New Jersey
1918

Dan Ebener's *Pastoral Leadership: Best Practices for Church Leaders* centers on both "heartful" and "mindful" leadership that can emerge from anywhere in a parish community. Drawing from a brief exploration of the neuroscience of the brain and its relation to emotions, Ebener invites his readers to reflect on their relational capacities so that they may develop more intentionally the awareness and skills that comprise emotional intelligence. Such mindfulness of the power and effect of emotions helps the blossoming leader to engage others in mission-oriented activities. The book also amply threads a spirituality of leadership throughout its chapters and highlights the virtues of humility, patience, and forgiveness of self and others as essential to the leadership task.

Ebener clearly distinguishes the work of leaders from that of managers and punctuates those descriptions with pithy statements, such as "leadership requires change," "explain the why." His down-to-earth presentations of contemporary leadership and management literature is refreshing as he presents practical examples from familiar parish dilemmas. In several chapters, his main character, "Fr. Dave" confronts new challenges and discussions of leadership concepts and strategies ensued from such situations.

Of particular value is Ebener's chapter on systemic change in a parish setting. Drawing from the work of Ronald Heifetz, who uses the term "adaptive change" to describe changes in organizational culture that involve shifts in attitudes and behavior, Ebener adds the dimension of Catholic social teaching to the mix of organizational research and speaks of social justice as a wider example of adaptive change. He is realistic in describing the resistance that change efforts often involve and offers concrete steps and heartfelt approaches for dealing with the grief, sense of loss, conflict, and power plays that systemic change often evokes. Each stage of change requires a listening heart on the part of the leader and a willingness to tend to the fears, griefs, and emotions of those undergoing change.

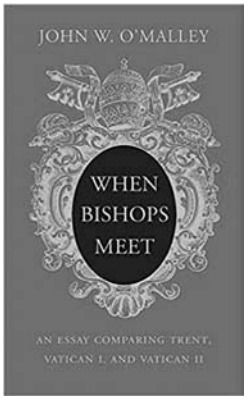
Ebener's chapters on strategic planning processes and on calling forth and training new leaders are equally practical in offering approaches and strategies. His planning processes call for a wide involvement of parishioners, centered on issues and questions raised in dialogical groups. Hence, engagement of parishioners is at the heart of the processes he proposes. He addresses the challenges found in large-scale planning and outlines ways of facilitating the eight steps of

pastoral planning that he presents.

In many respects, the book could be titled, *Parish Leadership,* as the main examples provided are in a parish context, rather than in other pastoral venues, such as dioceses, church-related service organizations, or even mission-oriented businesses. One area that could be more developed is the skill of delegating authority and responsibility. Ebener seems to speak of the ordained leading change with "formal authority" (certainly true from Canon Law) and the notion of leading change "without authority" by the laity. A discussion of how authority may be delegated responsibly would be helpful in bridging the divide between "formal authority" leaders and laity without authority.

Overall, Ebener's work presents a holistic and practical view of leadership in a parish setting, illustrating how important emotional intelligence, spirituality, and virtues are to the practical tasks of engaging others with excitement and leading mission-oriented change. He offers a cornucopia of practices and strategies that are well-grounded in organizational literature and sound Catholic principles. The book is a valuable resource for anyone, with or without formal authority, who aspires to become a compassionate and effective leader.

Barbara Fleischer, Ph.D.
Professor Emerita
Loyola Institute for Ministry
New Orleans, LA



WHEN BISHOPS MEET: AN ESSAY COMPARING TRENT, VATICAN I, AND VATICAN II
John W. O'Malley.
Harvard University Press
Cambridge, MA and London England
2019

John W. O'Malley is an author who is an outstanding Church historian, whose doctorate studies sermons delivered in the Basilica of Saint Peter in the Vatican during the sixteenth century. He published three monographs on three ecumenical councils. Now he adds a fourth book comparing these three councils. He asks a number of questions: What do councils do? Does the teaching change? Who is in charge? Who are the participants? (popes and curia, theologians, laity and "others"). What difference did the councils make? Will there be another?

In the conclusion of this book, O'Malley answers the questions. He also indicates that it would not be possible to answer these questions validly unless based on solid studies of each council in and for itself. This O'Malley does well. Each council produces insights

otherwise unavailable. Each council is unique. The language used is very important. For example, Vatican II, unlike other councils, has a language that is not used in previous councils. Trent was more legal. Vatican I was written with canons which were aimed at reforming persons and changing behavior. Vatican II spoke to people of good will and to people of other religions, inviting collaboration for the common good.

This is a small book, but it studies the "issues under the issues" and O'Malley's comparison rests on years of study, research, writing and thinking, until the uniqueness of each council is obvious. This work deserves a place for all who want to know more about councils and why future councils will be necessary for the Church and the people of God in future ages.

Ernest Falardeau, SSS
Cleveland, Ohio

EUCHARISTIC WITNESS

Jim Bartel

Highland Heights, Ohio

When I was asked to offer my Eucharistic Witness story, after praying about it, I would say it began early in my life. It was at my first communion that I truly saw Jesus in the Eucharist. During the consecration, when the priest held up the Eucharist and looked to heaven, it was then that I saw Jesus was made a man. It was at that moment that I took my first step to having a relationship with Jesus.

My relationship with Jesus was a spiritual awakening. I saw through prayer that Jesus would help me in my struggles to be a holy and God-fearing person. At my confirmation I was taught that I could be a soldier for Christ. Through my relationship with Jesus, I was able to see and appreciate my gift of hospitality. It started with my desire to cook and eat good meals. My first job, as a bus boy, provided me opportunities in the kitchen. My employers recognized my talent for cooking and gave me a recommendation to attend culinary school. I chose the Culinary Institute of America in New York. I later learned it was located between the minor seminary for the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament and Marist College, where I would attend Mass.

After graduation from the Culinary Institute of America I came back to Cleveland, OH to work as a chef. In a short time, I found myself living down the street from the Blessed Sacrament Community at Saint Paschal Baylon parish. It was not until some years later, when my family life had shattered beyond my understanding, that Jesus showed me the way that I could raise my children as the custodial parent while continuing to work a full-time job. Needing more spiritual guidance, I drew closer to Jesus through prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

It was at Saint Paschal Baylon that I met Father Donald Jette, SSS. When he learned I was a chef, he introduced me to Brother Allen Boeckman, SSS who was looking to hire a cook for the Blessed Sacrament community. Through my time in prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, I felt I was called to be the chef for the community, and that Jesus would work out the details. I simply needed to trust Jesus.

Through my relationship with Jesus I came to learn that there are no coincidences in life, only "God incidents." The more closely I walk with God, the better I am able to hear Jesus' voice when he speaks to me. Through prayer and adoration I continue to deepen my relationship with Jesus, and in my daily walk with Jesus I have learned to listen as much as I talk to God.

Loving God our Father,
your servant Saint Peter Julian Eymard,
who was captivated by your Son's love
as revealed to us in the Eucharist,
greatly desired to manifest this love
to his contemporaries.

He established a new form of religious life
which is nourished by the Eucharist:
celebrated, adored,
and enriched with ministries of all kinds.

Through his intercession,
call forth many young people
who will labor in your Church
as priests, deacons, brothers or sisters.

Give us the grace
to become like the bread of the Eucharist
which is broken for the life of the world.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Jesus said) "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come a great distance." His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread to satisfy them here in this deserted place?" Still he asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they replied. He ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then, taking the seven loaves he gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they distributed them to the crowd. They also had a few fish. He said the blessing over them and ordered them distributed also. They ate and were satisfied.

Mark 8: 2-8 (NAB, revised edition)