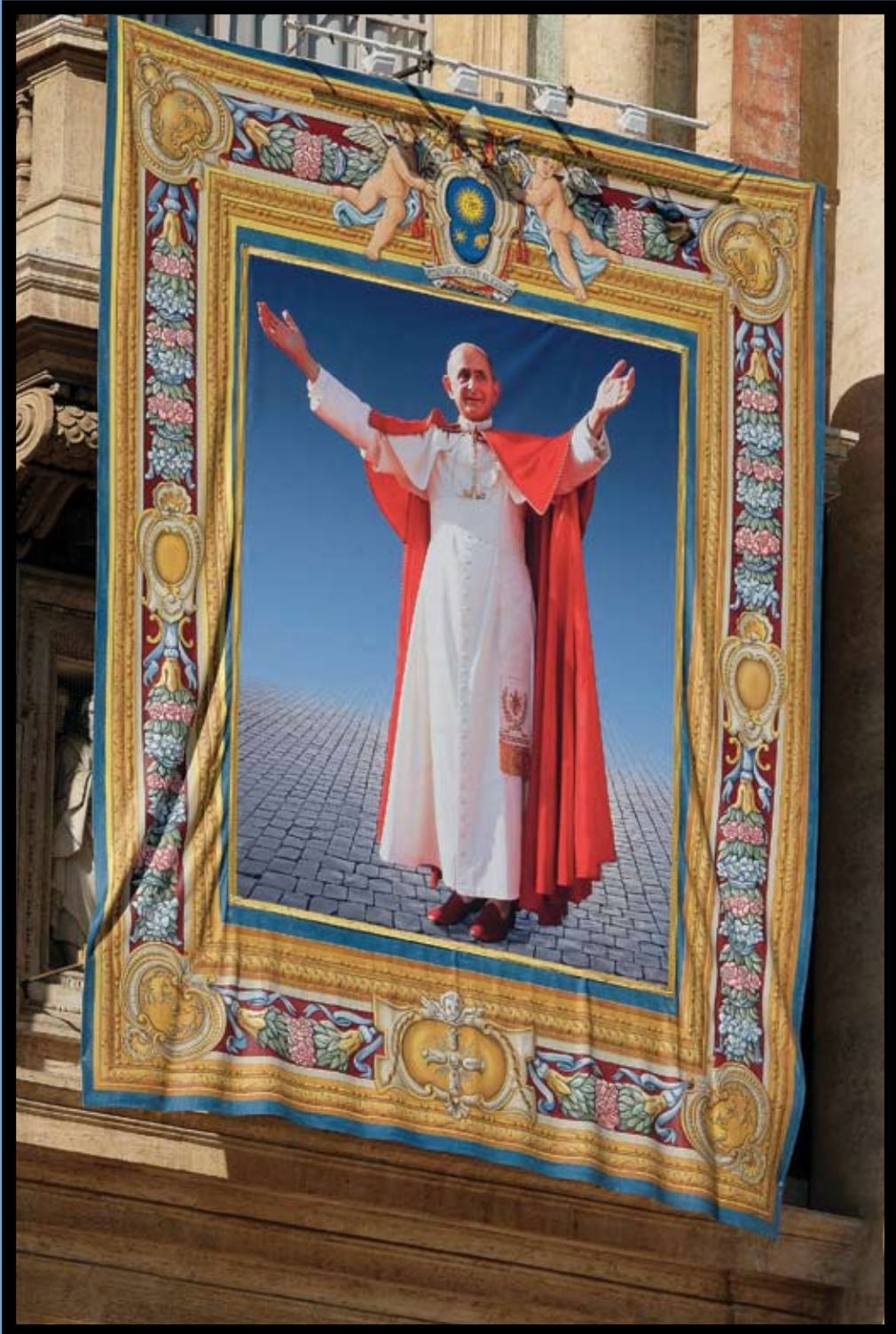


# Emmanuel



*Eucharistic Spirituality*

September/October 2018



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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](mailto: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. ©2018

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



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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 124 Number 5



## EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

- Thoughts About Catechesis  
in Today's Church  
by Owen F. Cummings 284
- Pope Francis and Vatican II's Saintly Popes  
by James H. Kroeger, MM 293
- Saint Oscar Romero's Eucharistic  
Transformation: In Word, Sacrament,  
Adoration, and Gethsemane  
by Robert Sanson 302

## EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

- The Universal Call to Holiness  
by Ernest Falardeau, SSS 310

## EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

- From Devotions to a More Devoted Life  
by Peter Schineller, SJ 314
- Pondering the Parables:  
The Parable of the Leaven  
by Bernard Camiré SSS 318
- Counsels for Spiritual Life 321

## EUCHARIST & CULTURE

- Art, Music, Film, Poetry, and Books 339

## COLUMNS

- From the Editor 282
- Pastoral Liturgy 322
- Breaking the Word 326
- Eucharistic Witness 348



## FROM THE EDITOR

One of the most memorable funeral liturgies in which I have taken part during my years of ministry was celebrated in the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist in downtown Cleveland in December 1980. It was the Mass of Christian Burial of Ursuline Sister Dorothy Kazel, 41, who had been brutally murdered along with three other churchwomen in the Central American country of El Salvador during that nation's bloody civil war.

The images of that day are as fresh as if it was yesterday. The pews were filled with members of her family and her religious community as well as the clergy and faithful of the diocese. So many feelings hung over the assembly: sadness and shock at the suddenness and violence that marked her being taken from us, yes; but an overwhelming sense of admiration and love for Dorothy and her unflinching commitment to the Gospel and to the Salvadoran people. Just eight-and-a-half months earlier, on March 24, Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, an outspoken proponent of justice and reconciliation in his native land, had been assassinated as he celebrated Mass in a hospital chapel in the capital city, San Salvador.

Standing there with my fellow concelebrants forming an honor guard in the cathedral's main aisle and overflowing into the transepts, I was struck by an overwhelming realization that I was in the presence of a martyr. Never in my life had I imagined that happening! Martyrs were revered figures from the distant past — apostles, evangelists, pastors, missionaries, holy men and women of every state in life who gave the ultimate witness in death to their undying faith in Jesus Christ. I felt incredibly blessed.

Those most familiar with the story of Sister Dorothy Kazel know that her stay in El Salvador had been extended because of the need to assure continuity in the Cleveland Diocese's mission team serving

there among the poor. It must have been a constant worry for her parents and brother and her Ursuline sisters to have her so far away and in evident danger.

A 2005 article in *The Plain Dealer* by religion writer David Briggs speaks of Dorothy's commitment to staying: "All Dorothy had told her [Sister Sheila Marie Tobbe, a fellow Ursuline and a member of the mission team in the 1990s] in letters and conversations about how close to God and one another the people of El Salvador were had become clear. Now she understood what Dorothy had told her over and over, 'Can you see why I can't leave all this?'"

Capuchin Keith Clark, author of *An Experience of Celibacy* (1982) and *Being Sexual . . . and Celibate* (1986), reflects on how intimacy, friendship, commitment, and loneliness are lived by the Church's ministers and religious. There is the call to be genuine, caring, and unswerving as we stand in appropriate relationship with and to those we serve. While not the exclusive love of marriage, it is nevertheless costly and enriching.

We are to give our lives as Christ did, unto death. Such love is the daily sacrifice of faithfulness and joyful self-giving — as Jesus, the martyrs of ages past, and Sister Dorothy Kazel and the martyrs of El Salvador have shown in our own time.

### **In This Issue**

October will bring the canonization of two new saints: Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Oscar Romero. You might begin with Maryknoll missionary James H. Kroeger's reflection "Pope Francis and Vatican II's Saintly Popes" and Robert Sanson's "Saint Oscar Romero's Eucharistic Transformation." Or linger in September for a while, pondering Owen F. Cummings' "Thoughts about Catechesis in Today's Church." Underpinning it all is Ernest Falardeau, SSS' "The Universal Call to Holiness," which is deepened by our participation in the Lord's Table.



Anthony Schueller, SSS





*EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING*

## Thoughts About Catechesis in Today's Church

by Owen F. Cummings

*Catechists share the faith they love, as well as the person of Jesus Christ, with a new generation of seekers and believers. But how do they do this effectively today?*

Deacon Owen F. Cummings, a frequent contributor to *Emmanuel*, is the academic dean and Regents' Professor of Theology at Mount Angel Seminary in Saint Benedict, Oregon.

### **Catechists Are Theologians**

SOMETIMES THEOLOGIANs SPEAK AND WRITE AS THOUGH THEY WERE LIVING ON another planet, speaking and writing in a language other than human! This reflection hopes to avoid that temptation. My hope is to write plainly with as little use of technical theological language as possible.

For me, all catechists are theologians, but not all theologians are catechists. Some theologians, arguably not too many, spend most of their time at their desks and in libraries researching different aspects of the Christian faith. They are necessary and they make a valuable contribution. A theologian who is a catechist, however, is engaged in communicating the faith to others at various levels: elementary through high school, adult catechetical formation as in the RCIA, college, and graduate school. All catechists-theologians are attempting to communicate the faith not only intelligibly but persuasively and with joy and even a sprinkling of excitement.

The most intelligible, the most persuasive, the most joyful, and the most exciting text coming from a catechist-theologian of the first century may be found arguably in the Prologue to Saint John's Gospel (1:1-14). The beginning verses are especially important. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. . . ."

Then consider these remarks by a contemporary theologian: "This is, deservedly, the most influential short theological text in the history

of Christianity. Among many other things, it sets an unsurpassable horizon within which to consider Jesus, that of God and all reality. The scope of theology is, as Thomas Aquinas says, everything in relation to God, all things *sub ratione Dei*, embracing all Scripture, all creation, all people, all spheres of life, all knowledge and culture, and all religions. Here, at the opening of John's Gospel, God is seen as free to express fully who God is, in full self-giving as a particular human being, and as doing so in Jesus, the Word become flesh. . . . Nobody before this Prologue, so far as we know, had written theology like this."<sup>1</sup> In short, everything, but everything has to do with God. Everything has come into being through the Word, and that Word has become one of us.

As the Prologue begins the Gospel of Saint John, so the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus end the Gospel. In Chapter 20, we find Jesus saying, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," and then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:21-22). As the Father has sent Jesus to be the incarnation of divine love in the world, so Jesus sends his followers to be that incarnation also, not just his immediate followers of the first century, but all followers and perhaps we may say especially all who profess to teach the faith.

### **The Essential Marks of the Catechist**

As we attempt to do so in our own ways, I would suggest that there are three essential marks of the catechist: faith, hope, and love. Now I have no doubt you have heard this so often before and perhaps are getting ready to roll your eyes! Please hold the rolling of the eyes until we have spelled out something of what is involved in each of these three essential marks.

### **Faith**

Theology has been defined by Saint Anselm of Canterbury as "faith seeking understanding." What we need to do now is parse that statement. We may parse it in two ways: first, from the point of view of God toward us; second, from the point of view of ourselves toward God.

First, from God toward us. Let us take a look at this summary statement of what Christian faith is all about: "While we cannot see or understand or apprehend the essence of God, we encounter God mediated and manifested in plural, interweaving forms, percolated through the entire material universe by virtue of the act of creation, and raised to a far higher power in the lives of holy people, and to a supreme



state of unbroken intensity in the incarnate humanity of Jesus Christ. In other words, the relationship of the invisible, unknowable God to the material world, whether in Jesus Christ or more generally, is not simply the relationship of a self-enclosed divinity, infinitely distant from all material reality. It is the relationship of an active, outpouring, self-diffusing God whose action, you might say, soaked through the material environment, so that there is indeed a 'real presence' — and I use the words advisedly — of God within creation, and, by the work of grace and the Holy Spirit, an intensified presence of God in baptized people; even more intensified in those who took their baptism seriously and became saints; and supremely intensified in Jesus Christ-Church-sacraments around the Eucharist."<sup>2</sup>

This is a remarkable paragraph worth lingering over. The author, Rowan Williams, is telling us that creation is the massive and absurdly generous outpouring of God's creative love, and that Jesus is that absurdly generous outpouring of God's creative love in human form. Furthermore, the Church continues in its own way this generous outpouring, strengthened and centered in the Eucharist. It is a brief but very fine summary of what Christian faith is all about, and what catechists are caught up in.

Second, from us toward God. This is the bit of Saint Anselm's definition "seeking understanding." Catechists seek to understand, are always seeking to understand, and in a carefully articulated fashion inviting others into this horizon of understanding. It doesn't stop when you get certified as a catechist, or when you get a master's degree, or when you get a doctorate. It never stops, this seeking to understand.

The study of theology should never stop. I recognize the challenges. I don't mean by studying theology something like the following theological sentences — and here I am being quite naughty!

"Christ's use of asyndetic syntax has implications for a liturgical critique of modern, secular modes of epistemology. In my description of the complex, anaphoral structures of the prayers — especially manifested in the *Credo* — of the Roman Rite, it was seen that pre-modern language readily reflects a sacral universe in which all elements form a constitutive part of the greater whole, and one element recalls another. This recalls by means of a synthesis of hypotaxis (syntax with subordinating conjunctions) and parataxis (syntax with coordinating conjunctions) which I described as 'organic' syntax. The use of this



complex integral structure in the liturgical text shows it to be an essentially open configuration which allows itself to be subverted by an order in which exceeds its own reason."<sup>3</sup>

Now the author is actually making a very important point, but honestly this is rather obscure and might put one off from reading and studying theology. Contrast this rather heavy-handed expression with some sentences from theologian Nicholas Lash. Why should catechists continue to study theology? Well, says Lash, because "it is terribly easy to talk nonsense."<sup>4</sup>

*Theology, and so faith, must not only be intelligible to people, but also it must be "infectious."*

I am convinced that part of the reason why people no longer walk with us as Church is because they think we are talking nonsense, and it is nonsense if they are unable to understand it — at whatever age and stage they are at — in terms intelligible and persuasive to them. Lash continues: "To be quite blunt: those who refuse to do theology — to read, think hard, discuss — simply do not, in fact, care about the truth of Christianity or, at the very least, do not care sufficiently to seek some understanding of that Word through whom all things are made, into whose light we have been called, and which will set us free."<sup>5</sup>

In other words, if we are not fired up, continually interested in pushing the horizon of understanding about the things of the faith, if we are not obviously excited about the things of the faith, how on earth will our students be?

As catechists, we need to be confident about our Christian faith — always in an informed manner — and we need to be confident about Christian doctrine and knowing our way around Christian doctrine. Some words from historian David Keck, in a book in which he recounts his family's struggle with his mother's Alzheimer's, help to demonstrate what I mean about this confidence.

Keck has reverence and gratitude for Christian doctrine for two reasons. "First, as a historian, I am astounded by its endurance through the centuries. Many impressive thoughts have not survived, and many that have, have lost all of their power today. Second, and



more personally, I am thankful for doctrine because I believe that only through the faithful transmission of the Church's traditional teachings is it possible for me to have hope for my mother; for my father, her primary caregiver; and for the rest of the world which suffers each sunrise and sunset. Hence, as I use the term, orthodoxy is not only about doctrine or guiding principles; it also denotes a kind of existence to be desired in itself. Orthodoxy is a deep longing to align one's own life and memories with the life and memories of the Church."<sup>6</sup>

Keck is making the point that there have been many exciting and wise thoughts put out by thinkers from the dawn of civilization. Many of these have been forgotten over the course of millennia. Christian doctrine, however, continues to be handed down from one generation to the next — the task of catechists — and Christian doctrine has the capacity to shape the lives of people in ways that are immensely and deeply satisfying, if taught well and excitingly.

One contemporary author, the Czech priest-therapist-theologian Tomas Halik insists that theology, and so faith, must not only be intelligible to people, but also it must be "infectious." That may seem a strange word to use, so let me spell it out a bit further using Halik's own words: "Christianity (has) ceased to be a common ideal for humankind and (has) become sterile — because it *failed to love the world enough*. Its teaching and spiritual practice (has) been crippled by the old heresies — Manichaeism that rejected matter and creation, and Jansenism with its pessimistic attitude to natural human behavior, its pathological asceticism, and its obsession with original sin."<sup>7</sup>

Essentially the point Halik is making is that many today do not love Christianity because Christianity seems inordinately suspicious of the good things that they love. We can easily give the impression of being *against* things, of being condemnatory, of being too negative. Halik is saying we need to be more positively infectious and teach the faith with this positive infectiousness.

## Hope

Catechists are people of hope. I find the following passage from that first great catechist of the Christian tradition, Saint Paul, full of hope. He is writing in the early 50s of the first century to that fragmented Christian community at Corinth — he says they are full of *schismata*/

splits — but this is what he has to say to them: “For when one says, ‘I belong to Paul,’ and another, ‘I belong to Apollos,’ are you not merely human? . . . I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. . . . For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building” (1 Cor 3:4-9).

Paul and Apollos are both catechists, but it is God who gives the growth. We are God’s servants. We do all we can with all the excellence we can command, but we recognize in all that is being done with our catechumens — before our ministry, during our ministry, and after our ministry — God is always active. That is the ground of our great hope. It is not dependent upon us, but upon God, and he is ever present and working to draw people to himself, whatever their circumstances happen to be.

*Christian doctrine has the capacity to shape the lives of people in ways that are immensely and deeply satisfying, if taught well and excitingly.*

We hear a great deal these days about the Church dying, and if not dying seriously ill, in Europe and in North America. We know this existentially because members of our families, brought up in the Catholic faith, no longer walk with us in any active sense.

These are facts. Statistics and sociological data confirm the facts. That cannot but create a certain sadness for the committed catechist. What we love and what we love to communicate is not loved by everyone and sometimes not by those whom we love. Sadness, however, does not mean a loss of hope.

One of the things that gives me great hope and confidence is the study of church history. The study of church history brings home very clearly to us that there never was a golden age in the history of the Church, free of problems, concerns, and challenges. If there never was a golden age, that means that there never was a time when the people of the Church were universally active in the sacraments and great moral witnesses to the love of Jesus.

Think back to the Gospels — Peter, first among the apostles, denied



Jesus in his moment of need. Judas, one of the Twelve, betrayed him. The entire tradition is peppered with these challenges. Let's take a look at a few of them.<sup>8</sup>

A third-century Syrian author, in a text known as the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, complains that there are some who prefer to go to the theater rather than attend Sunday worship. In the thirteenth century, the century of the great Saint Thomas Aquinas, the century that many look to as almost a perfect time of Christianity, one finds a Dominican friar, Humbert de Romans, writing about his congregation in the south of France.<sup>9</sup> Through his sermons, we are presented with a picture of the very ordinary people of his day.

Humbert rails against their obsession with money and sex. He comments on their ignorance of the faith. He speaks of those who are obdurate and who "turn away their ears" when Christ is mentioned. He tells us that there are people who "rarely pray during the day," seldom or never attend church, and, if they do, it is once a year for the Eucharist. And even among those who do come for the Eucharist, there are some who do not stand for the proclamation of the Gospel or do not sign themselves with the cross.

The point of these examples is not to induce or to confirm a sense of pastoral complacency about Eucharistic attendance and participation. The point is to recognize that there is no golden age in the history of the Church or of sacramental participation. There can be no doubt that things are changing in the Church as we encounter it today. Tomas Halik writes: "The history of religion and the history of Christianity consist of periods of crisis and periods of renewal; the only religion that is truly dead is one that does not undergo change, the one that has dropped out of that rhythm of life."<sup>10</sup>

We, as catechists, should be alert to the signs of the times, listening to what our friends who no longer walk with us are saying, listening to what our critics are saying, and attempting to respond as best we can, and expecting appropriately to change. At the same time, because God is never absent and always gracefully at work even when things seem very dark, catechists are always people of hope — not optimism, because optimism lacks grounding in reality — but hope, always hope.

## Love

I recall during the 1990s when George Niederauer was the bishop of Salt Lake City he began a homily during a Mass when priests were to be ordained with these words to the ordinands: "Love the people, love the people, love the people." Very impressive words, and impressive words that apply no less equally to catechists: "Love the people, love the people, love the people."

People of all ages know when you do not care about them. It shines through your speech, your face, your body language, your failure to listen adequately, your failure to smile enough, and so forth. Catechists are people of love, and so their speech, their faces, their body language all express this love. They listen very carefully, they smile frequently. Students of whatever age know that they are loved.

*"We love God by 'loving in God.' We love people and the world 'in God.' . . . God is the fact that we love and how we love rather than the 'object' of our love."*

In that same letter to the Corinthians which we cited earlier, the apostle Paul gives us his famous hymn to love. "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. . . . Love never ends" (1 Cor 13:4-8).

Some words of Tomas Halik are a good paraphrase of what Paul is talking about. "We love God by 'loving in God.' We love people and the world 'in God,' in the way that we see people in the world in the light. God is *the fact that we love* and how we love rather than the 'object' of our love. He is the 'biosphere' of all real love. . . . God *happens* where we love."<sup>11</sup> An atmosphere of love, in Halik's words, a biosphere of love should be the living ambience of our classrooms or wherever our catechesis takes place. But it cannot happen there, it cannot happen from us to them, if it is not happening *in* us.

## Conclusion

Every year in our Church, at all levels, we recruit students and we recruit catechists for those students. There can be few more important vocations.



One hears constantly of the challenges that catechists-theologians face in their various classrooms. Sometimes, one can feel that one is really up against a brick wall. Our Catholic faith is exciting, and if we are to convey some of that excitement to the upcoming generations, they must sense excitement about it, an excitement marked by faith, hope, and love.

I end this brief reflection with some more words from the Czech priest Tomas Halik. He has a clear realization that faith, hope, and love are so necessary for our world. This is what he writes: "If love, faith, and hope seem absurd according to the 'logic of this world,' while from the perspective of the human heart that yearns and suffers 'this world' appears absurd, it means that there is something in the human heart that fundamentally gravitates towards sense and meaning 'in spite of everything,' 'nonetheless.' There is something in the heart that is open to meaning in protest, yearning, and hope."<sup>12</sup>

Catechists-theologians are those people in the Church helping to provide that Christian meaning that sustains life. And that is so deeply needed.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> David F. Ford, "Jesus in the 21st Century," McDonald Lecture 1, April 11, 2018, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, 3-4.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is adapted from Rowan Williams, *The Christian Tradition for Today* (London-Oxford-New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 107.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 226.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas Lash, "On Learning To Be Wise," *Priests and People* (October 2001), 357.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Lash, *op. cit.*, 355-359.

<sup>6</sup> David Keck, *Forgetting Whose We Are: Alzheimer's Disease and the Love of God* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 82.

<sup>7</sup> Tomas Halik, *Night of the Confessor: Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 37-38.

<sup>8</sup> See Owen F. Cummings, "Eucharistic Absence," *Emmanuel* 116 (2010), 100-114.

<sup>9</sup> See Alexander Murray, "Religion Among the Poor in Thirteenth Century France: The Testimony of Humbert de Romans," *Traditio* 30 (1974), 285-324.

<sup>10</sup> Tomas Halik, *Night of the Confessor: Christian Faith in an Age of Uncertainty* (New York: Doubleday, 2012), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Tomas Halik, *I Want You to Be* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 26-27.

<sup>12</sup> Tomas Halik, *Night of the Confessor*, 32.





## EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

# Pope Francis and Vatican II's Saintly Popes

by James H. Kroeger, MM

*Among the many accomplishments of Pope Francis' time as pope is the fact that he has canonized the three popes of Vatican II. Why is this so important and what is he saying to the Church and the world?*

POPE FRANCIS HAS BEGUN HIS SIXTH YEAR AS LEADER OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH. He was elected on March 13, 2013, and officially inaugurated on the solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19. These past five years (2013-2018) have been filled with intense activity; recently released data from Rome illustrates Francis' many pastoral involvements.

Francis has made 22 international trips, traveling 154,906 miles — equivalent to six journeys around the world. He has made 18 pastoral visits within Italy and 16 parish visits within his Diocese of Rome. He has canonized 880 saints, created 61 cardinals, led 219 general audiences which include catechetical reflections on various themes: sacraments, the Church, family, mercy, faith, Christian hope, and the Mass. He has prayed the *Angelus* and *Regina Coeli* with visitors 286 times.

In addition, Francis has issued 41 major documents, including the encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Sí*, apostolic exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Amoris Laetitia*, and the bull *Misericordiae Vultus*. He has called four synods of bishops and declared two special years on the consecrated life and on mercy. He has attended or announced three World Youth Days (Brazil, Poland, and Panama). And this list of activities, extending from March 19, 2013-2018, could easily be augmented.

However, one remarkable "achievement" that was *not* included in the statistics issued by the Vatican Press Office is that by October of 2018, Pope Francis will have canonized *three* popes: John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. While this presentation does not delve into the merits of popes canonizing other popes, it does highlight a unique contribution

Father James H. Kroeger, MM, has served in Asia since 1970, ministering in parishes and in the formation of seminarians, catechists, and lay leaders. He currently teaches at Loyola School of Theology, East Asian Pastoral Institute, and Mother of Life Catechetical Center in Manila, Philippines. His recent books include *Exploring the Priesthood with Pope Francis*; *Becoming Missionary Disciples*; *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones*; and *Walking in the Light of Faith*.



of Pope Francis. And, in the mind of this author, it is significant that all these three pope-saints were active participants in the Second Vatican Council. This piece now turns to presenting a “brief glimpse” or “quick snapshot” of these canonized saints; it highlights their missionary contribution and illustrates the admiration Pope Francis has for each of them.

### **Saint John XXIII: Joyful Pope**

Pope John XXIII, along with Pope John Paul II, was declared a saint on April 27, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday. Over the years of his short pontificate (1958-1963), John XXIII became a beloved figure worldwide; he was popularly known as “Good Pope John.” He is remembered for the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965); his feast day on October 11 is fixed to commemorate his opening of Vatican II on October 11, 1962. Each year as the Church celebrates this saint, we are asked to recall the pivotal role of Vatican II in the ongoing life and mission of the Church.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the fourth of 13 children of peasant farmers, was born in the village of Sotto il Monte in northern Italy on November 25, 1881. He entered the seminary as a young boy. Significantly, at the tender age of 15, he began writing his spiritual diary, which was published as *Journal of a Soul* shortly after his death. Undoubtedly, Pope John’s aim in life was to be a holy priest. One could validly say that he always tried to be a saint — and he made it!

### **Papal Contributions**

Beginning his pontificate at age 77 on October 28, 1958, Angelo Roncalli brought a whole new pastoral and personal style to the papacy. Describing the person and contribution of John XXIII during his visit to Bergamo on June 3, 2013 (the 50th anniversary of John’s death), Pope Francis noted that John’s life is a lesson in how obedience and trust in God lead to interior peace.

Pope Francis said: “The whole world recognized Pope John as a pastor and a father, a pastor because he was a father. . . . It is so beautiful to find a priest, a good priest, filled with goodness.” He was “an effective weaver of relationships and a solid champion of unity, both in the ecclesiastical community and outside it.” He was always “open to dialogue with the Christians of other churches, with representatives

of the Jewish and Muslim worlds, and with many other people of good will.”

Pope Francis said that John XXIII’s decision to convoke Vatican II was the result of a “prophetic intuition” based on his “love for the Church’s traditions and his awareness of the constant need for renewal.” The council and Pope John’s “offering of his life for its success,” Francis said, are “a bright beacon for the journey that lies ahead. . . . Let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. Do not be afraid to take risks, just as he was not afraid.”

*John XXIII’s decision to convoke Vatican II was the result of a “prophetic intuition” based on his “love for the Church’s traditions and his awareness of the constant need for renewal.”*

### **Genuine Spirituality**

John XXIII’s outlook is, in fact, a spirituality that he communicated to the world. He took the call to holiness seriously throughout his entire life. His profound trust was evident in his simplicity, patience, gentleness, and affability, qualities manifested in all his varied writings.

John could be very forceful in asserting his conviction that the Christian faith should result in deep, joyful hope. In his opening speech to the Second Vatican Council, he said: “We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand” (quoted by Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, 84). He believed that divine providence was renewing humanity and that through a perceptive reading of the “signs of the times” (cf. EG, 14, 51, 108) one could discern that by God’s designs a new order of human relations was emerging in the contemporary world.

### **Daily Decalogue of John XXIII**

In his homily on October 11, 2006, commemorating the anniversary of the opening of Vatican II, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone quoted what is widely known as the “Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII.” The following are some excerpts: 1) Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively, without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once; 2) Only for today . . . I will not criticize anyone; I will not



claim to improve or discipline anyone except myself; 3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one; 4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes; 5) Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading. . . .”

Pope John’s Decalogue continues: 6) Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it; 7) Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices; 8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself; I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it. . . ; 9) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me. . . ; and 10) Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness. . . .” We marvel at John XXIII’s wisdom and seek to put it into practice — each and every day!

Saint John XXIII, a holy man with a great heart, radiated an infectious optimism and joy. Radically open to the Holy Spirit, he certainly helped renew the Church, seeking to transform us all into a truly joyful community of Jesus’ missionary-disciples!

### **Saint Paul VI: Pope of Evangelization**

On World Mission Sunday in 2014, Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) was beatified in Rome. The choice of the occasion was significant. First, on Mission Sunday, the Church focuses on her missionary vocation and identity. And, when elected, the new pope specifically chose the name Paul because he saw himself preaching the Gospel to the whole world, following Saint Paul’s missionary dynamism.

Secondly, the date marked the close of a special Synod of Bishops on the Family; it was Paul VI who established synods of bishops in 1965 to assist the Church in both reading and interpreting the signs of the times. The Vatican has confirmed that the canonization of Paul VI will take place in Rome on October 14 at the close of the Synod of Bishops on Youth and Vocations. Indeed, the parallels between the events of 2014 and 2018 are quite striking!

## Missionary Initiatives

Aside from expressing his “core identity” with the chosen name Paul, Giovanni Battista Montini accomplished much to bring the gospel message to contemporary humanity. Sharing John XXIII’s vision of Church renewal, Paul successfully concluded the Second Vatican Council and systematically implemented its missionary vision. In addition, Paul VI presented his “dialogical” vision of the Church in his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964). He established the Vatican office now known as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on Pentecost Sunday 1964.

Paul, the missionary pope, initiated papal travels, literally covering the globe. His most extensive missionary journey in November-December 1970 brought him to Asia, with visits to eight countries. While in Manila, he met with 180 Asian bishops, a pivotal event in the foundation of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. In addition, Paul VI vigorously promoted the growth of authentic, inculturated local churches.

*Paul VI wished “to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. . . . Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church.”*

## “Evangelii Nuntiandi”

Pope Paul will always be remembered for his 1975 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), *Evangelization in the Modern World*. This was the first papal document to flow from a synod (the 1974 world synod focused on the theme of evangelization). This beautiful document, as fresh today as when it was written, asserts that: 1. evangelization is the vocation proper to the Church; 2. the Church’s mission continues the mission of Jesus; 3. evangelization is a multi-faceted reality; and 4. evangelization includes a commitment to full human development and social justice.

Paul VI asserted: “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. . . . Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to



the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize” (EN, 14). “For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity” (EN, 18). *Evangelii Nuntiandi* became the Magna Carta for Catholic evangelization in the last quarter of the second millennium of Christianity. Without doubt, it is one of the most important ecclesial documents of the post-Vatican II era. In it, Paul VI boldly addresses the topic of evangelization in the modern world.

### **Pope Francis’ Affirmation**

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* is the most quoted document in Pope Francis’ 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; it is quoted on 13 different occasions. One finds that Pope Francis, beginning early in his pontificate, regularly quotes and praises it. In 2013, Francis said that *Evangelii Nuntiandi* includes words that “are as timely as if they had been written yesterday” (May 17); he called it “a very full text that has lost nothing of its timeliness” (June 13). As Francis described evangelization, he asserted that *Evangelii Nuntiandi* was “that basic point of reference which remains relevant” (July 27). The pope went so far (June 22) as to describe *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as “to my mind the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written to this day.”

Pope Francis reiterated his great admiration for Paul VI and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* on June 16, 2014, when he opened the pastoral convention for the Diocese of Rome. Francis stated: “Still to this day, it is the most important post-conciliar pastoral document, which hasn’t been surpassed. We should always go back to it.” Undoubtedly, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is the fertile soil from which Francis drew much as he authored his *Evangelii Gaudium* (as well as using other material from Pope Paul VI). Francis appreciates Paul VI, because he affirms that the testimony of Paul VI “feeds us the flame of love for Christ, love for the Church, and gives us the momentum to announce the Gospel to the people of today, with mercy, patience, courage, and joy” (June 22).

### **Parallel Insights**

Popes Paul VI and Francis share several common perspectives. “Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing” (EN, 80); “let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization” (EG, 83). All Christians are challenged to be “evangelized evangelizers” (cf. EN, 15) who are truly “missionary disciples” (EG, 120); their spirituality must reflect “the fervor of the saints” (EN, 80) and emerge



from “a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ” (EG, 3). Popes Paul and Francis are truly “kindred spirits” — aflame with the fire of evangelization. We try to catch the same “Gospel Fire”!

### **Saint John Paul II: Global Missionary Pope**

The Catholic Church worldwide rejoiced as Pope John Paul II was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on May 1, 2011, and then canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014, in Saint Peter’s Square in Rome. Catholic and secular media covered the events from a wide variety of perspectives, emphasizing the many and diverse contributions of the 264th pope of the Catholic Church, whose pontificate extended over 26 years (1978-2005).

*John Paul II was convinced that “missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!”*

### **Startling Statistics**

When John Paul II died on April 2, 2005, the Reuters News fact sheet noted some remarkable statistics regarding his pontificate. He traveled a total of 775,231 miles around the world — 3.24 times the distance from the earth to the moon! John Paul II read aloud, before audiences in the millions, more than 20,000 addresses. As pope, he issued more than 100 major documents, including 14 encyclicals, 45 apostolic letters, 14 apostolic exhortations, and 11 apostolic constitutions. He beatified 1,338 and canonized 482 people, more than *all* of his predecessors in the last four centuries combined.

Undoubtedly, one of the major emphases of Pope John Paul II was his focus on the renewal of the Church in her missionary identity and commitment. When his mission encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer) (RM) was published on December 7, 1990, [the 25th anniversary of *Ad Gentes*, the mission document of Vatican II], Cardinal Godfried Daneels of Brussels wrote: “This document best exemplifies who this pope is; it is the fruit of his mission in every continent. There is nothing better to define his pontificate than to say: he is a missionary pope.”



## Commitment to Missionary Evangelization

In *Redemptoris Missio*, 1, John Paul II described his missionary commitment: “From the beginning of my pontificate, I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the *urgency of missionary activity*. . . .” He echoed this explicit pastoral choice in his Message for World Mission Sunday in 1981, the year of his first visit to the Philippines: “My trips to Latin America, Asia, and Africa have an eminently missionary purpose.” Everywhere he went, John Paul II emphasized a central point: “I wish to invite the Church to *renew her missionary commitment*” (RM, 2).

The pope was concerned that “missionary activity specifically directed ‘to the nations’ (*ad gentes*) appears to be waning. . . . For in the Church’s history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis on faith” (RM, 2). John Paul II made the faith-mission link very explicit when he noted: “*Mission is an issue of faith*, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us” (RM, 11).

Saint John Paul II did everything in his power to renew mission because he continually asserted that mission is at the heart of the Church: “The Church here on earth is missionary by her very nature” (AG, 2). He was deeply convinced that “missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*” (RM, 2). Pope Francis said of John Paul II: “I think of him as ‘the great missionary of the Church,’” because he was “a man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere.”

## Missionary and Saint

The choices of the dates for his beatification (May 1, 2011) and canonization (April 27, 2014) of Pope John Paul II were certainly not accidental; both are the feast of Divine Mercy. John Paul II had a deep commitment to this devotion, as it was propagated by Sister Faustina Kowalska, a fellow Pole. One can also note the intimate link with mission. Is not missionary evangelization all about proclaiming God’s abundant love, compassion, and mercy? Mission is grounded in being so filled with God’s loving mercy that one wishes to proclaim it to the world. Mission makes God’s merciful love contagious!

One might assert that for his missionary commitment and insights Pope John Paul II “deserved” to be declared a saint. However, the canonization process is not quite that simple! Yet the Church celebrates the life of this saint, because she has been gifted with an extraordinary apostle of Jesus Christ who used *every opportunity* to spread the message and person of Jesus. We rejoice to pray: Saint John Paul II, renew our missionary hearts as members of Christ’s Church!

### Living in a Remarkable Era

As Catholics today, we are truly privileged to live in such a fascinating time of the Church’s history. We recall that it is precisely six decades ago (1958-2018) that Saint John XXIII was elected pope (October 28, 1958). In less than 100 days after his election, he announced the Second Vatican Council on January 25, 1959, the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul. Certainly, the council, considered by many as the most significant Church event since the Council of Trent in the 1500s, opened an age of marvelous transformation in the Church — all guided by the action of the Holy Spirit. In addition, this “Vatican II Era” has been characterized by several holy popes: Saints John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II.

How did these saints regard Vatican II? Pope John XXIII said that he was offering “to the world the gift of a new ecumenical council,” and he prayed to the Holy Spirit: “Renew your wonders in our time, as though for a New Pentecost.” Pope Paul VI said: “One may say that the council leaves itself as a legacy to the Church that held it.” He asserted: “The first need of the Church is to always live Pentecost.” Pope John Paul II noted: “The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has been a gift of the Spirit to his Church.” He affirmed: “The conciliar documents . . . have not lost their value nor their brilliance. . . . In the council, we have received a sure compass to guide us.”

Our hearts overflow with gratitude for God’s abundant blessings showered upon the contemporary Church through two very special gifts: Vatican II itself and the three “pope-saints” of the council. Indeed, the Spirit has renewed the Church in our times; we have experienced a “New Pentecost”!





## *EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING*

# Saint Oscar Romero's Eucharistic Transformation: In Word, Sacrament, Adoration, and Gethsemane

by Robert Sanson

*Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador will be canonized along with Pope Paul VI on October 14. The story of his life and ministry is one of transformation and self-sacrifice.*

Father Robert Sanson is a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. Ordained 51 years and now retired, he first visited El Salvador in 1982, two years after the death of Archbishop Romero. As the pastor of Saint Joseph's Church in Strongsville, Ohio, he established in 2004 a sister parish relationship with San Jose Villanueva, close to Zaragoza where a Cleveland missionary started an orphanage that Romero would visit.

OSCAR ARNULFO ROMERO Y GALDAMEZ HAS BEEN A "SAINT" FOR DECADES TO the poorest of El Salvador — the farmers and laborers who work with no land of their own, little education, poor wages and working conditions, and no real promise for their children to have much better. No wonder that the civil war ended officially in 1992, but this tiny, highly-populated country is in the grip of gang violence.

Amidst so much bloodshed, where is the hope for this mostly Catholic country? Romero's blood was shed that they might have hope and joy. He knew he would probably be martyred, and said, "If they kill me, I shall rise in the Salvadoran people."

When you celebrate liturgies in El Salvador today in the poorer parishes, you feel the joy of the Gospel. When you hear the animators of the word, you sense the hope. When you see how they care for each other, you know they recognize the real presence of Christ in his word, his sacrament, and in the least of his sisters and brothers.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

Many people know the basic story of Archbishop Romero from the 1989 movie *Romero*, produced by Paulist Father Ellwood Kieser. The movie captures well the Romero who "made the ultimate sacrifice in the passionate stand against social injustice and oppression in his country." It also chronicles the "transformation of Romero from an apolitical, complacent priest to a committed leader of the Salvadoran people." Raul Julia, the famous actor, masterfully captures the spirit of Romero, and was so moved by the character he interiorized that he himself returned to the practice of the Catholic faith.

What we often remember as the most dramatic moment of the movie is his elevation of the host at Mass, and at that moment the professional assassin in the back of church puts a bullet into his heart. But this is not when it happened. Rather, Romero had just finished his homily when the bullet struck. The timing is significant: he was *killed for his proclamation of the word of God*. His bold words as a prophet of justice stung them to the heart.

To understand what this means liturgically is to read the title of the basic English work on Romero by his Jesuit biographer, James R. Brockman, *The Word Remains: A Life of Oscar Romero*. On the cover: "The word remains. This is the great comfort of the one who preaches. My voice will disappear, but my word, which is Christ, will remain."

Romero's words flowed from his life and ministry of gospel preaching and service. We can read his own reflections in his homilies, his writings, and especially in his own diary, *Archbishop Oscar Romero. A Shepherd's Diary*. So many Salvadorans heard him preach at the cathedral by way of radio broadcasts about the human rights abuses, the death squads, those who were tortured, "disappeared," and killed, and his plea to the government soldiers to stop killing their own people.

A dramatic way to understand how infuriated his enemies were is to visit the museum of the martyrs at the Jesuit university in San Salvador. In 1989, six Jesuit professors, their housekeeper, and her daughter were brutally shot and killed by government troops. These academics proposed words from the social Gospel of the Church that were used by many theologians in Latin America labeled "liberation theology."

In its most non-threatening form, it states that Jesus came that we might be spiritually free, mainly from sin. In its most distorted view, it came to connote violent stirring up of the common folk with Marxist interpretation calling on the poor to take up guns to overthrow unjust social structures. In correctly understood terms, liberation theology was a gospel call and an imperative to preach and empower people to have access to education, jobs, work, housing, and basic human rights.

I recommend two courses by Dr. Michael Lee of Fordham University from Now You Know Media (2016): "An Introduction to Liberation Theology" and "Oscar Romero. Saint of Liberation." But emotions and fears engendered death squads and repression in El Salvador, in Pope Francis' country of Argentina, and in much of Latin America. In some countries, such as Cuba, it was violent, Communist-inspired revolution. Neither Romero, nor the Jesuits, ever wished or inspired



anything other than non-violent preaching of the word of Jesus. Cardinal Helder Câmara of Recife, Brazil, said it best: “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why they are poor, they call me a communist.”

When the six Jesuits were killed, it was primarily their *words* that stung. Visit the museum of the martyrs at the Jesuit university. In the museum, you will see their books totally mangled, their typewriters smashed, and unnerving pictures of their dead bodies in the garden with their brains destroyed by bullets.

Romero knew the anger of his enemies from his strong words for justice. He feared for his life — or worse. He knew they often used torture. View the graphic Stations of the Cross in the chapel and see the naked bodies receiving electric shock. Romero heard his own priests, the ones who lived, recount their tortures.

The Sisters of Divine Providence Hospital, where he lived in his little cottage on their property, knew of the sleepless nights he spent every time he prepared a Sunday homily. One of the sisters from the hospital spoke to our group, as we crowded into the little bedroom with the desk, typewriter, tape recorder, and prie-dieu, about Romero spending long hours on that kneeler. He was not just pondering the right words to say, he was with Jesus in the agony in the garden of Gethsemane with fear and trembling at the consequences of his words. This was his first martyrdom for justice — witness to human rights abuses and torture.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Liturgy is life! “*Ite missa est!* Go forth, you are sent.” The central belief of our Catholic Eucharist is that Jesus truly becomes present, body and blood, soul and divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. Romero never made it to the Eucharistic Prayer on that day of March 24, 1980, where in that chapel of the cancer hospital he would have spoken in the person of Christ and said, “This is *my* body . . . *my* blood.” “Can you drink this cup?” Jesus said. The chalice meant suffering as well as joy.

The Eucharist was the real presence of Christ that he adored, received, and let himself be transformed. The Eucharist was not his “bully pulpit” to decry injustices and abuses. The Eucharist was Jesus hearing the cry of the poor. The Bread of Life gave him strength and was the cup of joy



and of suffering that promised redemption, by way of the cross. We have the same challenge. This dying and rising, the paschal mystery, was explored by William T. Cavanaugh in his article: "Dying for the Eucharist or Being Killed by It? Romero's Challenge to First-World Christians."

We know the analogies to bread being kneaded, baked by fire, broken, and shared. On one trip to El Salvador, our group was privileged to meet with the late Monsignor Ricardo Urioste, perhaps Romero's closest advisor and later president of the Romero Foundation. Someone asked whether Romero had a "conversion."

*Romero's words flowed from his life and ministry of gospel preaching and service.*

It was said that he was chosen as the archbishop of San Salvador because the bishops and political leaders thought he was "safe." He was seen as conservative, had many friends among the wealthy and well-connected, and rarely spoke out on controversial matters. Monsignor Urioste said no, that Romero always was concerned for the poor, for justice, for preaching the challenging Gospel of Jesus, but that he did transform in the light of terrible events at that time.

A similar view was offered by my classmate, Father Paul Schindler, who served in the Cleveland diocesan missions in El Salvador from the 1970s. He knew Romero as an auxiliary bishop briefly, then saw him leave to be the bishop of Santiago de Maria Diocese, and in 1977, return as the archbishop.

Father Schindler confided that originally Romero was "not liked" by the priests. He worked with Cursillo, education, and ministries in which mainly the wealthy were able to participate. Father Schindler said that Romero was always a good priest, a man of the Church, doing whatever the archbishop wanted him to do. His motto was "Sentir con la Iglesia" (think with the Church).

At first, Father Schindler told the bishop of Cleveland he might not be able to work with Romero and might want to come home. Then, when Romero, as the archbishop, came to his first meeting with priests as his own man, he spoke nervously but boldly to them. Father Schindler was deeply moved and expressed to our bishop how much he loved



Romero and would stay and follow him anywhere!

Eucharistic celebrations by Romero gave much joy and direction to meetings of the priests, delegates of the word, and his people — especially the poor, hopeless, and helpless.

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

Just as Saint Teresa of Calcutta and her Missionaries of Charity began every day with prayer and Eucharistic adoration to fuel their missionary service, so Romero walked the few feet from his cottage to the Divine Providence Chapel (where he was killed) to make his Eucharistic holy hour.

Carlos Colorado manages the blog which has long advocated the canonization of Oscar Romero. In his *Super Martyrio* blog of May 29, 2013, Colorado focuses on Romero's Eucharistic adoration. Romero spoke publicly in 1978 of the connection between Eucharistic adoration, an act of faith before the real presence of Christ, and acts of charity. Sister Luz Isabel recalled that before or after his holy hour, he would visit cancer patients and say, "You are the suffering Christ and your bed is the cross." In 1979, on Corpus Christi, he preached about the nourishment Christ gives us "like the family setting where a mother, even though poor, breaks the bread and shares this one bread with her children who are seated around the family table of unity."

### **Transformation into Jesus the Suffering Servant of the Eucharist**

The way to preaching justice in El Salvador was truly a way of the cross. Government and military leaders often oppressed the struggling poor as well as those who educated them and advocated for them. Well-known are the government's repression, death squads, and persecution of religious leaders. What is more confusing is that most of Romero's fellow bishops were not in agreement with his statements and stands, which truly pained him. The movie *Romero* highlights this opposition.

Cardinal James Hickey, then Bishop of Cleveland, would visit Romero and the Cleveland missionaries in El Salvador. Increasingly aware of the dangers, he offered them the choice to return home. They all chose to stay with "their" people. Bishop Hickey attended the funeral of Romero, when the Mass in the square in front of the cathedral was

suddenly interrupted by gunfire. Pandemonium broke out, and Father Schindler pulled him into the cathedral for his safety. The bishop later told me how scandalized he was that most of the Salvadoran bishops had not attended the funeral.

A few months after Romero's death, on December 2, 1980, two Cleveland missionaries, Sister Dorothy Kazel, OSU, and Jean Donovan, a young woman, along with two Maryknoll nuns, were brutally raped and murdered by Salvadoran soldiers. Sister Dorothy had been a second-grade teacher, instructing children for First Communion. Now she and Jean lived Eucharist by working with Romero and rescuing refugees of the civil war, especially orphaned children. They met the same fate.

*The Bread of Life gave him strength and was the cup of joy and of suffering that promised redemption, by way of the cross.*

The most dramatic transformation in Romero came shortly after his installation as archbishop. On March 12, 1977, his Jesuit friend, Father Rutilio Grande, was assassinated on his way to celebrate Mass, riding in a car with an old man and a boy who were also killed. Grande had befriended Romero back in the days when Romero, then auxiliary bishop, lived at the seminary with Grande. He knew that Grande was a good and faithful parish priest in Aguilares and taught the message of Jesus, and would never advocate for a Marxist, violent response to injustice.

On hearing of the deaths, Romero immediately went to the bodies, prayed over his friend all night, and in the morning gave an interview that changed everything. His message was basically that we must speak out now with courage. If not now, when? Then came the announcement that shocked the bishops, and even angered the nuncio to the Vatican: there was to be no Mass in any church in the Archdiocese of San Salvador that weekend — only *one*, in the cathedral: the funeral of Father Grande and his two companions.

Romero began to face the danger more squarely by establishing a Human Rights Commission that documented the murdered, the disappeared, and the massacres. Threats came, and Romero spoke increasingly with a "filial boldness," in the words of the *Catholic*



*Catechism.* Romero was always a loyal son of the Church, and as such had to speak out prophetically. In God's name, stop the repression! The Eucharist impelled him.

### **Canonization**

Since 1980, the cause for the canonization of Archbishop Romero had been blocked, not only for political motives by his enemies, but even by churchmen who opposed him in life and in death. The controversial "liberation theology" is at the root. Romero's strong supporter was Pope Paul VI with whom, providentially, he will be canonized. Another very close supporter over the years was Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez. He was never appointed to be an ordinary of a diocese.

The full story of Romero's treatment by Pope John Paul II is yet to be revealed. Saint John Paul prayed at his tomb in death, but he silenced "liberation theologians" and seemingly had his reservations about Romero in life. He certainly fought for the "preferential option for the poor" and was a strong supporter of the Latin American Conference of Bishops in Puebla, Mexico, and elsewhere. Perhaps John Paul II was haunted by the Communism he experienced in his own country, and his fear of its threat in Latin America.

*Romero spoke publicly of the connection between Eucharistic adoration, an act of faith before the real presence of Christ, and acts of charity.*

As the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was part of the document on "liberation theology" that cast much of it in a bad light. As Pope Benedict XVI, he was warm to the devotion to Romero, yet the cause for canonization languished in the Vatican.

Not long after his election, Pope Francis cleared the path for consideration of Romero's cause, leading to his beatification in 2015 in El Salvador. Francis revealed a more ecclesial interpretation of "liberation theology" and praised its proponents, reconciling them to mainstream social justice. In 2016, he opened the cause for canonization of Romero's very close friend, Rutilio Grande. In 2017, he named the "lowly" Auxiliary Bishop Gregorio Rosa Chavez as the first cardinal in El Salvador. We may well expect that in January 2019,

Pope Francis will put an exclamation point on Saint Oscar Romero by visiting El Salvador on his way from World Youth Day in Panama, Central America.

### Conclusion

Hope is one of the enduring dimensions of Archbishop Oscar Romero's transformation and the "Romero effect." His assassination was tied by a truth commission in El Salvador to the President of the country at the time.

I met in 2017 with Cardinal Ricardo Ezzati, SDB, of Santiago, Chile, and we spoke of Romero, since the cardinal was sent by Pope Francis to El Salvador for the centennial of the birth of Romero. After expressing his admiration for Romero, he told the story of his reception by the current President of El Salvador, who spent a whole hour with him. He saw a huge tapestry of Romero on the wall of the President's Office and was told by a secretary that he keeps a candle burning before the image of Romero, day and night!



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## EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# The Universal Call to Holiness

by Ernest Falardeau, SSS

*One in Christ by baptism, each of us is called to holiness of life.*

Blessed Sacrament Father Ernest Falardeau has dedicated much of his life and ministry to the promotion of ecumenical dialogue and interfaith relations. He is a member of the Blessed Sacrament Community at Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City.

SAINT PAUL CALLS CHRISTIANS "SAINTS."<sup>1</sup> THIS IS NEITHER HYPERBOLE NOR presumption. It is a simple statement that God's plan, mission and purpose in creating human beings is to make them holy. "Be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect," Jesus tells us (Mt 5:48). Our very existence and our vocation is to be holy — saints.

The Second Vatican Council, in *Lumen Gentium*,<sup>2</sup> the theological document on the Church, states and develops the teaching of the universal call to holiness. Every human being has this call, and none are excluded unless they exclude themselves by failing to return God's infinite love for each and every person.

The Eastern fathers of the Church speak of this universal call as deification (*theosis*).<sup>3</sup> In common parlance today, many Orthodox Christians say the West focuses too much on the sufferings of Jesus. Eastern Christians focus on the resurrection of Jesus Christ and with him all of humanity. Thus, joy at God's love predominates in the East, while sorrow over sin tends to dominate in the West, in spite of love and forgiveness.

### Eden: The Garden in the East

Genesis<sup>4</sup> tells the beginning of everything was beautiful and good. God created everything and after each "day" God said, "It is good." After creating man and woman, he said, "It is very good." That is the way it should be. That is the way God made the earth and sky, the sea and the firm land. And man and woman were to live forever in God's love and friendship.

However, the story did not have a happy ending in Eden. Humanity was sinful and exiled. Cain killed his brother Abel. Sin dominated the story, even though a redeemer was promised. Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*<sup>5</sup> tell the story in poetry and images, in theology, meter and rhyme. And the story continues to be told in homily and liturgy. "It is right and just, almighty Father, to praise and thank you. . . ."

The end of the story is not death on a cross, it is paradise regained, it is Christ risen, it is Christ glorious in heaven at the right hand of the Father. The Gospels and epistles tell the real story, the truth, that God did not abandon us to our fate. God had mercy on us and paid a loving price for our redemption and restoration. The resurrection triumphed over sin and death so that we live in hope and faith and respond lovingly to God's love.

*Our very existence and our vocation is to be holy — saints.*

### **Ecclesia Semper Reformanda**

Last year, we commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>6</sup> The Reformation was an effort to renew the Church. It had a limited success. Some say it did not succeed at all. In addition to separating the Western world into Protestant and Catholic, it began a series of separations among the reformers themselves, which continues today, even in the Catholic Church of the West as well as the Orthodox Church of the East.

The Council of Trent was the Catholic Reformation. Unfortunately, the Lutherans were not invited, and so there was no other voice to mediate the kind of reform that would heal the division and preserve the unity. Some 450 years later, the Second Vatican Council brought other voices to the discussion. Official observers were invited to hear the deliberations and were able to express their suggestions in informal conferences outside the aula of the council. Before the council, Christian theologians had been talking together for fifty or a hundred years.

### **Reformation in our Time**

The ecumenical movement was a fact long before Vatican II, and the Catholic Church declared in the council that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Pope John XXIII announced that Vatican II would be a truly





ecumenical council, i.e., of the whole world. It began by declaring what the Church is, what its mission is, what God intends it to be in the modern world.

Pope Paul VI called the council together again after John XXIII had died. Some thought the council would never reconvene. Paul knew it had to reconvene; the work was not finished. Pope John Paul II, following the very short reign of Pope John Paul I (just over one month) extended his reign almost to the longest (26 years). Pope Benedict XVI added to the legacy. And now, Pope Francis has called the Church together for the work of reformation in our time and in the spirit of Vatican II.

*Pope Francis has called the Church together for the work of reformation in our time and in the spirit of Vatican II.*

The work is still unfinished. *Sentire cum ecclesia* needs to replace hunting through footnotes in papal teachings for “heresies” and get back to the heart of the matter: living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and promoting the holiness of the Church and Christians. The world needs saints, not papal critics.

### **Eucharistic Spirituality**

Saint Peter Julian Eymard founded the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament<sup>7</sup> and called its members to respond to the hungers of humanity with the Eucharistic bread and cup. He asked his religious to give of themselves as Jesus gives himself as the Bread of Life for a world that is dying of spiritual hunger. He called them to serve, not be served, so that the kingdom of God might be achieved through Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

### **Conclusion**

There was a tree in Eden that gave life to those who ate it. And there was a tree on Calvary that gave eternal life to the human race because on its branches hung the Son of God. That presence is with us until the end of time.<sup>8</sup>

The Son of God has given himself for us, and God accepts his self-sacrifice from sunrise to sunset of every day and in every corner of the

world. The apostle Paul, the herald of the Lord, tells us we are all called to be saints. We are called to be holy, as the Father is holy, perfect as he is whole and perfect, guides and companions with others on their journey as we follow Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life.

The Eucharist is the Son of God, the Wisdom of God, who nourishes us with his word and sacrament. Come to the feast! Come to the source of life and holiness.<sup>9</sup>



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Col 1:2, 4, 12 (*agios*).
- <sup>2</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, especially 39, 40.
- <sup>3</sup> "Theosis," cf. wikipedia.com.
- <sup>4</sup> Genesis 1.
- <sup>5</sup> Dante Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy: Hell, Purgatory, Heaven*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. John Milton. *Paradise Lost*. New York: Amazon, Kindle, *Paradise Regained*. New York: Amazon Kindle.
- <sup>6</sup> John O'Malley, SJ. *Trent: What Happened at the Council*.
- <sup>7</sup> Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. *Rule of Life* (Official Translation) Rome: Generalate, 1985, especially 3, 4.
- <sup>8</sup> Thomas Merton. *Seven Storey Mountain: Fiftieth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Harcourt, Inc.
- <sup>9</sup> Pope Francis wrote an Apostolic Exhortation: *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad) *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*. It was published earlier this year. It is neither a systematic theology of the subject nor a moral theology dissertation. It is, rather, an exhortation to focus on the essential call to every human person to model his or her life on God, who is holy. Rather than an ethical study, it is a sharing in the teaching of Jesus and the entire Bible's stress on God's love for humanity and the divine mission to restore humankind to its original dignity. In the words of Saint Athanasius and Saint Irenaeus, God sent his Son as a human being so that we could become God's adopted sons and daughters by grace, which makes us holy as he is.

This exhortation is timely because it stresses the example of the saints as "the next-door neighbor," the living of the beatitudes, and the struggle with the enemies of genuine holiness in the modern world. Spiritual combat, vigilance, and discernment are required to conquer these enemies, identified as contemporary Gnosticism and contemporary Pelagianism.



## EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# From Devotions to a More Devoted Life

by Peter Schineller, SJ

*How can we grow toward the devout life, true devotion to God?*

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

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS A RICH RANGE AND A VARIETY OF DEVOTIONS. BY devotions, we mean set prayers, rather than mental prayer, which are prayed regularly. Some are private, prayed in the quiet of one's home. Others are recited, prayed with a group in a church or chapel. There are devotions to Jesus, to Mary, and to many different saints. These devotions have served the Church well over the centuries and today. They have nourished and preserved the faith, keeping us close to God and to the saints of God.

I wish to raise a question and a challenge: How does one "grow in devotion"? Does it mean simply more rosaries, more time spent in church, or more saints that we ask to intercede for us?

All of this may be well and good, but when I speak of "growth in devotion" I am thinking of something else: not of devotional activities and prayers but, rather, of *how we find, contact, and serve God in our everyday, ordinary way of life*. To put it another way, I am speaking of a "devout way of life" and asking how we might lead such a life 24 hours a day.

### **A Guide to the Devout Life**

To explain this more fully, and to examine how we might grow in devotion, or perhaps better, how to move from devotions to a devout life, I turn to the reflections of Saint Ignatius Loyola.

Ignatius had the grace, according to his contemporaries, of seeking and finding God in all things, at all times. And this is basically what he means by a devout life. This grace was intended not only for Ignatius, but for his followers, namely, Jesuits as well as those who try to follow the spirituality of Saint Ignatius. It is important to remember

that Ignatius speaks positively of devotions in the traditional sense, set prayers to God and to the angels and saints. These are vital and appropriate at any time, including the time of retreat.

Ignatius then speaks of growing in devotion. By this is meant not more prayers, but something much more encompassing. His bottom line definition of devotion is the ease or the “ability to find God in all things.” In other words, we find God not only when in the chapel at prayer, or at Mass, or in private devotions in our homes or rooms, but in our daily, everyday lives. Ignatius wants us to extend the devout life from the times of formal prayer, in specific times and places, to encompass our everyday lives, 24 hours of the day.

How do we grow in devotion? In a letter about young Jesuits who are engaged in the life of studies, Ignatius writes: “Considering the end of our studies, the scholastics can hardly give themselves to prolonged meditations. Over and above the spiritual exercises assigned for their perfection — namely, daily Mass, an hour for vocal prayer and examination of conscience, and weekly confession and Communion — they should practice the seeking of God’s presence in all things, in their conversations, their walks, in all that they see, taste, hear, understand, in all their actions, since his Divine Majesty is truly in all things by his presence, power, and essence.”

“This kind of meditation,” he continues, “which finds God our Lord in all things, is easier than raising oneself to the consideration of divine truths, which are more abstract and which demand something of an effort if we are to keep our attention on them. But this method is an excellent exercise to prepare us for great visitations of our Lord, even in prayers that are rather short” (Letter to Antonio Brandao, June 1, 1551, in Young, *Letters of Ignatius*, 240).

It is crucial for the busy Jesuits, those in studies or those teaching and researching, to “find God in all things.” This is the goal, but how, practically, does one achieve it? How, in the words of Ignatius, do the young Jesuits, how do all of us with our busy lives, grow in devotion, that is, in the ability to find God in all things?

His answer, his suggestion, is concrete and surprising. Here, we look at what Ignatius says in number 250 of the *Jesuit Constitutions*. He suggests that one way to start is by reflecting on our relationship with others. Jesuits are asked to reflect on their relationship to the other Jesuits with whom they live and interact. They can and must, he counsels, begin by seeing God in one another, and seeing one another



as images of God. Ignatius writes:

“In everything they should try and desire to give the advantage to others, esteeming them in their hearts as better than themselves (Phil 2:3), and showing them exteriorly, in an unassuming and simple religious manner, the respect and reverence befitting each one’s state in such a manner that by observing one another, they grow in devotion and the praise of God our Lord, whom each one should endeavor to recognize as in his image.”

In this way, beginning with our brothers and sisters, by reverencing, respecting, seeing, and finding God in them, we expand and grow in seeking, seeing, and finding God in all things.

*Ignatius had the grace of seeking and finding God in all things, at all times.*

An additional way to grow in the devout life would be to emphasize the apostolic dimension of all devotions. This clearly coheres with the emphasis of Saint Ignatius, with his focus on Jesus Christ in the *Spiritual Exercises*, and his overall emphasis on a spirituality of mission. We are not only to pray to Jesus Christ and develop a personal relationship to him, we are to imitate him.

Thus, devotion to the Heart of Christ, for example, would and should lead us not only to love Jesus, but to put into practice in our lives the sacrificial and merciful love that we see in the heart of Christ. So, too, our devotion to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and at Mass, in the Eucharist, leads us to imitate his way and put into practice the way and the teaching of Jesus. Attending Mass leads us to mission, to act like Christ in our everyday life.

The God we pray to is not a miracle God who replaces us and our efforts, who will do everything for us, but a loving God who asks and seeks our cooperation. In the beautiful words of Saint Thomas More, “These things, good Lord, we pray for, give us the grace to labor for.” We look to God for his assistance and at the same time pledge to do our part.


For example, devotion to the Divine Mercy involves prayers and devotions to seek God’s mercy. But it should also be a commitment by us to be merciful, to be instruments of God’s love and mercy in

the world. In this way, what might have simply begun as a prayer to a saint expands to become a way of life and a mission. We move from devotion to Jesus Christ, Mary, or the saints to our neighbor, to our mission to the people of God. And, as Saint Ignatius urged the young Jesuits, it is precisely in interaction with our neighbor that we learn to see and love and serve God.

*We are not only to pray to Jesus Christ and develop a personal relationship to him; we are to imitate him in loving and serving others.*

### **From Devotion or Devotions to a Devout Life**

A devout life means the abiding attitude and the constant sense of the reality and the presence of God. It means an everyday “familiarity with God,” an awareness that something divine is involved in our lives. This is not easy, automatic; it is the gift of piety and reverence.

Today, in our world of busyness and constant technological stimulation, we seem more aware of the absence or the distance of God than his presence and influence. In this context, the devout life as described by Saint Ignatius Loyola is more necessary than ever, I believe. Our daily encounters with God-given or manufactured objects, and especially with persons, should not be distractions but part of our seeking, sensing, and finding God in all things. Might this Ignatian view of devotion and “growth in the devout life” be one of the important building blocks of heightened spirituality and committed discipleship in our parishes and in the Church today? 



## EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Leaven

by Bernard Camiré, SSS

*Parables were integral to Jesus' teaching ministry. His stories engaged the minds and hearts of his listeners and revealed the deeper meaning of their lives and God's power at work in and around them.*

Blessed Sacrament  
Father Bernard Camiré is the parochial vicar of Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City. This series on the parables of Jesus originally appeared in the parish bulletin and is being serialized in *Emmanuel*.

JESUS HABITUALLY DREW HIS PARABLES FROM THE SCENES AND ACTIVITIES OF everyday life. He set before his hearers things that were entirely familiar to them in order to lead them to things they had never yet thought of. He took the Parable of the Sower from the farmer's field and the Parable of the Mustard Seed from the gardener's yard. He took the Parable of the Wheat and the Darnel from the perennial problem that confronted farmers in their struggle with weeds, and the Parable of the Hidden Treasure from the everyday task of digging in a field. But in the Parable of the Leaven (Mt 13:33), Jesus came nearer to home than in any other because he took it from the kitchen of an ordinary house.

### **Leaven in the Making of Bread**

In Palestine, bread was baked at home, and three measures of meal would have been the average amount needed for a baking for a family of several people. Jesus took his parable concerning the kingdom from something he had frequently seen his mother do. Leaven was a little piece of dough kept over from a previous baking, which had fermented in the keeping.

In the language and thought of the Jewish people of Jesus' day, leaven was frequently associated with an *evil* influence. Fermentation was identified with decay, and leaven represented what was evil. For example, in his First Letter to the Corinthians as well as in his Letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul uses leaven as a metaphor for the corruptive influence of evil (1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:9). One of the preparatory



ceremonies for the feast of Passover was the seeking out and burning of every scrap of leaven in a household.

It may well be that Jesus deliberately chose the image of leaven in teaching about God's kingdom; hearing the kingdom of God compared to leaven was bound to have a jarring effect on his audience. The shock of such an unusual and unexpected image would arouse interest and rivet attention.

The whole point of the Parable of the Leaven lies in one thing, namely, the transforming power of the leaven, an ingredient that changed the character of a whole baking. Unleavened bread, such as is used in the Jewish Seder, is hard, dry, and not especially appetizing. Bread baked with leaven, especially when the bread is fresh, is spongy, fragrant, and tasty. If the introduction of leaven causes a transformation in the dough, the coming of God's kingdom causes a transformation in life.

*Leaven was frequently associated with an evil influence. Its use as an image of divine activity likely shocked Jesus' listeners, but it got their attention.*

Christian history offers a powerful witness to the transforming capability of Christ's Gospel. Besides the remarkable transformation that Christianity wrought in individual lives, there are the revolutionary social changes that Christianity brought about by its care for the sick, the aged, and the physically and mentally disabled, as well as by its defense of the inherent rights of workers, women, and children.

### **The Meaning of the Parable**

Almost all scholars agree that the Parable of the Leaven speaks of the transforming power of Christ and of his kingdom, but there is a difference of opinion as to *how* that transforming power works. Some believe that the lesson of the parable is that the kingdom works *unseen*. Just as the work of the leaven, though unseen, is always going on, so the work of the kingdom, the active presence of Christ, his grace, and his Gospel in the world are always going on. The lesson to draw from this, then, is one of *encouragement*.

Others, however, believe that far from being unseen, the working of the kingdom can be plainly *seen*. If leaven is placed into dough, its work is clear for all to see. It changes the dough from a passive lump



into a bubbling, heaving mass. Just so, the working of the kingdom in the world is a manifest and restless force that is plain for all to see, a force that sometimes arouses suspicion, resentment, and opposition.

Both views in regard to this parable are, of course, true. There are aspects of the kingdom, of the power of Christ and of his Spirit, that work quietly within human minds and hearts, and have an effect in human society. And then there are aspects of that kingdom that reveal themselves evidently and strikingly in individual lives and leave their mark on history as it unfolds.

*Christian history offers a powerful witness to the transforming capability of Christ's Gospel and of the kingdom of God.*

There is a sense in which these two aspects of the kingdom find expression in the rhythm of our own Christian lives as they sometimes conceal and sometimes reveal the mystery of the growth of God's grace within us.



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## In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

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 R, S, T, and U are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during September and October.



## *EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY*

### Counsels for Spiritual Life from Saint Peter Julian Eymard

#### **In the Service of God, Fidelity and Generosity Are Necessary**

THE APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST WAS ALSO A GUIDE TO THE INTERIOR LIFE AND TO EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY FOR many. In a letter to Mathilde Giraud Jordan on August 27, 1867, Father Eymard invites her to constancy in trials and reminds her of the two great laws of the spiritual life — that of *prayer* and of *fidelity* to the will of God:

“We need to know that when we receive a great grace of interior renewal, everything seems easy and pleasant at first because we are under the influence of that grace. This is often followed by a time of trial, which can be a terrible shock.

“Either we do too much at the beginning, or not enough. If we do too much, we become discouraged at the first infidelity. This is the fruit of pride. We were counting too much on ourselves! If we don’t do enough, we feel reproach, not from our conscience, but from the Evil One telling us that everything is already lost, that we are already unfaithful.

“If you have done all that you could, everything is fine in God’s sight. In the winter, we hardly manage to get warm. You are in a spiritual “winter” now. So, you must work, but not to the point of exhaustion. That can be dangerous.

“In God’s service, we need fidelity and generosity, not strength. God will be your strength! Try to attain a peaceful meditation in your life. A great rule of holiness is to know how to find time for one’s soul. It will lead to action.”





## PASTORAL LITURGY

# Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass at 45

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

*One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council is a heightened awareness of the connection between the Eucharistic celebration and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.*

Blessed Sacrament Father John Thomas Lane is the pastor of his home parish, Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. He has degrees in education, music, theology, and liturgy and speaks and writes regularly about vocations and liturgical theology and ministry. Look for his *Daily Prayer 2019*, already available. For questions or further materials, please contact him at [jtlanesss@gmail.com](mailto:jtlanesss@gmail.com).

AS THE WELL-KNOWN SAYING GOES, "LIFE BEGINS AT FORTY." WELL, PERHAPS THESE days, 45 is the new 40. And the Roman Catholic Church is proud to have a ritual document to guide its revered liturgical practice of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, a text which turns 45 this year. *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* (HCWEOM) introduced for the first time, when it was implemented in Latin on the solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ in 1973, liturgical norms for the practice of exposition, processions of the Blessed Sacrament, and Communion of the sick. Let's take a fresh look at the key aspects of this document and note some practical applications for our continued implementation of the liturgical practice.

In the General Introduction, HCWEOM reminds us of the important relationship between the Eucharistic celebration and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The origin of all worship of the Eucharist is the Mass (HCWEOM, 2). HCWEOM paragraphs 5 through 8 review the history, theology, and purpose of Eucharistic reservation: 1. to minister to the sick, and 2. for prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Sadly, due to security in some places, HCWEOM, 8 is difficult to implement: opening the church, chapel, or oratory for a few hours for the faithful to visit and pray.

HCWEOM, 9-11 remind us that the place for the tabernacle should be preeminent and in a separate part of the church, especially if a church frequently has many events outside of formal worship. HCWEOM, 12 asks episcopal conferences to have ritual books specifically prepared for worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass, and our own United States Conference of Catholic Bishops did this in conjunction with the

Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, in 1993, creating the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*.

Chapter 1 of HCWEOM again underscores the relationship between Holy Communion outside of Mass and the Mass itself. (As a side note: our bishops added specific adjectives and capital letters that HCWEOM did not create when originally promulgated.) HCWEOM, 16 concerns when Holy Communion may be given outside of Mass to those who are sick: any day or hour except during the Sacred Triduum. HCWEOM, 17 creates the lay minister of Holy Communion, a special minister to bring the sacrament to the ill, the homebound, and the imprisoned when clerics are not able to do so due to other pastoral duties or commitments. This offers an ever-expanding role for the laity to serve in the ministry of the Church.

Additionally, a completely new ritual promulgated Communion to be distributed when there is no Mass or in other places such as nursing homes. This ritual also advocates a Service of the Word to emphasize that both tables nourish us: Word and Sacrament (see 26). Chapter 2 of HCWEOM goes into greater detail regarding the administration of viaticum for all who are “on the way to the heavenly gates.” Furthermore, those who are unable to receive the Body of Christ are given permission in HCWEOM, 55 to receive the Precious Blood through a special vessel and permission.

Chapter 2 gives us three distinct rituals and ways to share Holy Communion from sickness to serious illness to death. It is hard to believe that there was a time when only the ordained were able to do this ministry. Through careful instruction and formation, HCWEOM opened up this ministry for others to share the gift of the Eucharist and more opportunities for the grace of the sacrament.

HCWEOM, Chapter 3 gives specific instructions for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Careful attention should be given to these paragraphs since there is a growing desire to make exposition possible in more places.

A new resource from LTP and this author goes into greater depth on these ritual practices: *Guide for Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, 2015. Like the “Sunday Benediction” of old, the bishop approves a parish or oratory having exposition (see 86-88), songs, vocal prayers, and sufficient time for silent prayer (89). Note that there is a difference between exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and “adoration” or prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in a

tabernacle, but not exposed. Paragraphs 93-100 highlight the specific aspects. You may notice that the Divine Praises are not included in this ritual, for this is a devotional prayer/litany with a history of addressing blasphemy, that over time was attached to the ending of exposition. Other songs and acclamations, especially those found in the *Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist*, may be more appropriate.

Finally, Eucharistic processions and congresses are addressed, and an entire chapter is included that is devoted to texts for use in the Rite of Holy Communion outside Mass, and in the worship and procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

*Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* is truly a helpful guide. It is worth reviewing during this anniversary year of its issuance to attain a more fruitful connection between worship of the Eucharist in Mass and in prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament after Mass. In places where liturgy and devotion may feel a bit muddled, HCWEOM brings clarity of thought, theology, and purpose. This timely review can aid us in learning more about the mysteries of the Eucharist and Eucharistic living.

### Reminders for September and October

The new Lectionary Supplement has the following readings for this year:

- Wednesday, September 12: The Most Holy Name of Mary;
- Friday, September 28: Saint Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs;
- Friday, October 5: Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos, Priest;
- Thursday, October 11: Saint John XXIII, Pope;
- Monday, October 22: Saint John Paul II, Pope.

Some civic and interfaith days to keep in mind as we pray with God's family:

- Monday, September 3: Labor Day (see the fourth volume of the *Lectionary* for the special votive readings for human labor);
- Sunday, September 9: Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins at sundown;
- Monday, September 10: Islamic New Year begins at sundown;
- Tuesday, September 11: Patriot Day (United States);
- Tuesday, September 18: Yom Kippur begins at sundown;

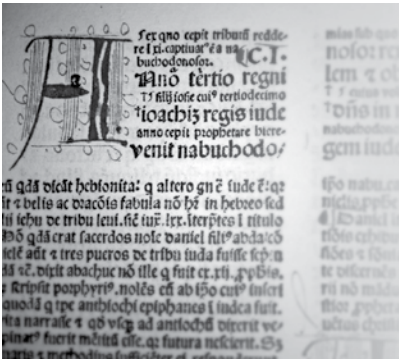
- Monday, October 8: Columbus Day (United States), observed as Indigenous Peoples Day in some places. Thanksgiving (Canada);
- Tuesday, October 16: National Boss Day (United States).

Prepare for some of these special blessings and prayers:

- As the new athletic year begins: *Book of Blessings* [BB] Chapter 29: Order for the Blessing of an Athletic Event;
- Catechetical Sunday (September 16): BB, Chapter 4: Blessings that Pertain to Catechesis or those appointed as catechists;
- *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA): Blessing of Catechumens, Anointing the Catechumens with Oil, or the Rite of Welcome into the Order of Catechumens;
- Beginning the new school year: BB, Chapter 5: Blessing of Students and Teachers;
- Thursday, September 27: Saint Vincent de Paul: BB, Chapter 7: Order for the Blessing of Organizations Concerned with Public Need;
- Blessing on the Occasion of Thanksgiving for the Harvest: BB, 28;
- Getting ready for All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (October 31-November 2): Use the *Book of the Dead* to allow your parishioners to remember their loved ones by inscribing their names; BB, Chapter 57: Order for Visiting a Cemetery.







## BREAKING THE WORD

# Scriptural Reflections – Homiletics

by John R. Barker, OFM

Brother John R. Barker, OFM, is a Franciscan friar of the Province of Saint John the Baptist (Cincinnati, Ohio) and Assistant Professor of Old Testament Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His main areas of research relate to the formation and function of biblical texts, particularly the prophetic literature.

## September 2, 2018 Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Dt 4:1-2, 6-8; Ps 15; Jas 1:17-18, 21b-22, 27; Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

The readings this week prompt us to consider how easily we can turn certain forms of piety or religious practices into defining aspects of our faith, sometimes allowing them to distract us from the work of ongoing conversion. In the passage from Deuteronomy, Moses exhorts the Israelites to be faithful to God: “you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it.”

In the centuries leading up to the time of Christ, Jews developed traditions of interpretation of the laws, allowing them to remain faithful under new circumstances. In addition, many Jews established practices not commanded by the law but intended to sanctify daily life through prayer, fasting, and other forms of piety. Catholics can certainly appreciate this religious impulse; our tradition has given rise to myriad devotions, sacramentals, and blessings intended to remind us constantly of God and to hallow even the most mundane activity.

The Pharisees were known for their devotion not only to the law but also to what today we would call popular religion. The purifying of hands and dishes was one such form of popular piety, apparently practiced by “all Jews,” such that it would naturally be seen as something that all “good Jews” did. Thus, in their question to Jesus about his disciples, the Pharisees are implying that he is not a particularly good Jew himself. Jesus’ response is twofold.

First, he accuses the Pharisees of hypocrisy by disregarding God’s

commandments while insisting on their own forms of piety. In a few verses not included in the lectionary reading (Mk 7:9-13), he cites as evidence their failure to uphold the divine command to honor father and mother in favor of their own practice. Jesus does not condemn the practice of washing hands — he does not call it evil or stupid. His criticism lies in the fact that the Pharisees have deluded themselves into thinking that their pious practices are just as important or even more important than the will of God as expressed in the law.

Second, Jesus reminds the crowd that ritual purification does not get to the “heart” of the matter when it comes to upholding the law. The whole point of the law — what matters to God — is to form a people of integrity, mercy, and love of God and neighbor. Experience tells us that it is easy to take up and be entirely devoted to a particular pious practice while neglecting the hard work of identifying and overcoming our tendencies toward malice, deceit, envy, and folly. It is our hearts, not our hands, that need purification.

This exact point is echoed in the Letter of James: “religion pure and undefiled before God” is “to care for orphans and widows in their affliction.” The care for the vulnerable is a central and recurring concern in the law and the prophets. Today’s responsorial psalm also reminds us that to walk blamelessly and do justice entails speaking the truth, not harming others, and being generous. Popular forms of piety can be good, to the extent that they lead us closer to God and to others. Jesus and James warn us, though, not to let them become ends in themselves, allowing them — and not God’s will — to define what it means to be faithful to God.

## September 9, 2018 Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Is 35:4-7a; Ps 146; Jas 2:1-5; Mk 7:31-37**

The readings this week bring forth two themes that would appear at first glance to be hardly related. The Isaian passage and the Gospel speak of curing the physically impaired: the blind, the lame, the mute, the deaf. James speaks of how the assembly ought to treat the rich and the poor alike, not allowing worldly social distinctions to infect the Christian body. Yet these two themes are inherently related, as the responsorial psalm makes clear: the God of Jacob keeps faith forever, giving food to the hungry, raising up those who are bowed down,

sustaining the orphan and the widow, giving sight to the blind. They, as much as the rich, the powerful, and the able, are God's children, and just as a human parent naturally gives particular attention to a child who struggles, so all who are afflicted in any way receive benevolent and faithful attention from God.

This point is most obvious in the reading from Isaiah, in which God proclaims not only a return from exile but the physical healing of the lame and the mute, and in Mark, in which Jesus does the work of his Father by healing the deaf and the mute. In Isaiah, God promises to overturn any circumstance in which life cannot thrive, be it in human infirmity or the infertile desert of "burning sands" and "thirsty ground." In Mark, Jesus begins his proclamation of the kingdom by casting out demons, healing diseases, and "raising up those who are bowed down."

Together these readings affirm that God and his Messiah are devoted to the well-being of God's people, a divine priority, not a side project. Yet the Scriptures insist that it is not only God and Christ who are charged with the task of healing a broken world, but also God's people. Both Israel and the Church have been charged with proclaiming who God is through our own actions as much as through words.

Just as God exhorts Israel several times in Leviticus to "be holy because I am holy," so Jesus exhorts his disciples to "be merciful (or perfect) as your Father in heaven is merciful (or perfect)." Just as the God of Jacob keeps faith forever by securing justice for the oppressed, protecting strangers, and sustaining the orphan and the widow, so must God's people resist social pressure to turn our backs or our hearts on the poor in favor of the rich, the weak in favor of the powerful, the vulnerable in favor of the secure. James reminds his audience that God chose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith, a sure sign of God's favor. Just so, the Christian assembly must resist being stained by the world's values and priorities.

The readings call us to consider how our larger culture inculcates in us admiration and desire for power, wealth, and invulnerability, and the subtle ways this can form in us attitudes (even unconscious ones) of disdain or neglect for the poor, weak, and vulnerable even in our own Christian assemblies.

September 16, 2018  
Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Is 50:5-9a; Ps 114; Jas 2:14-18; Mk 8:27-35**

For the first seven chapters of the Gospel of Mark, the proclamation of God's reign has proceeded at a hectic pace. Things tend to happen "immediately" and Jesus moves rapidly from one healing to another, with occasional, short pauses to teach his disciples. This fast-paced announcement of the Gospel has been marred only briefly by Jesus' rejection in his home town and by the death of John the Baptist.

For the most part, the Good News has been just that. But now these earlier signs of opposition come to the fore, revealing themselves to be not momentary aberrancies but rather early manifestations of a constitutive feature of Jesus' mission. Fidelity to God does not consist only in proclaiming God's good intentions for the world and showing signs of them through healings and forgiveness. It also means withstanding the inevitable opposition and conflict this mission will engender in a sinful world.

The passage from Isaiah exemplifies not only Jesus' attitude but also that of any disciple. With ears open to hearing the call of God and face set like flint, the disciple prepares to withstand real and metaphorical beatings and spitting, trusting that "the LORD is my help." The faithful disciple cannot expect to escape the same fate as the Son of Man. Jesus' teaching about this is clear and consistent.

But just as Jesus' warning has echoed through the ages, so, too, has Peter's objection resonated in our hearts. We are not told in what way Peter "rebuked" Jesus, but very likely he tried to dissuade him from doing anything else that would antagonize the authorities, that would get him in trouble. In an understandably human impulse to protect his teacher (and perhaps himself) from danger or pain, Peter perhaps tried to reason with him. Maybe he insisted that God could not possibly want the Christ to suffer, to fail. No one wants to hear that their leader is being set up for failure, and this is what Peter hears. This is all that Peter hears.

In response, Jesus looks at his disciples, as if rebuking them along with Peter: "You are trying to tempt me, just as Satan did, to abandon my

mission, but I will not. You are trying to draw me away from what I have come to do by making me think that if it brings pain and humiliation, even God would not want me to go through with it. You are assuming that avoidance of suffering is the highest priority. You are thinking as humans do, not as God does.”

It is human to want to run away from pain and death, to rationalize, to “rebel and turn back” from God’s call. The servant in Isaiah is able to persevere because he trusts ultimately that God will see him through — not around — the suffering for the sake of the mission. So it is with Jesus, who trusts that he will not only suffer greatly and be rejected and killed, but also rise after three days.

This is what Peter misses: God’s purposes in our fallen world will meet with objection, but God is faithful to both the mission to save that world and to those who undertake it with trust and fidelity. The readings this week prompt us to consider the ways we have been called, or might be called, to set our faces like flint in fidelity to the gospel. They also call us to consider the myriad ways we can find to ignore or deny that call, not only out of weakness but also out lack of trust.

## September 23, 2018 Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Wis 2:12, 17-20; Ps 54; Jas 3:16 – 4:3; Mk 9:30-37**

Again this week, Jesus predicts his suffering, death, and resurrection, and once again the first reading suggests that this is a consequence of living in fidelity to God within a sinful world. Taken all together, the lections present us with two modes of living, referred to in the biblical wisdom tradition as the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. Both James and Jesus warn us that wickedness in the form of jealousy, selfish ambition, covetousness, and self-aggrandizement are traps into which we can easily fall, separating us from one another and from God. It so happens that these are the same vices that, a few weeks ago, Jesus warned us emerge from within the human heart, defiling it and making it greedy, malicious, and arrogant.

It is these “passions,” as James calls them, that in the passage from Wisdom lead the wicked to turn against the righteous person, the

person who seeks to live in accordance with God's will, acting justly, kindly, and at peace with all. In thrall to their passions, the wicked put the righteous (and, incidentally, God) to the test to see if God will indeed rescue them from harm, as the biblical tradition regularly attests. The point of this passage from Wisdom is that righteousness will always be opposed in this world and "revilement" is to be expected when one seeks to live rightly.

Thus, just as last week we saw that Jesus' eventual suffering would be the consequence of fidelity to his mission, so today we see that it will also be a consequence of his righteousness. What we do not hear this week is Jesus' warning that his disciples too must expect to suffer for the sake of the kingdom. Instead, now Jesus joins James in warning his disciples to guard their hearts against jealousy and selfish ambition. Rather than aiming for "greatness" (as the world would define it), they should instead aim for humility, minority, and vulnerability, exemplified by the child. Those who would aspire to "receive God" — to be friends with God — can only find God through the way of "lastness" and service.

As we go through these weeks in Ordinary Time, we are learning along with Jesus' first disciples that although the reign of God brings healing and life, it will always encounter opposition because it also entails conversion, repentance, turning away from many values that the society takes for granted. Standing firm in the midst of countervailing social winds that oppose the moral vision of the reign of God still to this day brings serious and sometimes vicious opposition.

In the face of this, we may be tempted to aggrandize ourselves, to defend ourselves using the ways of the world, telling ourselves and others that we are important and influential. The Christian path, however, is different. It is the path of humility and service that seeks no reward, no recognition, no accolades. Jesus insists on this regularly throughout the Gospels and exemplifies it with his own life. The Letter of James, as well as other New Testament letters, reveal how challenging this teaching was for Jesus' early followers. History and our own experience remind us how difficult it is to adopt such a "countercultural" disposition.

September 30, 2018  
Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Nm 11:25-29; Ps 19; Jas 5:1-6; Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48**

The Gospel this week reflects themes that are found also in the first and second readings. A little background to the passage from Numbers will be helpful to appreciate its point. As Moses is leading the people through the wilderness to the Promised Land, they have become increasingly unruly and dissatisfied, to the point that Moses complains to God that the demanding people has become too much of a burden for him. God agrees and instructs Moses to choose seventy elders to help him take care of the people.

The point of the “sharing” of the prophetic spirit that is already on Moses is to allow the elders to do this faithfully, in accordance with God’s will for the people. This notion of divine provision finds its parallel in the way that Jesus chooses his disciples and apostles and empowers them to preach and heal in his name.

In both cases, though, there are individuals who are not clearly connected with the core group who nevertheless share in the power that ultimately comes from God, an anointing given by God to whom God wills, when it serves the divine purpose. Those in the core group may be inclined to challenge those who are “outside,” not on the basis of what they are doing, but simply because they are not part of the group. Moses and Jesus challenge this narrow-minded perspective by reminding the “insiders” that the point is to do what God calls and equips to do. If Eldad and Medad are prophesying, it is a sign that God has bestowed the spirit on them, and who is Joshua to question this? If someone who healing in the name of Jesus, it is a sign that God’s power is working through him, and who are Jesus’ disciples to complain?

The power of God cannot be domesticated, nor can one determine who is “with” or “for” Christ simply or wholly on the basis of group membership. The desire to confine certain divine gifts or vocations to one’s own group is a symptom of human sin. Rather than delight in the marvelous deeds being done by God through others, we jealously cling to our what we think of as our own prerogatives, forgetting that all comes from God and all belongs to God.



This is a dangerous perspective that can threaten our spiritual well-being through pride and arrogance. So it makes sense that Jesus begins to instruct John and the others about sin and how to limit its effects in our lives. Still holding the child from last week's Gospel, a symbol of what all of his disciples should aspire to, Jesus warns them solemnly that leading any of his followers into sin is a serious, grievous offense. This includes leading themselves into sin by refusing to carefully and even ruthlessly examine their own hearts to determine what holds them under evil's sway, the ways they may model for others envy, arrogance, or folly. Without pity even for those corners of their hearts that seem (mistakenly) so dear, so essential to who they are, Jesus' disciples must be prepared to undertake painful moral surgery to remove gangrenous limbs that bring death rather than life.

In similarly stark and violent language, James makes the point to his audience that their wealth, which they have gained by corruption and injustice, will not only rot away but will have in fact "fattened their hearts," a biblical idiom for becoming resistant to God's will. The readings this week present some challenging lessons about clinging to those things that promise to bring us religious, social, or personal security. If we are not vigilant, they can lead us away from, rather than toward, God and neighbor.

## October 7, 2018 Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Gn 2:18-24; Ps 128; Heb 2:9-11; Mk 10:2-16**

It has been a few weeks since Jesus had his confrontation with the Pharisees over "human traditions" versus God's will as expressed in the law. At that time he insisted that pious practices should never be allowed to substitute for divine commandments, and that ultimately what God willed was purity of heart, which can only be gained by careful attention to one's dispositions. In this week's confrontation, the law and God's will are again up for consideration. This time, though, Jesus argues that a particular law, given by Moses, should not be taken as an expression of the divine will. In doing so, Jesus calls his disciples to transcend mediocrity and to strive for a closer conformity with God's designs for human life.

The Pharisees know quite well that Torah permits a man to divorce his wife. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 has Moses giving instructions related to writing out a “bill of divorce.” So what is the “test” to which they are putting Jesus? Perhaps they wanted to know on what side he stood regarding a disputed topic of legal interpretation. In any case, the Pharisees rightly note that “Moses” permitted a husband to divorce his wife, which they take to be sufficient warrant. But Jesus countermands Moses by suggesting that his ruling in this regard was not a reflection of divine will but rather instructions for how to deal with something human beings would do anyway, out of hardness of heart. Unlike other commands in Torah, which reflect the divine will for Israel, this command does not.

How does Jesus know this? How does he decide what commands reflect positive divine will and what commands do not? He interprets the command in light of other parts of Torah, in this case, Genesis, which makes it clear that in marriage God unites permanently two individuals, and it is not God’s will that they be separated by humans. A ruling by Moses to accommodate human frailty cannot be seen as an expression of positive divine will, when other places in Scripture claim to reflect explicitly what God intends, in this case, through marriage.

Through this teaching and his explanation for it, Jesus offers his disciples a guide for discerning the role of “law” in their lives. It is not enough to merely observe as a minimum the “rules” and to take whatever permissions are given us because we can. The life of faith is not about getting away with as much as you can. This disposition reflects a mediocre approach to faith and commitment to God. Instead, the life of faith reflects the divine command to love God with our whole heart, whole being, whole strength (Dt 6:5).

Just as elsewhere Jesus teaches his disciples that it is not enough to avoid murder or adultery — the bare minimum — but that they should seek God’s will by rooting out inclinations to unjustifiable anger or lust, so here through this teaching on divorce he emphasizes that God’s will is fulfilled in human fidelity, commitment, and love — not just for God but for all of God’s children.

October 14, 2018  
Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Wis 7:7-11; Ps 90; Heb 4:12-13; Mk 10:17-30**

In the previous weeks, we have seen a consistent emphasis on renunciation. Jesus admonishes the crowds to renounce their attachments to evil thoughts, envy, and arrogance, indeed to remove permanently anything in their lives that causes them or any of Jesus' followers to sin. He warns his disciples to abandon notions of who is in and who is out. Jesus and James exhort their audiences to give up worldly preoccupations with status, power, strength, and wealth. Jesus has even warned his disciples that they must be prepared to lose their lives for his sake. One begins to get the impression that Christian discipleship is almost entirely about renunciation, and this week's Gospel at first seems to confirm this.

The young man who seeks out Jesus seems genuinely interested in doing the will of God. When he says that he has observed the Ten Commandments all his life, he is apparently speaking the truth, for Jesus looks at him and "loved him." Then, in love, he tells him to give up everything and follow him. But this the young man cannot do; it's too much to ask. Nor are the disciples surprised at this.

When Jesus tells them that wealth is a hindrance to entering the kingdom of God, they are "exceedingly astonished." It was generally understood that wealth was a sign of God's favor and that wealthy people, at least those who were generous in caring for the poor, were blessed by God so they could be benefactors for others. If those who have so obviously been favored by God cannot be saved, then who can?

The disciples, who have been listening to Jesus talk about renunciation for several weeks now, are only able to focus on what they are being asked to give up. So it was also with the rich young man. He had asked how he could inherit eternal life, but all he heard was what he had to relinquish. He did not hear that this would gain him "treasure in heaven." In the same way, the disciples only know that they have given everything up to follow Jesus, and now they are beginning to wonder what they will gain from it. Will they even be able to attain eternal life? Jesus assures them that they will gain this, but in the meantime they have failed to see the riches they have already received in the persons

of the family gathered around Jesus, now their family.

To draw close to God by following Christ, to gain a family of disciples — compared to this riches are nothing, gold is no more than sand, and silver is nothing more than mud and muck. The Gospel this week reminds us that the renunciation Jesus calls for is not just a matter of moral or physical rigor. It allows for something greater to be gained. God has much to offer those who draw near, but it cannot be received without giving up other things, things that the Bible insists are not worth nearly as much as we think they are.

## October 21, 2018 Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Is 53:10-11; Ps 33; Heb 4:14-16; Mk 10:35-45**

Last week Jesus promised his disciples that by giving up everything they currently have, they will not only gain it all back in this life (in the Christian family) but also in the world to come. This week the sons of Zebedee try to make sure that when that world does come, they get what's coming to them. Jesus gently declines their request, pointing out that what they ask, to sit at his right and his left when he comes into his glory, is not his to give. More importantly, he indicates that before they can be seated in the kingdom, they must suffer as Jesus will suffer.

Once again, Jesus warns his followers that the path of discipleship requires courage and commitment. To gain they must be willing to lose. James and John at least seem to get that it will cost them something before they attain whatever God has in store for them. They claim to have no illusions about that.

But neither they or the other disciples seem to get a more fundamental message, one that Jesus has been teaching them for weeks. All of them keep thinking of their lives in terms of prestige, power, and status. James and John want it, even in the world to come, and the other disciples are indignant — probably at their *chutzpah* in grasping for prime spots that they themselves wanted. They may not be clamoring for status now, but they surely expect it as part of their reward when all is said and done.

Yet Jesus has consistently shown them in word and deed that the reign of God is not about being great; it's about service. Even the Christ, who has every right to be served, refuses to be served. He came to serve, because redemption is a form of divine service, rendered through the Messiah, who offers his life for God's people.

Jesus clearly knows that this teaching, like so many others, is hard to swallow. His disciples struggle even to comprehend it, much less to accept it and integrate it into their understanding of what it means to follow Jesus. This is undoubtedly true for us today, living as we do in a world that consistently tries to teach us how important it is to be served, to make our authority felt. And we easily fall into the trap.

But the author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is aware of, and even sympathizes with, our weaknesses, in this area as in so many others. Even when we succumb to the temptation to be served and insist on our prerogatives, we may still confidently approach the throne of grace to receive not only mercy, but "grace for timely help" in overcoming this stumbling block on the road of discipleship.

## October 28, 2018 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time


**Jer 31:7-19; Ps 126; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52**

After all these weeks of Jesus teaching, we are back again to a story of healing. As with earlier (September 9), we begin with a reading from the prophets that proclaims God's redemption of his people from exile. As in Isaiah, so in Jeremiah: the return will not be simply a renewal of life on the land, but a healing of God's people. Thus, we find the Messiah announcing the reign of God not just through words but especially through mighty deeds that show the power of God at work in the world. Along with the Letter to the Hebrews, which speaks of Jesus as the High Priest who brings about redemption from our sins, the readings this week emphasize that God's salvation encompasses every aspect of life. There is no corner of our existence that does not concern God.

Last week Jesus had emphasized that he had been sent to serve,

not to be served. Now he serves. He asks Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" This simple question captures what Jesus has been talking about for weeks. He has been sent by God to "do for us." To those in need of healing, he offers healing. To those in need of forgiveness, he offers that. To those who ask for mercy, he offers mercy. They need only ask in faith.

In Mark, the disciples famously come across as a bit thick, and so do some in the crowds. The disciples tried to keep children away from him, "rebuking" those bringing them to him for a blessing. Now the crowds rebuke Bartimaeus for crying out, telling him to shut up. Here as in many other ways, Jesus is fundamentally misunderstood. He has come to bless, to heal, to serve. The last thing he wants is to have those who need him kept from him. His followers may admire him enough to consider him too important to be bothered, but they have not been paying attention. They, not Bartimaeus, are blind to who Jesus is.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds his readers that Jesus is the great High Priest, who did not glorify himself, did not exalt himself, but was given the role by God. Why? Because as High Priest, Jesus Christ is not only able to intercede for us, to bring redemption from our sins. He is also, as we heard in previous weeks, our brother who stands in solidarity with us and gladly serves us, because he knows how weak we are. The same Jesus who heals the blind man calling out in faith is the Christ who beckons us all to God's throne "to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help." 



## EUCCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •  
Poetry • Books

When Pope Francis speaks off-the-cuff, people listen with piqued interest. Some are excited to hear the Pontiff's candid thoughts; others are nervous. What will he say? What will it imply for Catholics around the world? How might his words challenge or affirm my own worldview? If the prospect of a free-spoken airplane press conference stirs that kind of allure, then imagine the kind of enthusiasm and apprehension an internationally-released film documenting Pope Francis' daily thoughts and actions might provoke.

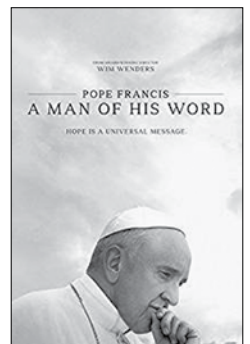
*Pope Francis: A Man of His Word* is just this sort of film. Brilliantly directed by acclaimed filmmaker Wim Wenders, *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word* breaks with many of the traditional norms associated with documentary filmmaking. It is not a biographical film chronicling the life of Jorge Mario Bergoglio from childhood to the present. Nor is it an overly pious rendering of a religious man.

Instead, Wenders opts for a type of immediacy, placing Pope Francis directly in front of the camera and allowing him to speak whatever is on his mind. This, woven together with Vatican footage of Pope Francis' papacy (of which Wenders was given full access) and buttressed by Wenders' own brilliant cinematic vision, creates a sense of encounter. Pope Francis looks you directly in the eyes and desires to share with you personally.

In a review in *The New Yorker*, Paul Elie describes Wenders' cinematic style in this film as an "aesthetic of nearness."<sup>1</sup> And through this, "we are brought near to Francis and, through Francis, to the people and issues that he is convinced should concern us most."<sup>2</sup>

This is an apt and insightful description. Wenders himself is heard introducing the film's major questions and occasionally weaving the film's many subjects together into a narrative arc, but it is Pope Francis himself who instigates and elucidates the film's many subjects.

## Film Review



**POPE FRANCIS:  
A MAN OF HIS  
WORD**  
Wim Wenders,  
2018  
Holy See,  
United States

John Christman,  
SSS

And the subjects he raises are many: poverty, degradation of the environment, economic exclusion and indifference, forced migration due to violence and lack of resources, the plight of refugees and migrants, clergy sexual abuse, the tragedy of human suffering, the value of family life, interreligious dialogue, the importance of “bridge-building” and peacemaking, and so much more.

The scope of Pope Francis’ vision is wide. The film subtly draws our attention to the wideness of his vision through its cinematography. Throughout the film, Wenders shows us Pope Francis gazing out over the many countries he visits through an airplane window. The vast landscapes and cityscapes stretch out before him. It could easily be an overwhelming and daunting sight for a Church leader with his responsibilities. Yet from those big, wide-angle vistas, we return to intimate close up shots of Pope Francis speaking clearly and concisely to the issues affecting so many people. It is Francis’ gift to see the broader realities and distill them into clear and relatable speech. More than this, as the countless images of Pope Francis embracing the sick, comforting the outcast, and strengthening the downtrodden attest, he practices what he preaches.

Unfortunately, as Pope Francis observes from the very beginning of the film, “The world today is mostly deaf,” and he includes priests among those often deaf to the gospel message he is sharing. Thus, Francis’ words are a challenging wake up call. The discomfort his words cause is palpable, both inside and outside the Church. Outside the Church, we see members of the United States Congress shifting uneasily as Pope Francis addresses issues of migration and gun control. Inside the Church, we see members of the curia sullen-faced as Pope Francis identifies the “illnesses” some of them have fallen prey to, such as “hoarding.”



Viewers will likely be challenged by Pope Francis’ words, and no doubt some will harshly criticize his choice to speak in such a way. Some would prefer he be silent on so many politically-charged issues. However, for Pope Francis, it seems it is more a question of using his voice to stand up for the deeply held Catholic values of preserving the common good and the God-given dignity of every human being.



Impressively, this film witnesses to Pope Francis' ability to find new, creative avenues to speak to society at large. Earlier popes may have spoken eloquently in Church documents and embarked on trips where they celebrated impressive liturgies with multitudes of people. Like his immediate predecessors, Pope Francis has retained these models, however he continually expands upon them. Whether writing a children's book responding to the letters of children around the world, opening Saint Peter's Square to crowds of people to see images of nature and our current environmental situation projected onto the facade of Saint Peter's Basilica, or participating in this new film, Pope Francis is tireless in his evangelical outreach.

His words are challenging, but they are rooted in his desire to not only proclaim Christ to the world, but to proclaim the message that Jesus proclaimed in word and deed. In that message there will always be challenges as well as joys. Pope Francis seems to know well both the joys and the challenges. It's what keeps him smiling and helps us to do the same.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Paul Elie, "The Spiritual Nearness of Wim Wenders's 'Pope Francis: A Man of His Word'" May 21, 2018. [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com), accessed June 2, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com) accessed June 2, 2018.

## Poetry

Peter and Paul

**Paul** Jerusalem, 31-32 AD

Near the end of all my studies, rumors first appeared.  
He just wasn't what we wanted, yet was what we truly feared:  
A rustic rabbi and a group of thugs  
Parlor tricks with loaves & fish, wine & jugs;  
Just a nuisance, just a tiny threat . . .  
So why is it I can't forget  
His haunting eloquence — reported second-hand  
To just our insulated, isolated band  
Of students of the real rabbi, Gamaliel the Great?  
Danger's in the very wind; I'll finish up, go home to Tarsus, pray &  
wait.

I never really knew him but I grew to love him.

**Peter** Galilee, 31-33 AD

He came into my boat and changed my luck:  
The fish now came to me. And even when I begged him to depart  
He would not go away and leave me stuck  
With broken dreams from romance lost, with listless will and grieving  
heart.

He came into my home and touched the fevered brow:  
This mother who had watched her daughter fade and die,  
Whose heart and mind — grown sick from wond'ring how  
Our faithful God could snatch my wife instead of her, and why  
She still should hope or care. Contagious was his smile,  
His hope-filled touch that healed her bitter soul  
And raised her up to wait on us again. His style  
Of speaking held us rapt in awe; his healing made us whole.

He came into my life and called to me; he called me "rock,"  
He trusted me — and I denied him. Bitter were my tears.  
And yet he never gave up hope in me, his love ran deep.  
A stretch of beach in morning light, a charcoal fire, the shock  
Of icy water as I swam — his words absolved my fears  
Of utter worthlessness: "You'll feed my lambs; you'll feed my sheep."

I never really knew him but I grew to love him.

**Paul** Tarsus to Jerusalem, 33-34 AD

My friends returned to Tarsus filled with stories of a wind and flame  
And deacons, languages, and miracles that made me fear the same  
Departure from our pure religion. I had made my life's whole aim  
The marketing to Roman hopes and dreams the clear, efficient claim:

One temple and one God are just enough. Yet now this Steven's  
spread  
Contamination even there. I watched with glee this rival fall  
And championed again our awesome temple's glory. But a dread  
Kept gnawing at me: to completely halt the danger, catch them all.

I never really knew him but I grew to love him.

**Peter** Judea, 34-35 AD

The frequent ridicule and beatings we could face  
But Steven's murder hit us hard. Some chose to hide;  
The other brand-new deacons scattered far and wide.  
Yet even on those distant paths the Spirit's guid-  
Ing presence called to Philip: "Go, run up beside  
The Ethiopian and share your message, bring my grace."

That great and Holy Spirit led us everywhere:  
From Joppa to a gentile's home. Yet do we dare  
Bestow the children's bread on unclean dogs? "Don't call  
What God has made unclean! Proclaim my truth to all!"

I never really knew him but I grew to love him.

**Paul** Damascus and Beyond, 35-37 AD

Damascus road became so bright I broke and fell —  
Into his arms. His faithful friends there made me well.  
Just how could I have been so blind? He had to hit  
Me just enough to help me see the Scriptures fit.

His call: "It's hard for you to kick against the goad"  
Began my thinking finally down a worthwhile road.

With Barnabas as guide and apostolic friend,  
Who introduced me to the group I'd hurt and feared,  
In Antioch their prayers and charity endeared  
Us to each other, letting us be called and sent  
To spread his faith with miracles. Our lives were spent  
In service to our Christ — unto the world's end.

I never really knew him but I grew to love him.

**Peter and Paul** From Antioch to Rome, 40s to 60s

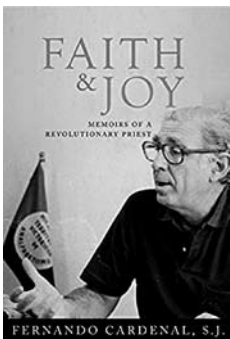
Back and forth across the Roman world, we spread  
His sacred word and sacraments — that let men rise  
Above their petty grasping squabbles, mortal dread,  
And hedonistic lusts. His call to sacrifice  
Enabled all to know that rising from the dead

Was their reward as well: the pearl of great price.

It cost us everything — and nothing — every day to follow him;  
And over many years we finally grew to know him and to love him.

Patrick Dolan

## Book Reviews



**FAITH & JOY:  
MEMOIRS OF A  
REVOLUTIONARY  
PRIEST**

Fernando Cardenal,  
Sj  
Maryknoll, New  
York: Orbis Books,  
2015  
288 pp., \$29.00

There is an iconic photo of Pope John Paul II on the tarmac of the airport in Managua, Nicaragua. It shows a man kneeling before the pope and John Paul shaking his finger at the priest, scolding him. That man was Fernando Cardenal, a Jesuit whose passion for the suffering people of Nicaragua caused him to work for the overthrow of the Somoza regime, which had over many years relegated the majority of the people of the country to absolute poverty and ignorance.

Cardenal entered the Society of Jesus in 1952, at a time when most of the priests throughout Central and South America accepted the political and economic realities, in which ten percent of the people owned all the land and resources and the other ninety percent were literally their slaves. A great change in thinking took place after the Second Vatican Council, one which re-oriented the Church to greater solidarity with the poor. The Central American Bishops' Conference in Medellin in 1968 and the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1965 made the promotion of justice integral to the service of faith. The orientation of many Jesuits throughout the world, but in particular in Central and South America, was immediate and profound.

For his tertianship experience, Cardenal was sent to live in a village in Medellin where he experienced the utter poverty of the people. As one of his responsibilities, he was to go into town to get the bread for the Jesuit community. The first time he did this, he gave all the bread away to hungry children on his way home. He told the community that they needed to send someone else to get the bread. No one did, and they learned to live without bread.

Living with the poor for nine months greatly impacted him. Before he left at the end of his tertianship, he made a promise to the people he had come to love. "Before God, I promise you that, wherever I am sent in the future, I am going to work for justice, for the building of

a new society, for the liberation of the poor of Latin America, for all those marginalized and excluded of the continent. I will do this in any country where I am asked to live, in any task that my religious superiors ask of me.”

His first assignment was as the director of students at the University of Managua at the very moment when the campus erupted as middle-class students became radicalized against the repressive Somoza regime. They took over a number of university buildings in protest. Cardenal was able to negotiate a settlement and no property was damaged or people hurt. But that was just the beginning.

Shortly thereafter, he was with a group of students and other priests who occupied the cathedral. Arrests were made and some students were later killed. Protests against Somoza intensified and the opposition, called the Sandanistas, took up arms to protect themselves from the army. What followed was a long, bloody war during which Cardenal experienced the deaths of many of the young people he had come to know and love. After years of intense fighting, Somoza fled the country and the Sandanistas had won.

Very dear to Cardenal was literacy. He was assigned by Daniel Ortega, the Sandanista president, to lead the National Literacy Crusade. With virtually no resources, Cardenal was able to mobilize hundreds of young people who went through the country teaching people to read. The effort was highly successful. But the same could not be said for the socialist Sandanista government.

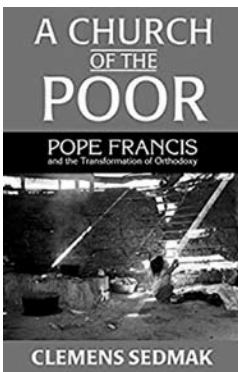
The Reagan administration did all it could to undermine what it saw as a dangerous communist country in the Western hemisphere. Pope John Paul II, who had suffered under communist repression in his native Poland, also looked on this socialist government, which had gained power through a bloody revolution, with concern. He wanted to enforce the canon law stipulation that prohibited priests from serving as government officials.

Jesuit authorities told Cardenal that the Vatican wanted him to resign and, after a number of delaying tactics, Cardenal told his Jesuit superiors that he could not in conscience step down. His work with the poor was too important. Nor would he resign from the Society of Jesus. Finally, under renewed pressure from the Vatican, Cardenal was expelled, but his local Jesuit community invited him to continue to live with them.

Because the country was in such a mess economically, Ortega lost his reelection bid and after great soul-searching, Cardenal resigned his government post but continued his work in the education of his people. In 1990, he met with the Jesuit general, Father Peter Hans Kolvenbach, and asked if there was any possibility of his returning to the Society. No Jesuit who had left the Society was ever allowed to return. Kolvenbach told Cardenal that he had studied his case and found that Cardenal had met a true conscientious objection and, given the testimony of his life, after some time and a second novitiate, he would be welcomed back into the Jesuits. On March 24, 2004, the anniversary of the martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero, Cardenal made his final vows in Managua.

The rest of his life was a continuous service of the poor to whom he had committed himself as a young priest. He never wavered from the promise he made and died in Managua in 2016. In many ways, Cardenal was the kind of priest that Pope Francis envisions. He had the heart of Jesus and certainly had the smell of the sheep engrained in his blood.

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



**A CHURCH OF THE POOR:  
POPE FRANCIS  
AND THE  
TRANSFORMATION  
OF ORTHODOXY**  
Clemens Sedmak  
Maryknoll, New York:  
Orbis Books, 2016  
208 pp., \$25.00

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Sedmak uses the documents and addresses of Pope Francis to examine how the doctrinal tradition continues to develop and reclaim our relationship with the poor. He especially uses quotations from *Evangellii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel).

Chapter 4 describes a Church of the poor for today: a call to conversion, poverty as a thorn in the flesh, a Church of the poor as risky and costly, and the Church of the poor and epistemic practices. In the last chapter, he expands on the growth and development of the tradition and the challenges called for in becoming what we had been originally as a Church of the poor. He describes "Orthodoxy in a New Key: Faith in Practice": propositional orthodoxy, institutional orthodoxy, existential orthodoxy, and orthodoxy of pilgrims.

Sedmak emphasizes such quotes from Pope Francis as "Don't forget the poor;" "God does not reveal himself cloaked in worldly power and wealth, but rather in weakness and poverty," and "The poor are at the center of

the Gospel, at the heart of the Gospel. If we take away the poor from the Gospel, we cannot understand the message of the Gospel," etc.


With his emphasis on "The Joy of the Gospel," Sedmak presents ten characteristics of joy as described by Pope Francis, among them: the joy of the Gospel as an invitation, as a biblical motif, as a cooperative good, as a good people that wish to share, and as the social and political condition for joy (14-15).

I believe that Sedmak carries on a good dialogue between himself and Pope Francis. What is bothersome, though, is the use of obscurant vocabulary. To reclaim the early tradition of the Church of the poor, one has to recover the vocabulary — the vocabulary of Jesus, the vocabulary of the crowds that followed Jesus, the vocabulary of everyday life — not the vocabulary of the medieval disputes of the scholars of the university.

Pope Francis has led by personal example: having only three pair of shoes, living in Saint Martha's with priests and visitors, taking in homeless men at the Jesuit residence, installing showers in the Vatican and having barbers give haircuts, welcoming a refugee family, and asking all religious groups to do the same.

To speak of "the orientation of epistemic resources," the principle of the universal destination of goods, the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* is intended to encourage (hence *exhortation*) the addressees to live in, summoning help, etc. . . . An exhortation is *paraklesis*, an act in encouraging, in admonishing, etc." Often, he uses words that he then explains. Ideas are lost in the esoteric language.

Instead of listing and explaining all of the different types of orthodoxy, why not just use Matthew 25, which is clear, concise, and practical? Theology is more action than language.

I found the book very much a book for a theological library, not grounded in everyday action and practice or in a real call to relate to the poor. It doesn't have the language of "the shepherd and the sheep" or a radical, everyday call to action of Matthew: 25. 

Marie Vianney Bilgrien, SSND  
El Paso, Texas



## *EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS*

Father Kevin C. Shemuga

Pastor, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church  
Macedonia, Ohio

Peter the apostle, the first among the Twelve, in his first letter admonishes us to holiness because Jesus is holy. Pope Francis in his recent apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (On the Call to Holiness in Today's World) does the same.

In Paragraph 10, the Holy Father meditates on Peter's letter and he writes: "With this exhortation, I would like to insist primarily on the call to holiness that the Lord addresses to each of us, the call that he also addresses, personally, to you: "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lv 11:44; cf. 1 Pt 1:16). The Second Vatican Council stated clearly: "Strengthened by so many and such great means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord — each in his or her own way — to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect."

As priest for 35 years, I have seen my role as calling the Church to holiness. In preaching, presiding at the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, in teaching, and even in administration, I am, through the Holy Spirit, to inspire all to put into practice methods that conform us to Jesus Christ. The hours in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament have invited me to be like Christ who gives himself as nourishment and mercy.

This means that I am invited to strive for holiness as a priest and a disciple. Prayer has to be at the center of my life that leads me to love and mercy. Presiding at the Eucharist and the sacrament of penance are two significant ways that I am moved by the Spirit to holiness. In these sacraments, I can share in Christ's mercy and love.

Our new bishop in Cleveland, Nelson Jesús Perez, has stated that as priests we are to be always available to our people. I take this as their needs, as well as their joys, are my needs and joys! By entering into their lives, I am able to be holy.

Holiness is essentially our willingness to share in Christ's life. Christ is present to us primarily in the Church. All of us should imitate Jesus who did not look for worldly wealth, status, nor privilege. Instead, he took the way of the cross that is humility and trust only in the Father. In this way, he could do the Father's will. No matter what we are doing in life, we are called to be saints and to be holy. As a priest, my way of holiness is entering into the hearts of Jesus and my people.





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“God gives us neither years,  
nor days. We have at our  
disposal only the present  
moment.”

*Arrivé au monastère de Dieu  
sous la protection de la B. Vierge  
en la compagnie de S. Jean.  
Votre lettre que je reçois  
nous comble de joie  
seulement prenez les seconds.  
Soyez vous bien - surtout les  
pieds -  
Je vous bénis de tout mon cœur  
Ivan attend de même*

*Eymard  
S. J. S.*

Saint Peter Julian Eymard

*Eymard*

*S. J. Je vous ma lettre à  
la gare - avec un petit*

“No one can fail to see that the divine Eucharist bestows an incomparable dignity upon the Christian people.”  
“...that Christ is truly Emmanuel, which means “God with us.” For He is in the midst of us day and night; He dwells in us with the fullness of grace and of truth. He raises the level of morals, fosters virtue, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the weak and stirs up all those who draw near to Him to imitate Him, so that they may learn from his example to be meek and humble of heart, and to seek not their own interests but those of God.”

-Pope Paul VI  
Mysterium Fidei, #67, September 3, 1965

