

Emmanuel



Eucharistic Spirituality

May/June 2018



Exciting News for Emmanuel Subscribers

Beginning with this issue of *Emmanuel* the digital edition of *Emmanuel* is available on our newly designed website: emmanuelpublishing.org. If you currently have access to the digital edition you will receive emailed instructions as to how to access magazine content on our website.

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

EMMANUEL MAGAZINE (ISSN 0013-6719) is published bimonthly with 6 issues a year, by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Phone (440) 449-2103. E-mail: emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS (print subscription includes access to digital edition): individual (U.S.) \$35.00 one year/ \$65.00 two years; Canadian and foreign \$40.00 one year/ \$75.00 two years, U.S. currency; single issues \$8.00 plus postage. EDITOR: 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland OH 44143. POSTMASTER: send address change to Emmanuel Magazine, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. ©2018

©2018 BY THE CONGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

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



EDITOR
ART DIRECTOR/MANAGER
LAYOUT
CIRCULATION MANAGER
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
PHOTOGRAPHY

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

BOARD

Lisa Marie Belz, OSU
Thomas Dragga
James Menkaus
Gilbert Ost diek, OFM

COVER

THE DOVE
Ioan Chisu
Oil on canvas
2012

emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com

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



Emmanuel Magazine

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 124 Number 3



EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

The Christian Sense of Mercy:
A Defense of “Amoris Laetitia”
by Gerald J. Bednar 140

Dorothy Day, Founder of the
Catholic Worker Movement
by Victor M. Parachin 152

EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Frank Sheed on the Eucharist
by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR 159

Body of Christ: Say Amen
by Ernest Falardeau, SSS 167

EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

A Symphony of the Spirit
by Mark C. McCann 171

Pondering the Parables:
The Parable of the Doorkeeper
by Bernard Camiré, SSS 177

Counsels for Spiritual Life 180

EUCCHARIST & CULTURE

Art, Music, Film, Poetry, and Books 200

COLUMNS

From the Editor 138

Pastoral Liturgy 181

Breaking the Word 185

Eucharistic Witness 208



FROM THE EDITOR

I have never had the pleasure of seeing *Les Misérables* performed professionally. The closest I came to that was watching a high school fine arts department in a suburban school district north of New York City put it on as their annual production seven or eight years ago. It was an exceptionally good show, however. This particular school district is known for investing as much money and resources in the arts as in athletics.

The musical, of course, is adapted from the historical novel by Victor Hugo published in 1862. The story focuses on the lives and interactions of several characters caught up in the June Rebellion of 1832 in Paris. It is a tale of struggle and redemption amid the chaos of the times, especially for the ex-convict Jean Valjean who shows his true character by caring for the innocent Cosette who has fallen in love with a fiery youth, Marius.

The show is filled with extraordinary music. In one song, “Bring Him Home,” Valjean begs God to protect Marius from danger and bring him back safe and unharmed to Cosette:

“God on high, hear my prayer,
In my need you have always been there.
He is young, he’s afraid. Let him rest, heaven blessed.
Bring him home, bring him home, bring him home.

“He’s like the son I might have known
If God had granted me a son.
The summers die one by one, how soon they fly on and on,
And I am old and will be gone.


“Bring him peace, bring him joy. He is young, he is only a boy.
You can take, you can give. Let him be, let him live.

If I die, let me die. Let him live.
Bring him home, bring him home, bring him home.”

I think that we may at times look down on intercessory prayer, believing that because the prayer of thanksgiving and adoration is focused on God *as God*, and not on human need, it is purer, and thereby nobler, than petitions for our needs and the needs of others. But did Jesus not tell us to come to God in our need and to pray constantly and perseveringly? Intercessory prayer, too, is an acknowledgment of *who God is* as the author and giver of every blessing and good.

And so, in the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass as well as in moments of personal communion and intimacy with God, *we pray for others*: for the Church, for men and women of good will, for the conversion of all people and their salvation, for those who govern, for justice and compassion, for the sick, the dying, and all in need, for peace in our hearts, our homes, and our world, and on and on! It is a good and holy thing, then, to let our confidence in God find expression in prayers of humble supplication for others.

In This Issue

May and June bring us much to reflect on, as does this issue of *Emmanuel*. We rejoice in the power of faith at work in us as we are transformed by the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and by the gentle, persistent in-breaking of God into our lives as ultimate mystery. We wrestle with understanding God’s mercy more fully and living it ourselves. We find inspiration in the life of a prophet like Dorothy Day and in the symphony of the Spirit which is the Eucharist. 

Anthony Schueller, SSS



EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

The Christian Sense of Mercy: A Defense of “Amoris Laetitia”

by Gerald J. Bednar

Some critics believe that Pope Francis chooses mercy against the law. The choice is never between mercy and law. The choice is whether a law will be applied mercifully or harshly.

Father Gerald J. Bednar is professor of systematic theology at Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology in Wickliffe, Ohio, and a frequent contributor to *Emmanuel*.

IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE OF *EMMANUEL*, AN ARTICLE APPEARED THAT DEFENDED THE Pope’s apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (AL), against the *dubia* submitted by four cardinals.¹ The article’s approach noted that mercy and the law never oppose each another. One is not an alternative to the other. Laws can be applied mercifully or harshly. The Gospel commits the Church to apply the law mercifully.

By the very nature of laws, even good and necessary laws simply cannot answer adequately to every situation that might arise in life. When laws falter, when they lead to untoward results, the Church can and must apply mercy even if mercy takes it beyond the letter of the law. Pope Francis has allowed for that possibility in his apostolic exhortation.

Many responses to the article expressed appreciation that the article’s insights offer a way forward in a situation that has become contentious. Academics, Church officials, and laity were among those who found the article valuable. Other responses disagreed with the approach. Because the opposing responders addressed popular online audiences, their comments alternated rather freely between matters of style, substance, and their own sense of outrage. Responders also seem to think that the article identifies Pope Francis simply with sensibility.² It does not. It explicitly states that Francis acknowledges the sense of the law but has chosen to emphasize sensibility regarding marital dilemmas to counter the ill effects of one-sided approaches.³

The main objections of those opponents appear as follows: How can mercy permit a sinful action? How can mercy override the law?⁴ One

responder felt that the article would allow any divorced Catholic man to feel free to receive the Eucharist. This is not true. Much of the confusion deals with the fact that the relevant portion of AL deals primarily with dilemmas, situations that objectively have no satisfactory resolution. If there is no dilemma, little reason exists for discussion about irregular couples receiving Communion.

I. A Pagan Sensibility

The negative commentators insist on a strict application of the law. They fail to mention the proper place of mercy in the Christian life, and, at best, would reserve mercy only for the worthy poor and others who deserve it.

Such a position resonates with the values of pagan Greece and Rome. Pagan philosophers viewed mercy as a violation of justice. It ignored the rational observance of the golden mean, granting relief that was unearned. Rather than give in to leniency on the one side or to cruelty on the other, the moral person should seek the middle ground of justice. Mercy counted as so much nonsense, understandable only in the immature and fools.⁵

When plagues struck throughout the empire in the third century, pagans ran out of town, abandoning even family members. Adherence to the golden mean saved those who fled. Mercy would only imperil their health. On the other hand, Christians, motivated by mercy, stayed and ministered to the sick whether they were family members or not.⁶ To the irritation of Emperor Julian, Christians mercifully created “a miniature welfare state in an empire which for the most part lacked social services.”⁷

Even when pagans sought a greater place for mercy, it fell short of the Christian ideal. For example, the first-century Roman poet Statius favored “justice which mercy may accompany but never overturn.”⁸ The statement of Statius summarizes the sentiment of the dissenters. Reason alone was clearly in the driver’s seat in the pagan world.

In 1 Corinthians, Saint Paul addressed the issue of disunity. Some of his correspondents appear to be guided by a way of thinking based on their culture and not on the shocking novelty of the paschal mystery. Paul invokes the center of Christian faith, the cross, opposing it to a wisdom based on “human reasoning” (1 Cor 1:17). In Paul’s view, such wisdom denies the specifics of the Christian faith. It seems wise, but it amounts to folly, as the cross is the true wisdom brought into the



world by Christ (1 Cor 1:18, 21, 23). God's love for sinful humanity (see Rom 5:5-8), displayed in the cross of Christ, goes beyond reason and, because of that, it may be considered as nonsense in the view of those who subscribe to traditional human wisdom (1 Cor 3:18-19; 1 Cor 2:14). *The context within which all reasoning must be done is that of faith, centered on the cross as the manifestation of God's mercy.*

In Galatians, Paul calls a group of his addressees "mindless" (Gal 3:1) because of their demand from Gentile converts of full obedience to the Jewish law, in particular, circumcision and the celebrations of the Jewish feasts. For Paul, their demand of full adherence to the law clashes against and empties the revelation of God's mercy in Christ. That is why in Galatians 2:4-5 he can refer to the "freedom which we enjoy in Christ Jesus," which enabled him to avoid imposing circumcision on Titus. *The law finds its fulfillment, i.e., its goal and climax, in love* (Gal 5:14; Rom 13:9).

Ironically, some of today's Catholic critics adopt the pagan position that mercy is fulfilled in the law whereas the Church teaches the opposite: the law is fulfilled in mercy. Justice and rationality must be viewed in the greater context of faith and mercy, not the other way around.⁹

II. Mercy and Law

Some critics think that Pope Francis chooses mercy *against* the law.¹⁰ Not so. The choice is never between mercy and law. The choice is whether a law will be applied mercifully or harshly. Mercy does not present itself as an alternative to the law; rather, mercy is the Christian way of applying the law, and can even lead a person beyond the law. Other critics think that the mercy of the pope would overturn longstanding laws against polygamy and adultery, for example.¹¹ Let's take this a step at a time.

A simple analogy might help. Several months ago, I was stopped by a police officer for exceeding the speed limit by a good 15 miles per hour. He informed me of the infraction and asked for my license. I explained that I did not see the speed limit sign. He asked, "How good is your driving record?" I responded, "Pretty good." (I have not received a ticket in more than ten years). He returned to his squad car. When he came back, he handed my license to me, and said, "Please watch your speed." No ticket! Am I to conclude from this that the speed limit laws

have been revoked? Quite the opposite. I am now much more aware of the allowable speed on any street I travel. Did the officer “apply the law”? Yes, he did. He stopped me, questioned me, and made me aware of my failure. Yet his application of the law did not require that he write a ticket. He applied the law with mercy. The law still stands (and is even more emphatic in my mind). He did not apply mercy *instead* of the law. He applied the law mercifully.

Mercy does not present itself as an alternative to the law; rather mercy is the Christian way of applying the law, and can even lead a person beyond the law.

How can a Christian know when mercy will allow such an action? What rules govern mercy? Only love governs mercy, which is also a non-law. Mercy is acquired with faith. Its content is partially communicated by the law, partially by parables, and fully by Jesus. The merciful actions of the saints continue to teach disciples.¹³ Believers develop a finer sense of mercy as they become more mature in the faith.

So, too, when a couple in an irregular marriage “turns themselves in” to the authorities, if mercy does not hold them to the letter of the law, it does not mean that the law has been revoked. It means that the law, mercifully applied in their circumstances, does not require them to break up the second marriage. *The merciful application of the law can allow what the law does not permit, and can thereby ironically fulfill the law.* Mercy can achieve more than the law. Law always bows to mercy, not mercy to the law.

An analogous application of the law should be possible in the marital arena — obviously making allowances for the differences in subject matters. Of course, marriage laws differ from the laws against speeding in many ways, but the principle stands that just because the law was not applied to the letter does not mean that the law has been abrogated. Polygamy and adultery remain wrong. Mercy can act so as to take the situation out of the realm of the judgment of the law, as will become apparent below.

The standard position of the Church requires remarried couples to avoid sin by living in “brother-sister” relationships when a seriously unjust situation might otherwise result (*Familiaris Consortio*, 84). This



remedy has been widely accepted in the Church for a long time. People seem to think that the brother-sister relationship avoids objective sin under the law. That opinion deserves a closer look.

III. The “Brother-Sister” Relationship

Of course, infidelity means more than simply a sexual union in violation of one’s marital commitment. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that “Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire” (2380). When a husband flirts with someone else’s wife, or romantically caresses her, or becomes “emotionally involved” with her, or dates her on the side, everyone would agree that those constitute acts of infidelity. They adulterate the marriage. Consider this situation: What if a man were to separate from his wife and move in with another woman? They marry civilly and hold themselves out as husband and wife but do not have sexual relations.

Certainly such an arrangement would constitute a colossal act of infidelity against the wife — indeed, even a mortal sin. Yet that so-called “brother-sister” arrangement is now allowed by the Church where a second marriage cannot simply be broken up without causing serious harm. Catholics rightly seem unfazed by the arrangement in view of the fact that children need to be brought up in something resembling normal family life. Yet this merciful answer to such a dilemma does not nullify the fact that a prior marital bond is violated in that relationship, which continues even after the children have grown.¹⁴

Those who claim that the Church cannot allow an irregular marriage to remain as it is have not considered the brother-sister relationship itself as already an arrangement that adulterates the original marriage. The Church’s action constitutes a legitimate exercise of the power of the keys as given in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18-19 where Jesus gave Peter and the Church the power to decide such cases.

How can mercy permit a sinful action? Although the question is poorly phrased, one must admit that the Church has permitted such actions in appropriate cases for a long time. Pastoral circumstances may require it, as we will see below. *A better phrasing of the question would be whether the Church has the power to manage marital dilemmas in a way that can reach for mercy beyond the law.* It can, and it does.

Obviously, adultery, divorce, and “playing house” with another woman

are all gravely sinful, and they remain so in the pope’s view. The focus of Pope Francis’ desire concerning difficult second marriages is conversion. What does conversion require in each circumstance? After the remarried couple has expressed contrition, the Church has a delicate pastoral situation on its hands. How best to allow life to go on after people have worked themselves into impossible circumstances? Each dilemma needs to be assessed with love and understanding. That is mercy’s task. It will help to consider concrete hypotheticals.

IV. What Cases Are Affected?

Internet critics seem to have only the most inappropriate cases in mind when they reject mercy as grounds for letting an irregular couple remain in their union.¹⁵ Comments that entertain the possibility of whether AL would condone unmarried couples sleeping together or whether marriage has any purpose today seriously distort AL.¹⁶

Mercy is acquired with faith. Its content is partially communicated by the law, partially by parables, and fully by Jesus.

Those writers seem to hold predominantly one scenario in mind: the man who has grown tired of his marriage and leaves his wife without much regard for the trail of heartache he leaves behind. Freshly back from his second honeymoon, he expects an easy absolution along with his new “wife.” But if no dilemma exists in his case, how could he be allowed to Communion? Obviously, the previous valid marriage bond must be honored, and the second invalid marriage must be declared null. This man needs a wake-up call, which in the long run would be the most merciful thing that could happen to him. The same goes for his second wife.

Some couples live in invalid marriages and file for a declaration of nullity, but are denied because of insufficient evidence. What if the marriage has been abusive? Some couples enter matrimony in a weird way, not contemplating a husband-wife relationship but something strange — as when a woman wants to escape her father but ends by marrying, against all her wishes, a man who relates to her as a father figure, but not as a husband. What if only the spouses can testify about the ensuing difficulties, but offer conflicting testimony? Outside witnesses may be few in number, and they may have died. If the petition for annulment is denied for lack of sufficient evidence,



the marriage stands as a valid marriage on the books. In these circumstances, would the opponents of AL instruct the couple to live the rest of their lives as celibates? Or worse yet, would they encourage the couple to set aside their divorce and reunite because canon law has declined to judge their marriage as invalid? Is mercy powerless in such a case?

Or consider the case of a refugee who, in the process of flight from a country, becomes separated from her husband. She needs to support her children and herself. If she lacks adequate skills to become readily employed in a foreign land, she might enter into a civil marriage. When she “remarries,” she cannot certify that her first husband is dead. He may be dead, or in prison, or hopelessly trapped in a country from which he cannot escape. Is mercy powerless in this circumstance?

People can make a horrible mess of their lives and the lives of those around them. Unjust regimes can impose horrible conditions that give rise to decisions that people would never choose for themselves. When irregular couples want to reconcile with the Church, it makes sense for the Church to assess the particular situation to see what conversion demands. Pope Francis has wisely refused to prejudge those sorts of cases.

The situation in marriage cases is often considerably more complex than many people think. Several opponents claim that the Church is only following Christ’s words on marriage in the Gospels when it teaches that a consummated sacramental marriage is indissoluble.¹⁷ Of course, the category of a sacramental marriage did not even exist at the time of Christ. When Jesus spoke of marriage in Matthew 19, he was speaking of *all* marriages *from the beginning*. We know this because he even remarks about marriages during the time of Moses and how the stubbornness of the people prompted Moses to allow for divorce.

Note, too, that Jesus did not criticize Moses (as opponents criticize Pope Francis), but he blames the hardheartedness of the people instead. Jesus did not say that any of those marriages were different from what he had in mind, nor did he say that they didn’t count because they were not sacramental. Similarly, nowhere does Christ carve out exceptions for Pauline and Petrine privileges. Nor does he allow for the dissolution of a sacramental marriage that is not yet consummated. Rigorists would have to admit that, by their own logic,

those new arrangements result in adultery, yet they do not.

Those categories result from decisions of the Spirit-led Church of later days. What the Church did long ago when it identified those exceptions, it can do now. It has the power of the keys to bind and loose in any case that comes before it. Jesus taught that all divorces violate God’s intent from the beginning. They become allowable only because the Church can decide cases according to the power of the keys.

Francis now employs those keys to clarify that mercy continue to be honored. The Church has exercised such mercy before, quietly, and Francis now openly encourages the Church to continue the practice.

V. The Place of Mercy

Some fear that mercy makes things worse. Shakespeare has one of his more unpleasant characters, a Senator, observe, “Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy” (*Timon of Athens*, III.v.3). Alcibiades counters, “Pity is the virtue of the law, and none but tyrants use it cruelly” (III.v.8-9). Shakespeare thus raised the question of whether Christians of his day appreciated mercy or would rather remain in solidarity with their pagan ancestors. Does mercy necessarily embolden sin? Is pity simply a “free pass” that allows tyrants to manipulate others?

The Christian needs to observe both the spirit of mercy behind the law and the law itself.

AL does not authorize the nullification of the law, nor does it “embolden sin.” Even the apostle Paul, who could write so negatively about the law (see Rom 3:28; 4:13-16; 10:4; Gal 2:16, 21, etc.), nevertheless understands the law as a lifeline. The Christian needs to observe both the spirit of mercy behind the law and the law itself. Paul’s problem comes when the law is abused by sin. James D. G. Dunne observes that Paul recognized that “*both* the outward norm *and* the inward motivation were essential for ethical living.” Without the proper inward motivation in Christ, external laws degenerate into mere legalism, routine, and rule. Without the external norms of the laws, the inward spiritual impulses become unmoored from their proper content, in which case Christian conduct would “become antinomian and guru-led.” The practice of the law needs to be a “manifestation of love” or else “the spirit of Christ is not behind it.”¹⁸ The law must always operate from within the spirit. Mercy is not



confined to the law, but fulfills the law.

Thus, Jesus presents a different picture from the pagans. He notes that the rain falls on the just and unjust alike (Mt 5:45). Even the unrepentant sinner benefits from God's gifts. The prodigal son certainly deserves humiliation for his life of profligacy, but the father welcomes his son's safe return regardless of what the son might have to say (Lk 15:11-32). The tax collector who relied on God's mercy leaves the temple justified, but the Pharisee does not (Lk 18:9-14). Jesus earned the ire of his contemporary religious leaders for showing mercy to prostitutes (Lk 7:3-50), tax collectors, and other sinners (7:34), but he persists in his mercy despite their anger.¹⁹ After all, God desires mercy and not sacrifice (Mt 9:13; 12:7). Jesus commands his followers to be merciful as his heavenly Father is merciful (Lk 6:36).

Christians need to apply mercy to those who deserve it and to those who do not. Thus, Jesus defends the woman caught in adultery and protects her despite the laws in both Deuteronomy and Leviticus (Jn 7:53-8:11; Lv 20:10; Dt 22:23-24). He chooses a merciful application of the law, frees the woman from all punishment, and counsels her to not sin again.

Saint Thomas Aquinas taught that mercy constitutes the primary quality of God, stemming directly from his love. "Now the work of divine justice always presupposes the work of mercy and is founded thereupon" (ST I, Q 22, art. 4). Mercy is more basic than justice and is not simply one of God's attributes among several others. It comes from the very heart of God who is love. Mercy does not negate justice, but fulfills it. This calls into question the inclination of some to place more confidence in law than in mercy. The Church has an obligation to dispel the misery it finds among its people, including the misery found in irregular marriages.

The pope's plea for priests to accompany couples in second marriages is consistent with decisions made by Pope Innocent I and Pope Leo I, both of whom were open to divorce to help alleviate extremely difficult marital situations.²⁰ A canon law handbook dating from about the year 1000 AD included similar flexibility in fashioning a pastoral response that makes sense in the particulars of a given situation.²¹ It is not as if the Church has never considered whether it can live in communion with those in second marriages. Canon 8 of the Council of Nicaea (325) demanded that before the morally rigorous Cathars

could be admitted back into the Church, they must agree to live in communion with those in second marriages in the Church.²² Historically, the Church has exercised mercy to help people manage the dilemmas they encounter. Pope Francis does the same in AL.

Mercy can be quite sloppy — as is life at times. The Church has its systems of laws, but there is part of life that doesn't fit into a system and must be handled with care — with mercy.²³ After mistakes have been made, the Church must assist people in picking up the pieces of their broken lives. It may seem unfair to those who struggle to keep their marital commitments, but the pope's views should be given deference. One critic complained that the Church has already given due regard to mercy because Saint John Paul II wrote the encyclical *Rich in Mercy* in 1980.²⁴ True, but the Church must not only write about and pray for mercy, it must actually show mercy in its actions.

VI. Schism: Automatic or a Choice?

Rather loose talk about the implementation of mercy causing a schism needs attention. Some critics assume that schism must lie ahead unless the pope capitulates. One would hope that deference to Magisterial authority would prompt opponents to reexamine their own positions with more care.

Scripture testifies to the great importance that Jesus placed on unity (Jn 17:22; 1 Cor 12:12-27; etc.). Paul noted that factions in Corinth arose because of the immaturity of the Corinthians (1 Cor 3:1; 14:20). More productive ways exist than schism. When the faithful disagree, theologian Bernard Lonergan, SJ, contended that they must enter into dialectics until problems can be resolved.²⁵ This presumes calm, rational, respectful language producing works that can be read with equanimity and appreciated by all sides. Prayer and charity need to inform conversations on the neuralgic topics raised in AL. Who knows what creative solutions or explanations may lie in the future unless respectful dialogue takes place?

A decision to enter into schism amounts to a refusal of brotherhood. It is not the natural result of an argument; it is a failure of love. Stubbornness simply leaves all parties in the dark. Finally, it should be noted that there is something unseemly about Catholics objecting to the Church showing mercy to contrite sinners who have encountered dilemmas in their lives. Misery should draw Christians closer to those



who suffer, not farther away, and it certainly should not divide them.

VII. Conclusion: Mercy and Sense

The sense of mercy is found in the faith as it is lived in the Catholic community through her laws applied in charity. Faith, not a system, informs life. While many of the laws and systems in the Church are necessary to any institution, and should be observed as closely as possible, at times the dilemmas of life spill beyond their borders. Christ gave the Church the means to address those difficulties, and her ministers must not deny the benefits of mercy to those who suffer.



Notes

- ¹ Gerald J. Bednar, "Answering the Dubia: Sense and Sensibility in *Amoris Laetitia*," *Emmanuel*, September/October 2017, 284-293. Subsequently a group of 62 Catholics, including theologians, philosophers, and laity crafted a lengthy *Filial Correction* for the pope in hopes that he would alter his teaching. My article, "Mercy and Law in 'Amoris Laetitia,'" published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 10, 2017, 8, originally addressed the 62 dissenters. It had to be shortened.
- ² Richard Antall, "Sense and Nonsense" at <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2017/sense-nonsense-latest-defense-amoris-laetitia>.
- ³ See Bednar, "Answering the Dubia," 284.
- ⁴ Peter Baklinski, "Mercy for Pope Means 'Second Marriage' Isn't Adultery" at <https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/mercy-for-pope-means-second-marriage-isnt-adultery-priest-in-vatican-newspaper>; John Zuhlsdorf, "U.S. Priest in *L'Osservatore Romano* Promotes Either Dissoluble Marriage or Polygamy" at <http://angelqueen.org/2017/11/18/73620/>; and Reto Nay, "The *L'Osservatore Romano* Justifies Polygamy," at <https://gloria.tv/article/VDLQ8YY1vCmH3wcC7dfbVJErn>. Although the passion with which these men write is evident, it is not always clear that they understood the position taken in the article. Antall thinks the article intends to support Jane Austen's notion of sense and sensibility. The last paragraph of the article should make it clear that the Church's position is subtler than Jane Austen's. The article does not support Jane Austen, but indirectly criticizes her.
- ⁵ Edwin Judge, "The Quest for Mercy in Late Antiquity, *God Who Is Rich in Mercy*, ed. Peter O'Brien and David Peterson (Anzea Publishers: Homebush West, Australia, 1986), 107. See, for example, Plato, *Laws*, 936c. At times, compassion was viewed positively, but only for those who deserved it.
- ⁶ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1996), 83.
- ⁷ Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), 75.
- ⁸ Bruce F. Harris, "The Idea of Mercy and Its Graeco-Roman Context," *God Who Is Rich in Mercy*, 102.
- ⁹ See Saint John Paul II, *Rich in Mercy* (November 30, 1980), III, Sec. 4, Para. 11: "Love . . . conditions justice and, in the final analysis, justice serves love. The primacy and superiority of love vis-à-vis justice . . . are revealed precisely

The Christian Sense of Mercy: A Defense of “Amoris Laetitia”

through mercy”; and IV, Sec. 5, Para. 7: “It becomes more evident that love is transformed into mercy when it is necessary to go beyond the precise norm of justice — precise and often too narrow.”

- ¹⁰ So Antall writes that the article tries “to make of ‘sensitivity’ a principle that ‘overrules’ all the other rules.” *Op. cit.* See also Baklinski, *op. cit.*
- ¹¹ Zuhlsdorf, “U.S. Priest”; and Nay, “The *L’Osservatore Romano* Justifies Polygamy,” *op. cit.*
- ¹² See, for example, Mother Teresa, *A Simple Path*, compiled by Lucinda Vardey (New York: Ballantine Books, 1995), 122-124, where she describes her ministry to the destitute on their deathbeds. She honors the burial rites of the faith of the decedent, and, if she does not know the faith, she buries them according to the Hindu rites since most of those she accommodates are Hindu.
- ¹³ See Ladislaw Örsy, SJ, *Marriage in Canon Law: Texts and Comments Reflections and Questions* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1986), 288-294, for further reflections.
- ¹⁴ For example, Antall suggests that the article, without qualification, would permit divorced and invalidly married Catholics to have a right to Communion. It does not. Zuhlsdorf and Nay think the same. *Op. cit.*
- ¹⁵ Antall expresses these concerns without warrant. *Ibid.* Zuhlsdorf and Nay would agree.
- ¹⁶ See, for example, Baklinski, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁷ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmann’s Publishing Co., 1998), 669.
- ¹⁸ See Tucker S. Ferda, “The Historical Jesus and the Law: The Form of His Activity and the Impact of Social Reputation,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 80, n. 1 (January 2018): 62-80, esp. 74 where he notes that while Jesus upheld the law in his teaching, his actions deviated from the law often enough to attract *ad hominem* insults. Those who viewed his mercy saw it as “aiding and abetting sin” to such an extent that he could be considered as a “friend of sinners” (Mt 11:19; Lk 7:34).
- ¹⁹ Philip Lyndon Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church: The Christianization of Marriage During the Patristic and Early Medieval Periods* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994), 133-134, and 136-137.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.
- ²¹ See G. Cereti, “Reconciliation of Remarried Divorcees,” *Ius Sequitur Vitam* (Leuven: University Press, 1991), where he demonstrates that Nicaea refers specifically to those living in a second marriage while the first spouse is still living.
- ²² See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 94, art. 4, where he notes that often enough general principles “will be found to fail, according as we descend further into detail.” For this reason, canon law has recourse to canonical equity, exemptions, dispensations, and *epikeia* (which can be invoked when the application of a law would cause harm or prevent a greater good). See Card. Francesco Coccopalmerio, *A Commentary on Chapter Eight of Amoris Laetitia* (New York: Paulist Press, 2017), 39.
- ²³ Nay, *op. cit.*
- ²⁴ For example, Antall thinks the issue itself inevitably involves schism, *op. cit.*
- ²⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), 235 ff.



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Dorothy Day, Founder of the Catholic Worker Movement

by Victor M. Parachin

Dorothy Day was a diminutive figure, but a dominant force for justice and peace in the Church and American society. Her life was rooted in the prophetic call of the Gospel.

Victor M. Parachin is a minister and writes extensively on matters of spirituality. He has authored a dozen books and is a regular contributor to *Emmanuel*.

"WHATEVER I HAD READ AS A CHILD ABOUT THE SAINTS HAD THRILLED ME. I COULD see the nobility of giving one's life for the sick, the maimed, the leper. . . . But there was another question in my mind. Why was so much done in remedying the evil instead of avoiding it in the first place? . . . Where were the saints to try to change the social order, not just to minister to the slaves but to do away with slavery?" (Dorothy Day)

When Dorothy Day died in November 1980, her funeral was held at the Church of the Nativity in one of the poorer neighborhoods of New York City's Lower East Side. On the day of her funeral, one of the Jesuit teachers at the parish school gave his class the morning off, enthusiastically telling them: Go to church today and see the funeral of a saint.

That was a remarkable comment given the fact that Dorothy Day, in her early years, had a series of lovers, got pregnant by one, had an abortion, attempted suicide twice, and was active in the socialist and communist movements. Nevertheless, in her lifetime Dorothy came to be viewed both as a saint and as the living social conscience of the Catholic Church in America.

Her Life

Dorothy was born on November 8, 1897, in Brooklyn, New York, to John J. and Grace Day. Her parents were nominal members of the Episcopal Church and had her baptized in that Church. John was a newspaper reporter whose career meant many moves for the family. The family moved to Chicago in 1906. Feeling isolated from family and friends during those years, Dorothy turned inward, spending her

time reading and writing. She attended the University of Illinois in Urbana. While there, her commitment to writing deepened as did her interest in and involvement with the pressing social issues of poverty, organized labor, and war.

Religious practice was not part of Dorothy's life at that time. In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, she recalls being hostile to it: "I felt at the time religion would only impede my work. I felt it indeed to be an opiate of the people, and not a very attractive one, so I hardened my heart. It was a conscious and deliberate process."

Enticed by the radical social, cultural, and political ideas which were prominent in New York City, Dorothy dropped out of university in Illinois and moved to New York in 1916 where she promptly found work as a writer for the *New York Call*, one of the nation's largest and most influential socialist daily newspapers. There, Dorothy became a close friend of the playwright Eugene O'Neill and was often at his side helping O'Neill deal with bouts of alcoholism.

However, their friendship was not one-sided. O'Neill played an important role in Dorothy's eventual conversion to Catholicism. As O'Neill listened to Dorothy, discovering that she felt a restlessness of spirit that she sometimes believed was a calling to do more and to be more, he urged her to read the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. In so doing, she came across Augustine's famous statement and one which resonated with her spirit: "You have made our hearts for yourself, O God, and they will never rest until they rest in you." That reading became a vital first step in her ultimate spiritual conversion.

Over the next decade, Dorothy drifted aimlessly. She worked as a nurse at a Brooklyn hospital. While nursing, she met Lionel Moise, described as a "womanizing newspaperman." Their love affair resulted in Dorothy becoming pregnant. She sought out an illegal abortion, an act which caused her considerable emotional suffering for many years. In 1920, she married literary agent Berkeley Tobey, a marriage which ended a year later. She then moved to New Orleans where she worked as a journalist and wrote a modestly-successful novel entitled *The Eleventh Virgin* in 1924.

For the first time in her life, Dorothy had financial resources and used them to move back to New York and buying a beach cottage on Staten Island. There, she began living with Foster Batterham, a man she loved deeply and by whom she had a daughter, Tamar Teresa, born on March 3, 1927. This proved to be a pivotal turning-point in her spiritual life.

Dorothy chose to have her child and herself baptized into the Catholic Church on December 28, 1927. Her spiritual transformation ended her



relationship with Foster who could not understand nor appreciate her newly-embraced faith.

Becoming a new mother, being a single parent, and her embrace of a spiritual life drew Dorothy away from radical causes briefly. She spent time in prayer and discernment, exploring how she could live out her faith as well as her commitment to social reform and justice. The answer to her prayer came when she met Peter Maurin, a devout Catholic and a social reformer who envisioned a society based on the teachings of Jesus, one in which there were no divisions, such as between workers and intellectuals.

Maurin was a social philosopher who embraced the spirit of the perennially-appealing Saint Francis of Assisi. He committed himself to simplicity and to poverty, often taking meals in New York's skid-row missions, sleeping on the streets or wherever he could find a bed. What little money he received, Maurin spent on books or, more likely, gave to the poor.

The Catholic Worker

Because she was a journalist, Peter encouraged Dorothy to begin the process of Catholic social transformation by starting a newspaper. That monthly, *The Catholic Worker*, would eventually launch the movement of the same name. *The Catholic Worker* took bold, radical stands on social issues. It was first published in May 1933 with a modest initial printing of 2,500 copies. Within four months, 25,000 copies were printed. By the end of the year, circulation was up to 100,000 and three years later it was a widely-distributed national publication reaching 150,000 readers.

However, Day was not content merely to write about socialist ideals. She wanted to back up her words with deeds, so she set aside part of the newspaper office as a "house of hospitality" which offered food and shelter for those in Depression Era poverty. It was the first of many such houses of hospitality which would be established around the country. By 1936, there were 33 Catholic Worker Houses nationwide.

Over the next half-decade, Day and the Catholic Worker Movement led the American Roman Catholic Church in reform efforts. "What we would like to do is change the world," she declared, "make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do."

"And to a certain extent, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, the poor, and the destitute — the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor, in other words — we can to a certain extent change the world; we can work for the oasis, the little cell of joy and peace in a harried world."

Dorothy's faithfulness to Jesus' message of love and her reading of his Sermon on the Mount took her to an uncompromising place as a pacifist. Her posture of nonviolence was resolute. For example, in the January 1942 issue of *The Catholic Worker* — the first after the bombing of Pearl Harbor — Dorothy wrote: "Our manifesto is the Sermon on the Mount. . . . We will print the words of Christ who is with us always, even to the end of the world: 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you.'"

Because of her activism and her outspoken criticism of American political and social structures, many in the Catholic Church in the United States were unhappy with her words and her actions. Yet her passion, sincerity, and evident spirituality generally muted such critical voices.

Dorothy Day's life changed dramatically when she met and befriended Peter Maurin, a devout Catholic and a social reformer who shared her idealism.

On one occasion, New York's powerful and influential Cardinal Francis Spellman was asked to silence her. Although he had a well-earned reputation for being a vocal political, social, and theological conservative, and in spite of the fact that his worldview was the ideological opposite of Dorothy's, he was nevertheless startled and even offended by the suggestion. The cardinal had this simple, straightforward response as to why he would not do so: "She might be a saint." No bishop would want to be remembered for censuring someone whom the Church would one day canonize as a saint.

Dorothy died on November 29, 1980, at Maryhouse, a house of hospitality for women. After a lifetime of living in poverty, Dorothy died penniless. No money had been set aside for her funeral, which the Archdiocese of New York ultimately provided as a tribute to her indomitable spirit of faith and justice. In 1998, Cardinal John O'Connor raised the question of canonization for Dorothy and two years later, in March 2000, the Vatican formally initiated consideration of her cause for sainthood.



How to Be Like Dorothy

Prepare yourself intellectually and spiritually.

Dorothy was a layperson and a woman who didn't hesitate to challenge positions held by those in the Catholic hierarchy, including her own archbishop Cardinal Spellman. She was especially critical of their unrestrained patriotism and support of war. Dorothy did not wait for the Church to approve of her stand on nonviolence or any other issue.

Instead, she formed her social positions after serious and thorough intellectual preparation. She studied the Bible (especially the Gospels), early Christian writings, papal statements, and books and articles by theologians. In addition, she spent much time in prayer and meditation seeking spiritual insight, wisdom, and direction from God.

Use all of your experiences for the common good.

Nowhere does Dorothy dismiss her pre-conversion, pre-Catholic life experiences. Rather, the events and experiences of her early years informed her maturing adult spirituality. She was able to integrate these into her life and use them to shape the present.

For example, because Dorothy herself had an abortion in her youth, she wrote a letter to a young, unmarried pregnant woman offering counsel and support. In the letter, Dorothy openly shared her struggle surrounding the decision and its aftermath and begged the woman not to subject herself to the suffering which she had experienced as a result of the abortion.

Don't allow gender issues to hold you back.

Dorothy lived before feminist and sexist issues became major public concerns. Yet she was not constrained by gender issues. She was a professional woman, a journalist, an editor, an author, a single working-mother, a grandmother, a social critic, a pacifist, a dissenter, and the leader of a major religious movement in a male-led Church.

Be the incarnation of the divine for others.

Dorothy often reminded people that God wishes to manifest himself through us. "We must carry this glory in our lives so that when our neighbors touch us, they have contact with God." It is worth remembering that, for many people, the only link they will have with God is through us.

Sometimes be in the company of people who don't agree with you.

Dorothy wrote: "It is a matter of grief to me that most of those who are Catholic Workers are not pacifists, but I can see, too, how good it is that we always have this attitude represented among us. We are not living in an ivory tower."

Read spiritual writings.

All her life Dorothy was an avid reader. She read Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Dickens, and writings of a deeply spiritual nature: the psalms, Augustine's *Confessions*, etc. The fifteenth-century devotional work *The Imitation of Christ* was her personal favorite and had a significant impact on her when she was pregnant with her daughter Tamar. *The Dorothy Day Book*, a collection of her writings and readings edited by Margaret Quigley and Michael Garvey in 1982, reveals the breadth of Dorothy's reading interests.

Her faithfulness to Jesus' message of love and her reading of his Sermon on the Mount took Dorothy to an uncompromising place as a pacifist.

Consider ways to simplify your living.

Dorothy Day felt called to a life of voluntary poverty. For her, this meant living simply, wearing used clothing donated to the Catholic Worker houses, traveling by public transportation, and having as few material possessions as possible.

While you may not have Dorothy's calling to a life of poverty, perhaps you could consider ways of simplifying your lifestyle. Do you really need to buy this? Do you need another possession in your life? Could the money you plan to spend be better used in support of someone or a cause with a greater need than yours?

Stand up for the values which are important to you.

Dorothy Day was consistent, utterly steadfast in maintaining her values rooted in the Gospel: solidarity with the poor, nonviolence, pacifism, living in community. Conduct your own examination of conscience, asking yourself: What values are important to me? Am I faithfully living by them? Am I an effective witness and an example for others?

Never give up on yourself.

Keep in mind that Dorothy procured an abortion as a young woman. If she had given up on herself, if she had condemned herself thinking "I had an abortion. I am of no use whatsoever to God," the Church and



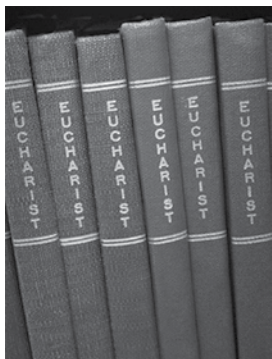
society would have lost an important prophetic voice and presence. Never give up on yourself.

It is a sad fact that some in the Church believe they are unworthy of a calling to a life of service because of past actions or decisions. Dorothy Day's life reminds us that God has a way of taking the broken pieces of our lives and creating a beautiful mosaic from them.

Don't take yourself too seriously and always have a sense of humor.

One day Dorothy was being driven to Mass by a young man who was dating a Lutheran woman. He told Dorothy quite proudly how he had argued with his girlfriend, claiming that the Catholic faith was superior to that of Lutherans. "Did the Protestants have any saints?" he grilled her. No. "Did the Blessed Mother visit any of them?" No. As he went on and on, Dorothy recalls thinking: "I felt like saying that Catholics needed them more!"





EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Frank Sheed on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR

Frank Sheed was a devout Catholic, a street preacher, an apologist, a publisher, and a theologian. The Eucharist was central to his teaching, as it is central to the life of the Church.

F. J. SHEED (1897-1981) WAS A POPULAR TWENTIETH-CENTURY CATHOLIC LAY theologian, public speaker, publisher, translator, and apologist. He was born in Sydney, Australia, graduated from the University of Sydney, and went on to study law. He moved to England with his wife, Maisie Ward, and worked for more than 40 years as a street corner evangelist for the Catholic Evidence Guild. In 1926, he and his wife founded the publishing house Sheed & Ward in London and the American house in 1933.

The author of more than 20 books, he was an important figure in what he called the “Catholic Intellectual Revival” and instrumental in renewing and promulgating Catholic thought throughout the English-speaking world. In recognition of his many achievements, Rome’s Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities awarded him an honorary doctorate in theology, which was bestowed at the Catholic University of Lille, France, in 1957. His teaching on the Eucharist was central to his life and thought.¹

Sheed’s Spiritual Outlook

Sheed was very much aware of being a member of a minority religion in a country (England) that had persecuted Catholics for centuries, and where its people were in many ways still suspicious of and, in some cases, even hostile toward them. For this reason, he placed a great deal of emphasis on the intellectual defense of the faith and the need to confront the world with the truth. His street preaching, his publishing house, and his own writing were manifestations of this fundamental spiritual outlook.

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



The best place to see Sheed's spiritual outlook at work is in his most popular work, *Theology and Sanity*.² In this book, he seeks to provide "the indispensable minimum that every man needs in order that he may be living mentally in the real world — which is what the word *sanity* means in my title."³ The concern of the book is not with the will but with the intellect, not with sanctity but with sanity."⁴ He does not mean to imply that the intellect matters more than the will, only that the intellect is often neglected and now needs some attention.

Sheed's spiritual outlook may be summarized thus: "For the soul's full functioning, we need a Catholic intellect as well as a Catholic will. We have a Catholic will when we love God and obey God, love the Church and obey the Church. We have a Catholic intellect when we live consciously in the presence of the realities that God through his Church has revealed. A good working test of a Catholic will is that we should do what the Church says. But for a Catholic intellect, we must also see what the Church sees. This means that when we look out upon the universe we see the same universe that the Church sees; and the enormous advantage of this is that the universe the Church sees is the real universe, because she is the Church of God. Seeing what she sees means seeing what is there. And just as loving what is good is sanctity, or the health of the will, so seeing what is there is sanity, or the health of the intellect."⁵

Sheed spends the rest of *Theology and Sanity* covering the essential elements of Catholicism's view of the universe, focusing primarily on topics related to God and his creation.

With respect to God, Sheed says that God is both infinite existence and personal, both changeless and infinitely active, transcending both time and space. God is also triune: the First Person generates the Second; the Third Person proceeds from the First and Second. This generation and this procession go on eternally. The Persons, moreover, are equal by nature yet distinct by virtue of their relations to one another. Although they always act as one, each appropriates a certain role in God's outward activity: the Father appropriates the act of creation; the Son, the act of redemption; the Spirit, the act of sanctification.

With respect to creation, Sheed ponders why God created at all, what it means to be created, and how it is indeed the work of the Trinity. He goes on to cover the created universe, the existence of angels and men, the fall, and salvation history. He writes of how God chose the Jews as his people and how in the fullness of time sent the Son to the

world in the mystery of the incarnation. He treats the mission of Christ, his divine personhood, his full humanity, the nature of his redeeming sacrifice, the gift of the Spirit, the birth of the church, the role of the twelve apostles, and the role of Peter. He writes of the coming of God's kingdom, the dispensing of God's sacramental gifts, and the nature of Christ's mystical body.

He describes what life in the mystical body is like both during life and after death. He writes of the end of the world and of the importance of all people to habituate themselves to this reality, taking into account their extraordinary place in God's creation, their insufficiencies, their need for grace, and their ability to find what they need in the Church. He writes about all these things, and much more, including the Eucharist, which for him holds a central place in the Church's vision of reality.⁶

Sheed's Teaching on the Eucharist

Sheed discusses the Eucharist at various places in *Theology and Sanity*. In the chapter entitled "The Redeeming Sacrifice," he recounts what the gospel writers say about its institution by Christ at the Last Supper: "He ate the paschal meal prescribed by Jewish law with his apostles and then went on to make them the priests of the Eucharistic meal, whereby until the end of the world men would receive his own body and blood."⁷ The Eucharist, for him, is the supernatural food that sustains our supernatural life in Christ. It nourishes the Church and her members and enables them to live through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.

The Eucharist is the supernatural food that sustains our supernatural life in Christ.

In the chapter entitled "Dispensing the Gifts," Sheed says: "The Blessed Eucharist obviously differs from the others in that whereas by the others we receive the life of Christ, by the Blessed Eucharist we receive Christ himself."⁸ All the other sacraments presuppose this sacrament and look to it: "The others all lead to increase of life, but the Blessed Eucharist is the basis of them all, for it is the very food of the soul and without food there can be no continuance of life."⁹

Sheed summarizes the Church's teaching on the Eucharist in this way: "It is, of course, the living Christ whom we receive. The bread ceases to be bread and becomes his body. But because death has no more



dominion over him, where his body is, there he wholly is, body and blood and soul and divinity. The wine ceases to be wine and becomes his blood: but where his blood is, there he wholly is body and blood and soul and divinity. Therefore, if we receive either, we are receiving the whole Christ. And receive him we must, for he is the food of our life.”¹⁰ Sheed embraces the Church’s sacramental realism and relishes it. He takes the words of institution at their face value and does not attempt to water down or modify their meaning.

In the chapter entitled “Life in the Body,” Sheed identifies the Eucharist as the food of the supernatural life: “By baptism, we enter into the life of the body: or, to put it another way, the life of the body enters into us. Either way, we become alive supernaturally. But a living thing needs food, and without food will almost certainly perish. But all life must be fed by food like in nature to itself. Our bodily life is fed by bodies, of animal or vegetable. Our mental life is fed by minds, the minds of those who instruct us. But this new life of sanctifying grace is Christ himself living in us: the only food that could feed a life which is Christ must itself be Christ. And what we receive in the Eucharist *is* Christ.”¹¹

What is more, the Eucharist not only nourishes the members of Christ’s mystical body, but is also a source of unity: “Receiving Christ our Lord thus, we are in the profoundest sense one with him, and this is the great thing; but also we are one with all, in all ages, who by receiving him have become likewise one with him. And this is no small thing. The Blessed Eucharist serves the growth of each member of the body in holiness; but it serves also the unity of the body as a whole, drawing the whole more profoundly into oneness with Christ”¹² The Eucharist, in this sense, “is the life principle of the Church even more than of the individual soul.”¹³

Sheed goes on to draw a close connection between the Eucharist and Christ’s eternal self-offering to the Father. The Mass “is the breaking through to earth of the offering of himself that Christ makes continuously in heaven simply by his presence there.”¹⁴ There is only one difference: “Christ makes his offering in heaven in his own sacred humanity; Christ makes his offering on earth through his mystical body.”¹⁵

Some Further Insights

While this brief description of Sheed’s understanding of the Eucharist does not exhaust his views on the sacrament, it gives us a sense of his general concerns and helps us find its place in his overall spiritual outlook. The following remarks expand on this description with the

hope of providing deeper insights into the place of the Eucharist in his life and thought.

1. Sheed's views on the Eucharist must be seen in the larger context of his understanding of the mystical body of Christ. This body, for him, is not a simple metaphor used to describe the unity of believers, but a living mystical entity that continues Jesus' historical presence in the world through those who believe in him. The risen Lord is truly present in this mystical communion, and the Eucharist is the means by which this mystical body is sustained in time. His point that all life must be nourished by food similar in nature to itself underscores the reality of this supernatural organism. Only the body and blood of the risen Lord himself can feed those whom he has incorporated into his risen life. The doctrine of the mystical body of Christ underlies the entire sacramental system of the Church. The grace of the sacraments comes through, with, and in the person of the risen Lord. Unlike the other sacraments, which give us life in Christ, the Eucharist gives us Christ himself.

The Eucharist is "the life principle of the Church even more than of the individual soul."

2. Sheed professes the sacramental realism that lies at the heart of the Church's teaching on the Eucharist. "The bread ceases to be bread and becomes his body. . . . The wine ceases to be wine and becomes his blood."¹⁶ This realism takes Jesus' words of institution seriously by asserting that the elements of bread and wine are more than mere signs or symbols of Christ's body and blood, but that they actually become Christ's body and blood. His experience as a street preacher enabled him to explain the Church's teaching on transubstantiation in a way that ordinary people could understand. He shied away from using philosophical terms and categories and sought instead to translate Church teaching in a way that was accessible to the masses. Sheed was a theologian for everyman. His teaching on the Eucharist displays his talent for translating difficult concepts into ordinary language.

3. The Eucharist, for Sheed, stands apart from all the other sacraments. It does so in a way that accentuates the intrinsic worth of each. All the other sacraments presuppose it and refer to it. The Eucharist, in turn, justifies their existence. Without the Eucharist the community of believers could not exist and there would be no further



need for the other sacraments. The Eucharist, in this respect, gives believers the supernatural sustenance of Christ's body and blood. This food brings those who receive it into close personal communion with the risen Lord. Sheed points out that the Eucharist, for this reason, is both the life principle of the Church and the primary means through which individual believers grow in holiness. The gift of the Eucharist is Christ's promise to all believers that he would always be with them and share with them the riches of his risen life.

4. The connection Sheed draws between the Eucharist and Christ's eternal self-offering before the Father in heaven reveals the deep sacramental bond between Christ and his Church. The risen Christ who offers himself in his sacred humanity to the Father in heaven and who intercedes on our behalf is the same Christ who acts in the sacraments and continues to spread his gospel message through the members of his body. The Eucharist, in other words, perpetuates Christ's presence in time by bringing his eternal self-emptying into our midst. When seen in this light, Christ's sacrificial offering on Calvary is both eternally present to the Father and present in time in the Eucharistic celebration. Through the Eucharist, Jesus lives his paschal mystery through the community of believers. In the words of Saint Paul, "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28).¹⁷

5. Sheed also recognizes that the Eucharist is the source of unity within the Church. When a person receives Holy Communion, he or she receives the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. Receiving the Eucharist thus puts the believer in intimate communion with Christ himself and with all who receive the sacrament and who profess their faith in the risen Lord. This unity is not superficial or cosmetic, but real, intimate, and life sustaining. By receiving the body and blood of Christ, the members of Christ's body are united both to Christ and to each other. Since not every member of the body has the same function within the body, there must be a certain degree of unity in the midst of diversity: "As it is, there are many members but one body" (1 Cor 12:20). To use Sheed's terminology, such unity requires that "we see what the Church sees" and "will what the Church wills." It presupposes the sharing of a common vision of reality and professing it in our words and actions.

6. The Eucharist sustains the supernatural life of the community of believers, conveys the real presence of Christ's body and blood, and is the redeeming sacrifice of Calvary made present in the sacrament in a real but bloodless manner. Sheed sees the Eucharist as a mysterious

blend of banquet, presence, and sacrifice, affirming the traditional teaching of the Church, yet doing so in a way that translates difficult theological realities into everyday language. He does not emphasize any one of these dimensions over the others, but balances them (even holding them in tension with one another) to convey a sense of the unfathomable mystery that Christ has revealed in this sacrament. The Eucharist, for him, is the central act of Catholic worship and brings together the many aspects of Christ's redemptive mission into a single action. At one and the same time, it nourishes us, gives us a taste of the messianic banquet, immerses us in the redemptive action of Christ's sacrificial offering on Calvary, and brings into our midst the presence of the risen Lord.

7. Finally, Sheed draws a strong analogy between Christ's hidden presence in the Church and his mysterious presence in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine. His presence in the Eucharist can be seen only with the eyes of faith. For many, it is hard to believe that the Lord of the universe would humble himself to such an extent and become the very food that we eat and drink. It stretches and strains the imagination to think that God would empty himself in such a way and hide himself in what, by all measurements, seems to be nothing more than ordinary bread and wine. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine that Christ is truly present in his Church, which so often seems marred by sin and human frailty. His presence there is hidden and we need to view this mystery through the eyes of faith. Christ's hidden Eucharistic presence sustains his hidden presence in the Church, even as it sustains us as we seek to understand his hidden presence in our own lives and in the lives of those we love.

Conclusion

F. J. Sheed accomplished many things in his life, and it is difficult to select any one as the most significant. He was not afraid to bring the truth of the Catholic faith to the world and did so through his many years of street preaching. He started a successful Catholic publishing house that promoted some of the most prominent Catholic voices of his day: G. K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh, Ronald Knox, Fulton Sheen — to name just a few. He was a respected lay theologian at a time in the Church when the field was largely the domain of priests and religious. His own writings were widely popular, although he did not receive the same degree of recognition as some of the authors whose writings he published. He viewed himself as a servant of the truth and strove to impress upon those whose lives he touched the importance of seeing what the Church sees and willing it.



The Eucharist, for Sheed, was the supernatural food that sustains the supernatural life of the Church. It was Christ's gift of himself to the community of believers: the gift of his presence, his redemptive action, his own nourishing body and blood. For him, it was also the source of the Church's unity with Christ and one another. Christ's presence in the sacrament, hidden beneath the appearances of bread and wine, could be seen only through the eyes of faith. He took the words of Paul to heart, " . . . we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). That hidden presence nourishes our life of faith and enables us to sense Christ's presence in the Church as well as in our own lives. The Eucharist, for him, was a sacrament of life, but not just any life. It was the sacrament of the life of Christ in his mystical body and its many members.

Sheed did not treat the Eucharist in isolation, but placed it at the heart of the Church's life and teaching. He knew that the Church's very existence depended on it, because it represented not merely the life of Christ but the person of Christ himself. For this reason, he encouraged all Catholics to embrace the Church's Eucharistic faith, take it to heart, and embody in their lives the act of sacrificial self-offering it represented.



Notes

- ¹ This biographical information comes from Shawn G. Kennedy, "Frank J. Sheed, 84, Lay Theologian *New York Times* (November, 21, 1981), <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/11/21/obituaries/frank-j-sheed-84-a-lay-theologian.html>.
- ² F. J. Sheed, *Theology and Sanity* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946).
- ³ *Ibid.*, v.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-4.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, vii-x.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 218.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 257-58.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 258.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 282-83.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 283.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 285-86.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 258.
- ¹⁷ All quotations of Scripture come from *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).



EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Body of Christ: Say Amen

by Ernest Falardeau, SSS

By baptism, we are incorporated into the church, the body of Christ. Communion deepens that union as we are progressively transformed into the very mystery we receive.

THIS ARTICLE IS A FOLLOW-UP ON MY REFLECTION “THE EUCHARIST AND THE UNITY of the Church” in the January/February 2017 issue of *Emmanuel*. The article explored the subject of spirituality, especially in the light of Vatican II and the keynotes of Eucharist, church, and unity. This article is more pastoral and hopefully more inspirational, and is focused on the church as the body of Christ.

Saint Augustine is often quoted for his emphasis on the Eucharist as the sacrament by which we become the body of Christ, the church. In simple terms, Augustine goes to the heart of this reality by recalling that when the priest or other minister of Communion offers the host, he says: “Body of Christ,” and the response is “Amen,” meaning “let it be” — become what you receive, the body of Christ.¹

In the Beginning Was God

Expanding the conversation on spirituality, we might first ask a question about God. It is a question that is often asked of those who have joined the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is a question that we might ask ourselves from time to time. Is our understanding of who God is growing as we make our journey to heaven? Is it different than when we were young or before we became Catholic Christians?

These questions might help us to respond to those who think religion and faith are things of the past. Science (Einstein, Darwin, or Hawking) may have blurred or eliminated our need for them, as some critics try to convince us. Yet some of our greatest scientists (including Einstein and others) may be more believers than we think.²

Blessed Sacrament Father Ernest Falardeau has dedicated his life and ministry to the promotion of Christian unity. He served for many years as the Ecumenical Officer of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and now resides at Saint Jean Baptiste Church in New York City.



The church is the body of Christ, the people of God. The mission of Jesus Christ was to save from sin the church, God's people, eternally in heaven. God's glory, praise, and thanksgiving are the goal of the church for all eternity.

We admire the saints because they have reached the goal of Christ's saving grace, namely, our salvation. We glorify God by striving for eternal life, the purpose of our human existence. We shall have reached the reason for very being in seeing God as he is, face-to-face with all the angels and saints.³

The Church, the Body of Christ

The letters of Saint Paul clearly emphasize the body of Christ. According to his teaching, we are not rugged individuals who have a relationship with God, and that is all there is. We are the body of Christ. We are members of his body (Rom 12:4-5). We all contribute to being the church. We all share the church's mission of praise, thanksgiving, reparation and prayer, and love of God and neighbor.

Spirituality is the antidote for our culture's fixation on *me* (I've got to be me, what's in it for me, I did it my way, etc.). We must love ourselves, but we are social creatures; we do not live alone, we are part of the body which is the church, and the human family — children of God.

The Eucharist is the bread of life; it is the transformation of the Christian into the life and likeness of Christ.

Paul's teaching looks at almost every facet of the Church: its members, its life, its *koinonia* (communion), its diversity, its hierarchy, etc. Every member of the church is like every member of the human body, needing others, connected to other people.

The Church and the Eucharist

The Second Vatican Council stated that the Eucharist is the summit and source of the Christian life.⁴ It is the very center of our Christian spirituality. We are encouraged by the council to "read the signs of the times."⁵ There is so much theology of the Eucharist in the Vatican II documents that it would be impossible not to see the Eucharist as vital to our Christian life and our growth in holiness.⁶

Holiness is wholeness. Saint Irenaeus says that to be holy is to be “fully human,” and this gives glory to God.⁷ *Gaudium et Spes* states that the mission of the Church is to make the human family Christ-like. He is the perfect human because he is the mediator of our creation in the image and likeness of God. We are to be the children of God. We will accomplish this goal and give God worthy worship when we share the glory of Christ’s resurrection. As the Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann put it, the “Eucharist is the sign and sacrament of the kingdom of God, which is the church in our time and God’s eternity in heaven.”⁸

Our task as Christians is not merely to “say Amen” but to “make it happen,” to truly become Christ.

The Gospel of Saint John, in recording the words of Jesus in the “ode” to the Eucharist (6:22-59), says that when we receive the Eucharist with faith, we live in him and he lives in us. The Eucharist is the bread of life; it is the transformation of the Christian into the life and likeness of Christ. As Augustine states, we become the body of Christ and from grace to grace we are transformed into Christ with each Communion (*koinonia*).⁹


The Eucharist and the Life of Christ

To be a Christian is to be another Christ. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Gal 4:20). Our task as Christians is not merely to “say Amen” but to “make it happen”; indeed, it is to “let go and let God” so that the Holy Spirit can do in us what he has done in Christ and in the saints down the centuries. Eastern Christians speak of transformation (*theosis*). Saint John Paul II reflected often on the episode of the transfiguration in the life of Jesus and its importance for all who follow Christ — his disciples — those who walk in his way.¹⁰

Saint Peter Julian Eymard, the Apostle of the Eucharist, spoke eloquently about the gift of oneself which is at the heart of the Eucharistic mystery.¹¹ Jesus gives himself to us as food and drink so that we might give ourselves to him and to our neighbor in loving service. Whatever we do to our neighbor, we do to Christ himself, and our fidelity to this Christian standard will be the measure of our likeness to Christ.



Conclusion

Reflecting on our being the church as a sharing in the life and grace of Jesus Christ through baptism and our living of the Christian life,¹² helps us to understand that what is called for by baptism and the Eucharist is more than the name of Christian or membership in an institution. It is communion/*koinonia* in Jesus Christ. It is the lifetime transformation of the neophyte into the fullness of Christ (Col 4:13). It is living the life of Jesus to the best of our ability from the grace that flows from our celebration, Communion, and worship of the Eucharist. 

Notes

- ¹ Augustine of Hippo, Sermon 271. Rouet de Journel, SJ, *Enchiridium Patristicum*. Rome: Herder, 1981, 530.
- ² Walter Isaacson. *Einstein: His Life and Universe*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
- ³ Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, 48-51.
- ⁴ Vatican II. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10.
- ⁵ Vatican II. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 4.
- ⁶ Vatican II. *Lumen Gentium*, 6.
- ⁷ Irenaeus. "The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God. If the revelation of God through creation already brings life to all living beings on the earth, how much more will the manifestation of the Father by the Word bring life to those who see God" (AH IV, 20, 7). As quoted by Pope John Paul II in his presentation on Irenaeus in Lyons, France. (cf. Mons. Phillippe Delhay. "On the Contemporary Importance of Saint Irenaeus," *L'Osservatore Romano*, February 9, 1987, 6).
- ⁸ Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*. Yonkers, NY: Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985.
- ⁹ Augustine of Hippo, *op. cit.*
- ¹⁰ John Paul II, Homily for the 26th Anniversary of the Death of Pope Paul VI at Castel Gandolfo, Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, Friday, August 6, 2004.
- ¹¹ Eymard, Peter Julian. *Retreat of 1865*, Entry for March 21. *Rule of Life*, Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, 4. The Spirit of the Congregation. Official Translation, Rome: The Generalate, 1985.
- ¹² Wood, Susan. *One Baptism: Ecumenical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Baptism*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009.



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

A Symphony of the Spirit

by Mark C. McCann

Music and prayer, word and silence, bread and wine and ourselves are given to God in praise to become a symphony of love and self-giving.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC THAT LIFTS US UP FROM OUR ORDINARY existence and carries us to places where life once more has meaning and holy intention? It always amazes me how a group of individuals playing a variety of musical instruments can come together with such precision and purpose that they capture the essence of an eternal moment and pull it straight out of heaven and into my very soul.

Experiencing the music of a magnificent symphony is not unlike the glorious unfolding work that is the celebration of the Eucharist. Like the orchestra, we are all instruments of the Almighty, led by our celebrant to sing the sweet eternal song of our salvation.

I would like to share one such concert experience because it reminded me so powerfully of what it means to participate in the Mass each Sunday at church with fellow believers.

Recently, my son, who had graduated from college, was invited to join the Connecticut Valley Symphony Orchestra. My wife and I were thrilled to attend the first of his concerts, a salute to Vienna. As we took in the extraordinary musical experience, I found myself carried away to a place of deep contemplation where God spoke to me about the Sunday Symphony I experience each time I participate in the Eucharist.

Tuning Our Hearts as We Prepare to Play

As I sat in my chair waiting for the concert to begin, listening to the orchestra members tuning their instruments, it suddenly struck me how many people look at the Mass as a performance, a play upon the

Mark C. McCann is a writer and ministry consultant, as well as a former director of religious education and the Associate Director of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut. In 2017, he authored “Rethinking Eucharist: A Relational Approach to First Communion Preparation” (March/April) and “The Renewing Power of the Eucharist” (November/December). Go to wordsvisions.com for more information about his work.



altar that we in the pews — the “audience” — take in as we decide whether it is something worth our time.

But the truth is we are not the audience. We are the musicians, bringing our gifts before an audience of angels. We are the instruments fashioned by our Creator. As we dip our hands in the holy water to make the sign of the cross and take our places on the kneelers to prepare our hearts for the Eucharist, we, too, are “tuning up” to join together in the symphony of the Spirit about to take place.

Before the concert begins, the first violinist comes on stage and calls out to the other instruments with a single note that is echoed over and over until there is unity of sound, purpose, and resolve. The stage has been set. The musicians are ready. They await the conductor — breathless, their hearts beating in anticipation as they surrender to the symphony about to unfold.

Oh, that our hearts would beat with such eagerness to respond in love to the call to worship! How much more wonderful would be our reverence if we understood that we bring our gifted lives before the throne of heaven and join together as the body of Christ, awaiting the entrance of our Lord.

The Ebb and Flow of a Heavenly Song

As the conductor entered the stage, there was a rousing round of applause. He stood before the orchestra, acknowledging the members of the ensemble before taking his place at the podium. With a raise of his hand, the music began. I watched in awe as he took charge of the musicians and led them through the *Light Cavalry Overture* by Franz von Suppé.

As he moved with conviction and courage, the musicians were caught up in the power of his presence and the music poured forth from their instruments like the thundering sea, rising up to exhilarating heights and crashing into shores of poignant pauses like waves upon the sand. At one point, it seemed as though the line of distinction was blurred between the conductor leading the orchestra and flowing along with it. In that incredible moment, conductor and musicians appeared to be one.

Each Sunday, our celebrant enters as the congregation raises a cry of

praise to the Father in heaven. Like a conductor, the priest greets the participants and, with a raise of his hand in blessing, begins the Mass. As he commits to his role, we see the person of Christ, calling us to pour forth our prayers and to give ourselves fully to the Eucharistic celebration in all its wonder.

If priest and congregation indeed surrender to the solemnity of the moment, we become one with Christ, our head. Together, we rise upon the wings of prayer and rest in the embrace of the One who has called us to himself in love. We become an offering, joined with the holy sacrifice about to take place upon the altar.

The Voice That Speaks to Open Hearts

The second selection we experienced at the concert was the *Clarinet Concerto in A Major* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, with soloist Yumi Ito performing. Before she came to the stage, I read about Yumi in the program, learning of her degrees in musical studies and the many awards for her performances. The true meaning of her background and experience, however, came to light as I heard her play.

The truth about the Eucharist is we are not the audience. We are the musicians, bringing our gifts to the altar to be offered to God.

I listened as she took the brilliant work of Mozart and spoke its beauty into reality through the voice of her musical instrument. The range, the softness, the power, and the splendor of the piece were infused into my soul as she played. She was one with the music. She had studied and practiced and poured herself into it until the solemn moment when her clarinet sang out with sweetness and surrender as she lifted us all to the mountaintop of serenity. In hearing the concerto, I somehow became a part of it.

The Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharistic Prayers, the penitential act and the Lamb of God, the Gloria and the Our Father were given birth in the Scriptures and the enduring traditions of the Church. She practiced and poured herself into the sacrifice of the Mass until it became what we experience today. The Scriptures speak to us with their own power, a power which is expressed through the voice of the one proclaiming them. Those who lead the congregation in song



have the awesome privilege of taking the sacred words and music and drawing us into their meaning. I experience the words more deeply when the ones speaking or singing have prepared well and empty themselves into their ministry.

As I pray the prayers and join in the singing, I am lifted up and given the grace to express their deep meaning through my own unique voice. I am challenged, comforted, commissioned, and called to live my life more fully for Christ as these committed “soloists” draw us into the experience of worship.

The Heights of Adoration in the Heavenly Realms

The final selection of the evening was the *Symphony no. 2 in D Major* by Johannes Brahms, a piece I can only describe as hauntingly beautiful. Before the orchestra began playing, our conductor took time to explain the history of the music and the intricacies of the different sections we were about to hear.

We are challenged, comforted, commissioned, and called to live our lives more fully for Christ.

When the music began, I was better able to appreciate what Brahms intended for us to experience. I wondered if the musicians playing that evening were truly able to capture the original flavor of the symphony exactly as the composer had envisioned it. I thought about all the special terms printed in the program: *Allegro non troppo*, *Adagio non troppo*, *Allegretto grazioso*, and *Allegro con spirito*. I considered all the notations on the sheet music the musicians had before them. I wondered how much they had trained, both in general and for this particular concert, and praised heaven for the individual God-given talent that each of them brought to the orchestra. All of what the piece was supposed to be had been carefully passed down through years of study and preparation so the musicians could play the symphony as it was meant to be performed.

Each Sunday, as I take my place in the assembly, I thank God that the teachings and traditions of the Church regarding the meaning and purpose of the Mass have been scrupulously passed down with faithfulness through the generations. I praise God that the Holy Spirit

has guided and protected the celebration of the Eucharist, the priests who serve at the altar, and all the faithful who have shared in worship since the time of Christ. The deposit of faith through the ages and the power of the Holy Spirit have ensured for all time that when we celebrate the Eucharist, we remain true to the intentions of the Lord.

In the End, the Spirit . . .

I have heard many concerts, but I was incredibly impressed by this one. Though the orchestra was made up of ordinary men and women with their own unique and individual gifts, in the end the performance was a flawless work of beauty, a coming together of people who through their love for the music and the outpouring of their beautiful, determined hearts were able to offer up a grace-filled performance that thrilled all who were there.

I watched as the violinists moved in perfect synchronization. I saw the determination on the faces of the cellists and the base players as the energy of their efforts moved from their skilled hands to the strings. The other instruments sang out their songs with joyfulness. The percussionists followed the music and yet served to provide the underlying rhythm behind the melody. The music flowed as one amazing expression of what the glory of God can do in the hands of gifted men and women.

As we partake in the celebration, we are made one with the Savior who entered this world to write his symphony of love upon our hearts.

This is the very essence of the Mass: that God can take ordinary and imperfect men and women, his inerrant, eternal Word, two-thousand years of tradition, and love itself, and infuse his mighty Spirit into it all to create a perfect celebration that carries us back to the moment when heaven and earth were reconciled through the power of the cross. To experience a beautifully executed celebration of the Eucharist is to participate in the drama of heaven itself.

The glory of God expressed through the minds and hearts and hands of his people is what the Eucharist is all about. Each one of us brings his or her unique gifts to the table. Together, we are an offering that is raised to heaven with the bread and wine offered on the altar. As



we partake in the celebration, we are made one with the Savior who entered this world to write his symphony of love upon our hearts!

I hope that the next time you take part in the Mass you will consider this brief reflection of mine and remember that you, too, are a player in the great symphony of God's unfolding work that is the Church. I pray that you will pour yourself into the celebration of the Eucharist with all your heart, mind, and soul, praising God that you have been given the great gift of joining with Christ in becoming a sweet sound in the ears of the Almighty!



In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

Rev. Msgr. Emmanuel Capozzelli
Archdiocese of Newark

Since its inception, *Emmanuel* has published a list of deceased members of the Priests' Eucharistic League, remembering those who have served the Church generously and faithfully and have passed into the promised eternal life. Priests in the Eucharistic League whose names begin with J, K, L, and M are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during May and June.



EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Doorkeeper

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.

THE PARABLE OF THE DOORKEEPER (Mk 13:33-37) BRINGS US TO THE LAST OF the parables found in the Gospel of Mark. As originally spoken by Jesus, the parable was probably a simple exhortation to watchfulness in the face of the advent of God's kingdom. Some scripture scholars, however, believe that in his recounting of the parable, Mark intends an allegory about the life of the Christian community between the resurrection and the final coming of Jesus.

By the phrasing of the introductory verse (13:33) and by the addition of important details, Mark gives a distinctive meaning to this parable. He begins with Jesus' words: "Be watchful! Be alert! You do not know when the time will come." These very first words link this parable with three other places in Jesus' "end of time" discourse where Mark, in effect, warns his community to be observant and to exercise watchful care in light of the final coming of Jesus that was thought to be imminent.

Mark compares the life of his community to a situation where a man, later identified as the "lord of the house" (13:35), goes on a distant journey. This is intended as a metaphor for the absence of Jesus before his final return. Before the lord of the house leaves on his journey, he entrusts his authority to his servants and, in particular, to the doorkeeper.

This imagery makes us recall that Jesus' first appearance in Mark's Gospel is as one who possesses a new teaching with authority (1:22, 27) and as the "Son of Man" who has power to forgive sin. When Jesus issues his call to his disciples, he bestows power on them. Also, we

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.



should note that the parable's description of the servants placed in charge not only reflects early Christian usage, such as we find in the letters of Saint Paul, but also recalls Jesus' command to the disciples to be servants of all, after the example of the Son of Man who came not to be served but to serve (10:45). The power of authority, in Mark's community, is to be expressed in service.

The brief indication that the lord of the house leaves the servants with power — "each with his work" — has wider significance. The phrase initially suggests that there are different tasks to be performed in the community even though they all share the same power. We have, here, a perspective similar to the apostle Paul's description of different gifts and different ministries, all inspired "by one and the same Spirit" (1 Cor 12:4-11). The tasks entrusted to the servants in the parable are both received from the lord of the house and carried out on his behalf. From this, we conclude that tasks within the Christian community include both service within the community as well as missionary activity.

The image of the "house" in Mark's Gospel has many layers of meaning related to the life and mission of the church community.

Mark's Broader Perspective

Approaching the parable from the angle of allegory, the household language used by Mark links this parable with other parts of his Gospel. Mark reveals a number of places where significant events take place in a "house," such as healings and private instruction to the disciples. Worthy of note, also, is the fact that "house" is a designation for the community itself.

Mark also uses household and family imagery to describe doing the will of God, as in 3:31-35 where those who do the will of God are seen as Jesus' new family; also, in 10:28-31 the disciples who have left all to follow Jesus receive a new family along with houses. Since we know from other passages of the New Testament, for example, 1 Corinthians 16:19, that the first Christian meeting places were "house churches," we may assume that Mark's community was such and that our parable is an allegory of Christian life centered in house churches prior to the return of Jesus.

The Parable of the Doorkeeper has enduring significance for us today. We simply do not know the day of the Lord's decisive return into our life through our personal death. Whatever our position in Christ's church, whether that of "doorkeeper" or of simple "servant," we must exercise spiritual watchfulness and dedication to the tasks entrusted to us. Jesus' concluding command must continually resound in our ears: "I say to all: 'Watch!'"



Emmanuel Subscriber Service	
• change your address	• inquire about gift subscriptions
• inquire about the status or payment of your subscription	• inquire about missing issues
NEW SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM	
U.S. Rates 2 yr. - \$65.00 1 yr. - \$35.00	
Canadian and Foreign Rates (U.S. currency)	
2 yr. - \$75.00 1 yr. - \$40.00	
Name _____	
Address _____	
City _____	
State _____ Zip _____	
Phone _____ - _____	
TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS	
Send us an address label from a recent issue together with your new address, or fill in the information below. Please give us 6 to 8 weeks advance notice.	
Old Address	New Address
Name _____	Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
City _____	City _____
State _____ Zip _____	State _____ Zip _____



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Counsels for Spiritual Life from Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Let Us Know How to Behave Like the Saints

The Apostle of the Eucharist was also a guide to the interior life and to Eucharistic spirituality for many. Here, in a letter to a woman he was directing spiritually, Mrs. Josephine Gourd, he writes on January 26, 1851:

“Sometimes our good Master works through the isolation illness causes to speak to our poor soul which continually flees him. A little suffering can dispose the soul to receive the touch of grace. I hope that you may often have a couple hours of rest at the feet of the divine Master in order to find yourself fully at his feet and be filled with his spirit and love for the rest of the time when you must be available to others.

“Let us learn how to do as the saints did: to be *with God first*, and then *for others* in God’s presence. But you tell me, ‘I don’t know how. I don’t think about it!’ It is easy to cast a simple glance toward God, who is present in us or around us, an interior act of offering, of petition, of acceptance of everything. Happy is the soul that lives thus with God. What a beautiful friendship! Then heaven is everywhere.

“Let us bear well with the ups and downs of life, of our interior state, of our heart, by our love for the holy will of God. When everything seems to irritate and to frustrate us, let us take a firm hold on our poor heart, without letting it focus on the cause of its frustration but instead encourage it to do something for the love of God.”





PASTORAL LITURGY

“Dies Domini”: Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy at 20

by John Thomas Lane, SSS

There has been a noticeable decline over recent decades in regular observance of the Lord’s Day. Communities of faith have a role to play in calling society to a renewed sense of the sacred amid the busyness of life.

SAINT JOHN PAUL II ISSUED THE APOSTOLIC LETTER *DIES DOMINI* (DD) ON Pentecost, May 31, 1998. Little fanfare accompanied the release of the text, which the Vatican published in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. Perhaps you remember reading several paragraphs of the letter in Catholic news sources? *Dies Domini* was partly intended as a warning to the world about the growing influence of secular culture on the traditional observation of the Lord’s Day.

Many of us, however, felt that John Paul had been late in drawing attention to the way society and its various economic and leisure activities have overtaken the sacredness of Sunday. It was a little disconcerting as well that he introduced Polish customs that were not in harmony with the liturgical year (e.g., Christmas trees and concerts at the Vatican during Advent, the Divine Mercy devotion, to name just a couple). At this twentieth anniversary, let’s review some key points of the letter for us today which can be helpful in catechizing and in keeping Sunday holy.

The pope said in the introduction:

I see this letter as continuing the lively exchange which I am always happy to have with the faithful as I reflect with you on the meaning of Sunday and underline the reasons for living Sunday as truly the Lord’s Day . . . in the changing circumstances of our own time.

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. For
questions
or further
materials, please
contact him at
jtlanesss@gmail.com.

Pope John Paul also wanted to, as he states in DD, 6:

Recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying the Church's precept so that the abiding value of Sunday in the Christian life will be clear to all the faithful.

Dies Domini is divided into five chapters: "The Celebration of the Creator's Work," "The Day of the Risen Lord and of Pentecost," "The Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday," "Sunday: Day of Joy, Rest, and Solidarity," and "Sunday: The Primordial Feast." John Paul revisits the history of "keeping holy" from the biblical injunction to the transition from Sabbath to Sunday, to the importance of church, family, Eucharist, and personal renewal. He gives the rich historical and theological significance of the Eucharist for mission and illustrates how we can live the day in the world.

From the dawn of creation, as narrated in the Book of Genesis, God sets into motion a day to rest and, as if answering the Hebrews' question, "Why do we rest?" invites humankind to rejoice in glorifying God. In our secular culture, it may be hard for busy folks to hear:

Rest, therefore, acquires a sacred value: the faithful are called to rest not only *as* God rested but to rest *in* the Lord, bring the entire creation to him in praise and thanksgiving, intimate as a child and friendly as a spouse.

The connection is found in the Book of Deuteronomy (5:12-15), where the precept is grounded less in the work of creation than in the work of liberation.

A comment I often hear from parents is that they "do not have time to rest"; they are "tied down" to practices for sports events, etc. One would hope that they could put their foot down and be "liberated" from so many things, returning to this sacred moment of rest, family time, and renewal for one's self rather than racing from one athletic field or gymnasium to another. They tire of tournaments — even on holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas — and fear that their child won't play. John Paul says in DD, 7:

Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ! Yes, let us open our time to Christ that he may cast light upon it and give direction. He is the one who gives us "his day" as an ever-new

gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings.

Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationship and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human.

Pope John Paul wrote this letter as a way of encouraging and deepening our understanding of Sunday. Sunday has a rich tradition of worship and family time — both the family of the Church and the personal family relaxing in one another's company. In this twentieth anniversary year of this letter, we pastoral leaders would be advised to encourage and support anew the peace and joy of the risen Lord, but also the peace and joy that comes from resting in the Lord from the ordinary and extraordinary events of our lives.

While *Dies Domini* was written to encourage a renewal for the Jubilee Year 2000, it continues to serve as a timely reminder for all of us to not let the world overtax and commit us beyond what we were created to do and to be. If we truly kept Sunday as the “weekly commemoration of Easter,” then we would be more faithful disciples, able to credibly proclaim the Gospel in a more effective way in building citizens of love, joy, rest, and peace [paraphrased from DD, 87].

Reminders for May and June

Additions to the Church's Sanctoral Cycle

The Lectionary Supplement has new readings for the following days:

- Thursday, May 10: Saint Damien De Veuster;
- Tuesday, May 22: Saint Rita of Cascia.

Solemnities and Observances

- Sunday, May 13: The Ascension of the Lord, unless observed on the previous Thursday;
- Sunday, May 20: Pentecost;
- Sunday, May 27: The Most Holy Trinity;
- Monday, May 28: Memorial Day (United States);
- Sunday, June 3: The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

Consult *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside of*

Mass (HCWEOM) for ideas about solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and a procession to mark this observance in your parish or vicariate.

Renewal of Marriage Vows

The months of May and June are optimal times for a renewal of wedding vows. Everybody wants a “June wedding,” eh!

Blessing of Graduates

With the end of the school year and the graduation of many young parishioners, recognize your graduates by blessing them at a weekend liturgy. Previously in this column, I offered a Blessing of Graduates or a ritual for passing from one grade to the next. Contact me for a copy.





BREAKING THE WORD

Scriptural Reflections — Homiletics

by Barbara Shanahan

May 6, 2018
Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48; Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4; 1 John 4:7-10;
John 15:9-17**

“As the Father has loved me, so I also love you”! How can we fathom this? Is Jesus saying, “I love you in the same way my Father loves me”? Does this give us any clear insight? Jesus’ words entice and perplex us. Then finally, words we can hold onto: “If you keep my commandments,” but he adds, “As I have kept my Father’s commandments . . . then you will remain in my love.” Comparing how we live our Christian life with the relationship between the Jesus and the Father can leave us sufficiently out of the realm of human understanding!

The simple statement “keep my commandments” is helpful, but what are these commandments? Having taught Scripture to adults for many years, the word *commandment* invariably calls to mind the Ten Commandments, etched on a plaque as if they just came down from God! As essential as these guidelines are to maintaining a state of order, is it the keeping of these ten commands that binds Jesus to the Father? Is this the way he carries out the Father’s will? Is this all that is demanded of him and of us? There has to be more to Jesus’ words! What are the “commandments” of the Father that Jesus kept that we must keep if we would resemble him in our faithfulness?

Psalm 40 may shed light. This psalm is also cited in the Letter to the Hebrews 10:5-10 when speaking of the obedience of Jesus to his Father. Psalm 40:7-9 says this:

You delight not in sacrifice and offerings,

Barbara Shanahan is an alumna of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois. She has led the Buffalo, New York, Catholic Bible Studies Program since 1992.

but in an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and sin offerings.
Then I said, "Behold I have come."
In the scroll of the book it stands written of me:
"I delight to do your will, O my God;
your instruction lies deep within me."

We are challenged by these words to see the faithfulness of Jesus in his surrender to the plan of his Father. Such obedience to the summons of his Father required a response from him. It was a total laying aside of his divine existence to do the will of his Father. It was instruction that found hearing deep in his being.

Is the same willingness also expected of us? There is much more demanded here than keeping ten commandments! We, as Jesus did, must keep an open ear attentive to and accepting of God's will each day through prayer and our connection with God. This is a daily response to life as it changes and as we accept what comes our way as God's plan for us.

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you." We have often heard that Jesus is the human face of God. His love is the only way we have of comprehending anything of God's love for us. And that love seems to be best understood in his "Yes" to God, assuming a human form and all that accompanies the human condition (sin excepted). Is saying "Yes" to God in all the circumstances of life more demanding than keeping the Ten Commandments? Is something more expected of us and does a greater reward await us?

Once we begin to contemplate the love between the Father and the Son described in terms of obedience, and wrestle to understand the depth of what that means, then we have some idea of how we are called to live that love, how we are invited to grow in understanding such divine things! All that is gathered and pressed together in the words of the Gospel echoes again in the First Letter of Saint John set before us today: "Whoever is without love does not know God for God is love"! The burden of proof seems to rest in God, who loves us first!

May 13, 2018

The Ascension of the Lord

Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-7, 8-9; Ephesians 4:1-13; Mark 16:15-20

Each of the gospel accounts ends with a similar look forward. In John, Jesus says: “. . . as the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21). On a mountaintop in Galilee, Matthew’s Jesus tells the disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). Luke says that “. . . beginning in Jerusalem, you are to be my witnesses of these things” (Lk 24:47-48). Mark expresses the same idea: “Go into the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation” (Mk 16:15).

The account Luke has left us of the ascension of the Lord picks up on this forward-looking direction. We can imagine the group of bewildered disciples gazing up into the sky and wondering what comes next. They are jogged into action by the presence of two men in white garments.

This is similar to the description we find in the resurrection account as told by Luke, where the women arrive at the tomb and are met by two men in dazzling garments who tell the bewildered women that life begins outside the empty tomb! Further, they are told that they should not “seek the living one among the dead” (Lk 24:4). The disciples witnessing the ascension and the women at the tomb are told not to just stand there but *do something!* Life continues in a profoundly transformed way, so go out of the empty tomb, go beyond Jerusalem (and wherever else we might be comfortable), and tell the story to the whole of creation!

How important was the faith and conviction of this early community of believers? What would have happened if they were not so convinced of the mystifying events that had taken place? Could they understand it all? Yet they were drawn into believing something they did not fully understand. They placed their faith in the One they had come to know.

The Gospel of Mark, written approximately 35 years after the events being described (and some portions of the ending of the Gospel written even later), relate to us a belief in this presence of Christ in the signs worked through the disciples and those who followed

them. Their power over demons, serpents, and death speaks of God's ultimate power over all forms of chaos. In Christ, all this has been subdued.

The faith of the Church unfolds gradually. In the Letter to the Ephesians, we see the formulation of what might be called a statement of belief in "... one body (church), one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Eph 4:4). There is a recognition of the unseen grace that flows from Christ: "But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (Eph 4:7).

Balancing this is the recognition that some are called to serve as leaders for the purpose of supporting all who are called to build the body of Christ. This is a beautiful ideal of what the church is supposed to be and to accomplish: each person committed to something larger than self; all recipients of grace so that the church may be enabled to reach maturity. This does not happen if we stand looking up to heaven in wonderment. It happens when we live dynamically, convinced of the grace that comes to us in Christ, the grace that transforms and invites freedom and growth.

Today's feast celebrates Christ's returning in glory to the Father's right hand. It is the completion of the work of our redemption that began with the angel's announcement to Mary, work that has now been left to the church. Christ who emptied himself of godliness, becoming human, now "takes his seat at the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb 1:3). He has not departed from us, but has imparted to us the grace to go to our small corner of the world and proclaim the Good News and bring Christ to full stature there. The face of the Gospel is always looking outward! So, too, must we.

May 20, 2018 Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

As we bring the Easter season to a close, we might pick up some thoughts that have been woven into the readings we have heard over

these 50 days. Among them, the frequent mention of the reaction of people who are described as “astounded” and “bewildered.” Luke uses these words to describe the witnesses to the Pentecost event (Acts 1:11). Thinking back on Easter morning, we heard Mark’s resurrection account proclaimed and were told that the women encountered the messenger inside the empty tomb, who told them that Jesus had been raised to life and they were to tell the disciples that Jesus would see them in Galilee. In response, the women fled the tomb seized with “trembling and bewilderment.”

In the Old Testament where individuals have a close encounter with the Holy God, their response is similar. Moses, when he saw the burning bush, fell to the ground; the people at Sinai, when they saw fire, wind, and lightning, were afraid (Ex 19). When Isaiah encounters God in the temple, he describes incense rising and the hymn of the Seraphim and the shaking of the door frames of the temple. He was “bewildered” (Is 6).

Such language is used by biblical writers to say that human beings are out of their element when in the presence of God. Trembling, bewilderment, and amazement is the appropriate response in such cases. Usually we manage to keep God at a safe distance, but the Easter events leading up to Pentecost do not let us remain there. We are brought face-to-face with the profound mysteries at the heart of our faith.

Have you ever felt that the Gospels in general, and especially the narratives that tell of the presence and the activities of the risen Lord, are sketchy at best? Don’t they cry out for more information? Here is where our ability to read between the lines is so very important if we are to understand what the inspired writers are saying. They are speaking volumes if we know how to read! The above explanation of the human response to being in the presence of God is one small example.

Take the story of Pentecost. Many scholars have noted that there is a strong link with the account in Genesis of the tower of Babel (Gn 11:1-9). The Babel story caps off a series of narratives about the world literally relapsing into chaos. Recall that in Genesis 1-2 God creates order out of a dark, formless, windswept wasteland, establishing a world of harmony and beauty, a world God which looked at and found “very good,”

What happens to that world of God's making is the subject of Chapters 3-11. We see a downward spiral from pride, to fraternal jealousy, to violence, to disobedience, to a world finally unable to communicate and humankind scattered over the face of the earth. These myths of Genesis seek to symbolically narrate what went wrong. They are true stories that never happened. They tell the truth, but are they true (historically or scientifically)?

When the Pentecost story is told, what more is Luke trying to say beneath the description? Because of the Pentecost event, people once scattered and unable to communicate are now gathered together, the confusion of Babel is reversed, and understanding is again possible. Without saying this in so many words, the "astounding" statement he is making is that the curses of Babel, the curses that burden the human condition, have been reversed. In Christ, the world has been restored to the original hope and plan God had at creation.

This is a deeply felt healing of the ruptured relationship between God and his creation. It does not mean the elimination of the vicissitudes of life, but it is a restoration that affects us and all of creation in a profound way.

To consider the impact of the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is cause for "amazement and bewilderment." Is it better to be amazed and bewildered than be so familiar with the stories that we no longer hear how much they should "astound" us? Oh yes!

May 27, 2018 The Most Holy Trinity

**Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40; Psalm 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22;
Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 28:16-20**

"If you watch what I do, you will know who I am." Somewhere back in my studies, I recall stumbling over this phrase. It has become a way of reflecting on the nature of God and taking note of God's presence and purpose not only in Scripture, but in life. It is also a key to finding meaning in the feast we celebrate today. This is God's feast!

How can we appropriately celebrate our triune God? Praise and gratitude accompanied by a sense of wonder and awe are the most suitable responses from us. What else can we attempt to say or do? How the biblical writers speak of God can help us fathom what our minds are unable to do on their own.

The sacred writers use human words to help us understand divine realities. Their words carry a weight of meaning. The many accounts that express God's involvement with his creation give some insight into the very long story of God's relationship with us. The readings for today's feast help us to "watch what God does so we might come to know who God is."

The passage from Deuteronomy captures the unimagined wonder of the faith of Israel in all that God had accomplished for them. "Did anything so great ever happen?" "Was it ever heard of?" "Did any other god rescue a nation from another with his strong hand and outstretched arm?" How important is it to keep being amazed by these questions? The Lord, the God of Israel, stood apart from the gods of the nations. Gods just don't act the way Israel's God behaved! None of these deities would be so concerned with, much less committed to, a personal relationship with their devotees. But this is the inspired tradition that has been handed down.

There is a dynamic sense in these words. It was not simply a recalling of the past that must never be forgotten. When Israel remembered and retold the story, each generation was called on to celebrate God's wonderful works as though they were the direct recipients of God's deliverance and favor! The story was a living story, the word a living word, not a simple recollection of some past event.

Does the story of God's deliverance remain a living story for us also? Can we, too, voice the same enthusiastic exclamations, the same unimagined wonder in what God has done for us in Christ? "Has anything so great ever happened? Was it ever heard of before?"

The psalm for the feast poetically sets before us in the simplest expressions many recollections of God's greatness, faithfulness, might, and creative goodness. "Praise is fitting from the upright" (Ps 33:1). The psalms are appropriate expressions for us who are privileged to call God "Abba," "Father." God gives us the words with which we can sing his praise. God's word to us becomes our words to God, our fitting prayer.

What do we learn of God in the words of Psalm 33? We are reminded of God's reliable word that calls all creation into being, of his commanding power over the world that at times can be a fearful place, but God tells us that his eyes are on those who fear him and who hope for his faithful love. What do we learn about God from such words?

"Watch what I do and you will know who I am."

June 3, 2018 The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ

**Exodus 24:3-8; Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18; Hebrews 9:11-15;
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26**

The making of covenants was a way of ordering life in ancient times. These mutually-binding agreements were made between nations, among neighbors, and between rulers and subjects. They were sacred agreements marked by a ceremony or ritual of ratification to seal the covenant. These might include a shared meal or erecting a memorial marker or planting a tree. We find many examples of these in the Bible.

The reading from Exodus relates such a covenant ratification. The preceding chapters (19-23) narrate the terms of the covenant made between God and Israel. The passage set before us today describes the unique symbolic ritual that ratifies the covenant. If you read all of Exodus 24:1-11, you will find two separate rituals described: verses 3-8 speak of a blood ritual and verses 1-2 and 9-11 of a meal ritual. Two different writers are responsible for the fusion of the accounts. This seeming confusion only helps us discover a deeper meaning.

The mention of blood occurs frequently in any discussion of cultic life in ancient Israel. Blood was very simply an essential element of life that took on symbolic importance. Living beings were dead when blood ceased to flow. There was a connection between life and blood, so it was considered sacred.

The animal sacrifice was a substitute for human life. The blood of the animal was poured out in the sanctuary or on the altar as atonement

for human sin. Blood represented the acknowledgment that all life belonged to God. According to Leviticus, blood was able to accomplish atonement (at-one-ment) with God, and therefore was thought to be significant for maintaining and restoring one to right relationship with God (see Lv 17:11). On the day of Yom Kippur, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood on the altar, thus accomplishing the reconciliation of all the people with God (Lv 16).

The blood ritual described in Exodus may be hard to understand without this insight. But what is happening symbolically is the blood sprinkled on the altar (representing God) and the people forms a single flow of blood — LIFE! “This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord made with you according to all these words.” As the act of covenant-making binds the people to God and God to the people, so does the action of sprinkling the blood accomplish what the words say: a covenant is confirmed. A bond of life is forged between God and the people.

The second ritual we mentioned is the meal ritual in verses 1-2, 9-11. We may more easily grasp this idea from our own life experience. A meal shared with family or friends is a time of intimacy, a fitting way to mark and to celebrate important moments in life.

These two rituals of blood and meal are incorporated into Jesus’ actions on the night before he dies. How perfectly he brings together both of these rituals at the Last Supper, sealing the New Covenant once and forever between God and the people with a meal and the offering of his life! “The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the name of the Lord” (Ps 116:13).

The Letter to the Hebrews makes the point that the cult of Israel, as good as it was for its time, has yielded to something better: a better covenant, better promises, better rituals. The author looks back over the years, recalling the annual observance of the Day of Atonement, and concludes that nothing has changed; these repeated rites have borne no lasting results. How indeed can the blood of animals save us?

But because of the sacrifice of Christ, “. . . through whose blood we have confidence of entrance into the sanctuary by the new and living way he opened for us,” once and for all salvation is accomplished!

June 10, 2018
Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Genesis 3:9-15; Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

The burden of being human, in all its fragility, is squarely placed before us in the readings for this weekend. Genesis creatively relates the human tendency to act contrary to God, then to cover our tracks by making excuses and shifting blame. Paul, in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, is burdened by a misunderstanding that has strained the relationship between himself and his beloved community. He acknowledges the fragility of the human condition and his helplessness in setting things right; yet, at the same time, the great hope to be found in faith. The Gospel finds Jesus caught between family and religious rivals who act either out of misplaced concern, jealousy, or an obtuse spirit.

There will always be a “serpent” lurking somewhere! Life was ideal in the garden, then it wasn’t! What happened? We are not reading an historical account here, but a symbolic story of the truth of the human condition. The “nakedness” experienced by the man and the woman is symbolic of the state in which God made them: free of conflict and struggle, comfortable in their own skin. “They were naked and they felt no shame” (Gn 1:25). But in today’s reading, we find the man and woman hiding from God because they are “naked.” Something has changed due to the choices they made!

Their attempt to cover themselves now leaves them helplessly naked before God. Nothing suitable clothes them. God himself must sew leather garments for them (Gn 3:21). The distance we feel from God and the conflicts that are part of the human condition are nothing we can make right by ourselves. We need God to repair the damage. In this story, the man and the woman have not as yet been named. They represent all of us! The serpent represents the temptations we struggle against. Nakedness is the human condition (the original weakness) that makes us need God’s redeeming grace.

In the Gospel, we find Jesus caught up in the messiness of our human experience. Typical of Mark, he offers us a “sandwich.” Mark places

some important teaching in between related stories that act as a frame. This framework includes mention of Jesus' relatives.

Biblical scholars suggest that what Mark is considering here is various responses to discipleship. The first group, extended members of Jesus' family, totally misunderstand what he is about. They want to save him from himself. The second group, "his mother and brothers," do not try to manage him. These become the point of comparison: "who is mother and brother to me?" Jesus redefines the bonds of relationship (discipleship), saying it is not blood that creates bonds, but those who hear the word and respond.

Do we sometimes tend to limit God? Is this what the first group of relatives was doing? They did not allow Jesus to be more than what they knew — a kid from the neighborhood whose parents and origins are known, or so they thought!

The "meat" of Mark's sandwich is the parable Jesus teaches about a house (world) that seems to be under the control of the demon. Jesus is accused by the scribes of being possessed by a demon and expelling demonic spirits by Beelzebul, the prince of demons. Jesus' first miracle in Mark's Gospel is the expulsion of a demon from a man in the synagogue in Capernaum (1:21-28). Mark emphasizes this aspect of Jesus ministry: "When it was evening, after sunset, they brought him all who were ill and possessed by demons . . . he drove out many not permitting them to speak because they knew him" (1:32-34).

As attentive readers, recall that earlier in the Gospel we are also told that Jesus is possessed . . . by the Spirit that comes on him at his baptism! The healing stories would seem to suggest that Jesus has entered the strong man's house and tied him up and has plundered his authority, bringing an end to chaos. The reign of God is at hand! But it is not without struggle, and opposition often comes from those who have much to lose in that struggle.

June 17, 2018
Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ezekiel 17:22-24; Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Mark 4:26-34

As I write this reflection, anticipating the deadline for this issue of *Emmanuel*, I am in a frozen world, single-digit temperatures and the landscape white with snow. The many scriptural references to seeds growing and green trees requires an extra shot of faith to see what the parables are speaking of. But I hold on to hope because for more years than I choose to tell, that's the way it has been. Seasons come and go! When these words appear in print, it will be summer!

How do we manage the season of life, growth, change, and death? The readings today suggest that we don't. It is God's arena. Is there anything I can do to melt the snow or rush spring into being? We contentedly come to realize that all we can do is wait and trust the process and observe the growth.

Jesus' speech in the Gospels is colorful and rich. We note this especially through his use of parables. We gain insight into the human side of Jesus and how he was a keen observer of nature, of people, and of the rhythm of life. He had a sense of wonder and humor. Use of parables to instruct the people demonstrates this creative side of Jesus.

Something like riddles, parables arrest us with their many nuances of meaning. If you have spent any time in the region around the Lake of Galilee, you can also understand Jesus' many references to agricultural images. These would have been inspired by the daily life of people living in small villages and engaged in farming or fishing. Then as now, the area was fertile and productive. Consider how many "seed" parables Jesus tells: the parable of the sower, the parable of the weeds that grow with the wheat, the parable of the mustard seed and, only in Mark, the parable we hear today of the seed growing secretly.

The interesting point is how each of the parables is used by Jesus to make a different point. The two parables for this Sunday are a case in point. Each has a distinct message. Each is revealing something different about the kingdom of God. The point is specific for each one although parables lend themselves to a variety of meanings. It is

important to stay within the boundaries of each parable to discover its uniqueness.

Consider the first parable about the seed growing secretly. The simple point seems to be about the mystery of growth. For all we might do today to enhance growth or to improve seed productivity, the fact is that they *grow*! This is nothing we can make happen. There is a reliability to nature. Seeds have their own timetable.

As certain as we can be of this, there is a mystery embedded in life. As far as we are able to define, manage, understand, or predict the outcome, Ezekiel reminds us of God's ways that elude us, ways that are paradoxical and imperceptible. What can seem impossible, what appears to be a predictable outcome can often reverse what seems inevitable. God's ways are not our ways.

Israel in the wake of humiliation and defeat by the Babylonians becomes the low tree that God raises up while the powerful oppressor is brought low. The dry tree is green and provides a place for the birds of the air to find shelter. There is a mysterious source of life within the world. The power of the Creator's life-engendering command, "Let there be!" gives to the world a power that is unseen but that is at work in the smallest of seeds that has potential to grow.

The kingdom of heaven, like the seed, will grow imperceptibly and mysteriously. The fragile nature of the seed paradoxically will persist against all odds. We cannot always see growth; we more easily see the results of something that has grown. So, too, within ourselves, the seed of God's reign grows and sometimes when it seemingly has withered up, it yields its abundant fruit because this is of God who makes the seed grow, the dry tree green, and winter snow the seed-bed of springtime.

June 24, 2018
The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist

**Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 139:1b-3, 13-14ab, 14c-15; Acts 13:22-26;
Luke 1:57-66, 80**

This Sunday the Church happily celebrates the solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist. The birth story is joyful and hopeful. It is so easy for us to understand the cause for the rejoicing of Zachary and Elizabeth. New life has come forth. A being that did not exist is born, their "pride and joy"! And with this child is lodged all the hopes and dreams of his parents and their promise of a future. Life and all its potential has been brought forth life that will live into eternity.

We know what it is to join in the happiness of such a human experience. Neighbors and relatives of Zechariah and Elizabeth gather to celebrate and rejoice at the goodness of God to them at the birth of the only child of their old age. This is the one of whom it was said, "Nothing is impossible with God!"


Rejoicing dominates the gathering for the circumcision and naming of the child, but there is also an odd mention of "fear" as events surrounding the birth are recalled. Everyone knew this was no ordinary birth. Their response was not a fearful anxiety but more an awareness of something unknown, acknowledging that God was near in the events that surrounded the birth and life of John. They wondered what this all meant. God had "visited his people" and reverence and awe are fitting responses.

Zechariah, now free to speak, praises God and situates this moment of birth and rejoicing into the unfolding story of salvation history. Recall that Zechariah was made silent after questioning the angelic messenger. Could it be that Zechariah was being silenced by God so that he would listen more than speak and be open to quietly ponder the significance of God's plan that would so influence his and Elizabeth's life?

Are there such sacred moments when silence before God is what is fitting so we might be receptive to understanding the depth of what is taking place? Mary also received an angelic visitor. When she asked, "How can this be?" she received an explanation that was likely beyond

her grasp or understanding, but also affirmation that these events taking place are of God.

Perhaps Mary already possessed a silent, prayerful spirit. We are told at least twice in Chapters 1-2 of Luke's Gospel that "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart," letting God unfold the mystery to her. In his canticle, Zechariah appears to have grasped the full meaning of the birth of his child. A fullness seemed to have come to him as it did to his pregnant wife, and he pours forth the thoughts of his heart that have been nurtured there by silence for nine months.

We have kept our focus on the mother and the father welcoming their child, as wondrous as that birth was. In itself, the scene fills us with love. The readings that are proclaimed alongside the Gospel for today take us outside the peaceful little village of Ein Kerem, beyond the secure world of the little towns of Galilee. We know how the story of John's life will proceed. His is the voice that prepares the way for the Word. Salvation will come, but not without exacting a great price. The way to peace and salvation will be the way of the servant and the way of the cross so that a light may shine on all the nations. 



EUCCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •
Poetry • Books

Art Review



THE DOVE
Ioan Chisu
oil on canvas
2012

Certain ideas can take hold of an artist's imagination for a lifetime. Some visual arrangement, aesthetic theory, theme, or subject can linger in an artist's mind through the years compelling further and further thought and exploration. Cézanne became obsessed with seeing geometric forms in nature. Mary Cassatt returned again and again to the image of a mother with a child. Jasper Johns had a dream about making a painting of the American Flag and subsequently painted images of the stars and stripes for the rest of his life. Ideas take hold.

As viewers of these works of art, we are invited to contemplate not just a singular work, but to also bring that work into conversation with the artist's entire engagement with an idea over time. Certainly each piece of art stands upon its own merits, but acknowledging the wider context in which an art work is made can shed light upon the meaning of a work of art and enrich interpretation.

John Christman,
SSS

The acclaimed artist Ioan Chisu has explored a wide array of subjects, styles, and ideas over his long career as an artist and a teacher. Born in Romania in 1939, his life has witnessed a great deal of change in the world of art, and he has thoughtfully engaged this ever-changing aesthetic milieu. From figurative work to abstract work, Cubist and Futurist influences, to more symbolic and naturalistic representations, all have factored into his artistic vision and exploration.

Amidst the brightly-colored patterned abstract paintings that have consumed much of his attention over the years, another interesting subject has engaged his attention: the still life. Many a young art student has learned their craft by painting still life paintings, patiently mixing colors and attempting to reproduce on a two-dimensional surface the simple objects placed on a table before them. Dutch and Flemish painters in the 1600s and 1700s raised still life painting to incredible

heights with “fool-the-eye” naturalistic detail. Post-Impressionists and Cubists alike used still life painting to explore aesthetic styles and concepts influenced by modernity. The still life has proven to be a versatile vehicle for artistic expression and exploration.

Intriguingly, Chisu approaches still life subjects in both naturalistic and abstract styles. In his more naturalistic representations, Chisu often depicts voluptuous red, yellow, and green fruits set atop a table scattered with books and vessels. In his abstract still life paintings, the objects are flattened and reduced to essential geometric characteristics. One very clever painting, *Still Life with Two Books* (2014), playfully integrates both styles into one painting, with the naturalistic still life in the foreground and the abstract painting in the background. The painting makes a visual argument against any “either/or” position of stylistic representation. Unlike so many artists and critics who have taken sides as to the greater value of either abstraction or naturalism, Chisu’s painting proposes that artists can explore naturalism and abstraction together without contradiction.

Another intriguing development in his still life work takes a theological direction. In 1977, Chisu painted a still life entitled *Still Life 2* (see Figure 1). A dynamic composition in earthy browns and warm yellow ochers, the painting in its complex geometry evokes a table densely covered with wine bottles, fruit, fish, books, and wine glasses.



Figure 1

Through a Catholic lens, a viewer might easily make Eucharistic connections. An abundant table, the Eucharistic symbols of wine and fish, warm colors stirring thoughts of hospitality and meals shared. The image itself is open to wide interpretation, some not religious at all. Nevertheless, as Jesus indiscriminately shared meals with saint and sinner alike, such a table seen through a Christian lens can be a profound place of encounter. Secular or sacred, Chisu’s *Still Life 2* presents a meal ripe with the possibility of transformative encounter.

Flash forward 35 years and Chisu presents us with another theologically-rich still life entitled *The Dove* (see front cover). In some ways, *The Dove* is strikingly similar to *Still Life 2*. The shape of the table is the same in both paintings and some of the primary compositional elements are the same. And yet, the differences in the painting are both aesthetically and theologically remarkable.

Whereas *Still Life 2* is busy with numerous shapes and objects, *The Dove* is less cluttered, without losing any dynamism. Gone are all the books and the fruit. Instead, we find a solitary cup, with a circle floating above. The plenteous wine bottles are nowhere to be found. In their place, we find instead a more sober presentation of what could be a single bottle of wine or perhaps a shape evoking a piano key and rhythm. The black rectangle that delineated the image of fishes in *Still Life 2* is in the same place here; however, it is now a strong, clear uninterrupted blue rectangle, with the abstracted form of a dove in its center.

If *Still Life 2* stirs the Catholic imagination to ideas of Jesus' meal ministry and latent possibilities of building communion through the sharing of food, *The Dove* evokes the liturgy of the Eucharist. With its chalice and elevated host. With its balance of transcendent sky-blue otherness and inviting Mediterranean blue warmth. With its deliberate, reverent clarity counterpoised with rhythmic curves and lively angles. With its ingenious title *The Dove* sparking in our minds not only the freedom and presence of the Holy Spirit, but also that awe-inspiring moment of *epiclesis* transforming our lives and liturgy. With all of this, Chisu's *The Dove* rises to theological grandeur.

How long does it take to distill an idea to its essence? Does it take a lifetime? Or is that the wrong question to ask? Is each expression of an idea appropriate to its time and rich in its own meaning? Thirty-five years separate *Still Life 2* and *The Dove* and yet placed together each enriches the other. Through these still life paintings, Chisu gives us just a small glimpse of what our tables are capable of. He presents us with beautiful possibilities and perhaps stirs a more challenging self-reflective question, "What kind of spirit can be found at my table?"

Poetry

Sancta Musicum

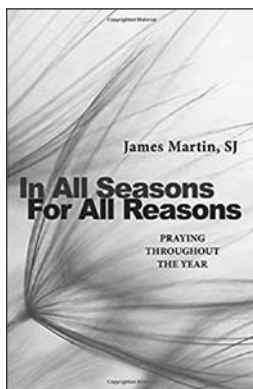
Like an orchestra our mouths
rejoice receiving the Lord
who created the spheres
and the harmony that turns
and tunes them in perfect pitch.

As hands open
and then enshrine the Lord of Hosts
congregations worldwide strum
the music of adoration.

God's holy people are his choir,
the polyphony of his creation,
but his voice the solo,
the virtuoso they follow.

Philip Kolin

Book Reviews



IN ALL SEASONS,
FOR ALL REASONS:
PRAYING
THROUGHOUT
THE YEAR

James Martin, SJ
Collegeville,
Minnesota: Liturgical
Press, 2017

A Give Us This Day
Book

88 pp., \$7.95

The Jesuit James Martin needs no introduction. In fact, the popular writer and commentator on contemporary Catholicism seems to be just about everywhere these days. Late last year, I caught a National Public Radio news program on the drive home one evening. I tuned in mid-interview and heard a familiar voice responding to a question raised by the host about Pope Francis' suggestion that the phrase "Lead us not into temptation . . ." in The Our Father needed to be retranslated for greater accuracy. It was Jim Martin!

Martin, the editor-at-large of *America*, is the author of many books including *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life* (2012), *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* (2014), and *Building a Bridge* (2017), on dialogue between the Catholic Church and the LGBT community. *In All Seasons, For All Reasons* is his latest.

In All Seasons, For All Reasons is a collection of 67 reflections Martin penned for the "Teach Us to Pray" column in the monthly worship aid *Give Us This Day*, along with an Introduction and an Afterword. Its starting-point is the disciples' earnest plea to Jesus in Luke 11:1, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The book is not a formal treatise on prayer but a "collection of brief essays . . . [exploring] many ways to pray — in all seasons and for all reasons" (11). The underlying thesis is that there is no single way to pray — the prayer equivalent of "one size fits all" — but a multiplicity of ways, for God meets us where we are, as Martin states in the Introduction.

Martin divides the essays into three sections: "A Rich Tradition," "For All Reasons," and "In All Seasons." He begins by appreciating the richness and variety of our Catholic prayer life — devotional, Scriptural, and Eucharistic.

Most of the topics in the first part of the book will be familiar to Catholics. They include rote prayer; devotion to Mary and the saints; the rosary; the examination of conscience; lectio divina; Scripture; the Mass as prayer; Eucharistic adoration; sacred images and icons; guardian angels, etc. (I was intrigued by "The Colloquy," an essay which highlights the prayer of friendship with God that is integral to

the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises*.

Martin's reflections are informative, inviting, uplifting. They are also short. The scope of themes presented in so few pages is impressive. For those wanting to go deeper or to know more about a particular topic or aspect of prayer, other sources can provide the depth. James Martin's book is a beginning — and a very good one at that! It would be especially helpful, I believe, to those new to the faith in the time of post-initiation mystagogy.

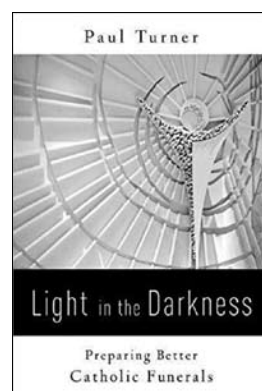
Anthony Schueller, SSS
Editor, *Emmanuel*

With *Light in the Darkness: Preparing Better Catholic Funerals*, Father Paul Turner has now written on every liturgical ritual of the Roman Rite. Compiled from a series of talks he did for dioceses on the *Order for Christian Funerals* (OCF), this excellent resource should be required reading for those in parish ministries responsible for planning the three parts of the funeral liturgy.

Turner laments that most families do not wish to celebrate the parts of the whole OCF, and encourages better support to help families through the process of grieving in ways that hold true to the vision the Church has for the OCF. Understand that this will take a significant investment of time, energy, emotion, and compassion on the part of the pastoral staff and the sacramental minister. Grieving families intuit when this type of commitment is not present and will choose to not celebrate all three parts rather than take part in superficial rituals just because it suits the pastor.

This book emphasizes the sensitivity that the pastoral staff must have as well as the aspects necessary for a well-rounded parish funeral ministry. Turner guides us through the process and shares personal stories and experiences, such as when a family thought they were getting a rosary and instead “did it wrong” by celebrating the Vigil. Turner makes helpful suggestions to navigate the planning process with families and to ensure that all the stages are celebrated well, even with others participating in the liturgies (and not necessarily with a priest present for all three parts of the OCF).

Several “Handouts for Mourners” are included at the end of the book,

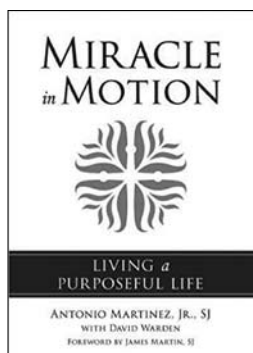


**LIGHT IN THE
DARKNESS:
PREPARING
BETTER CATHOLIC
FUNERALS**
Paul Turner
Collegeville,
Minnesota: Liturgical
Press, 2017
119 pp., \$19.95

which are also available for free distribution on the Liturgical Press website. The topics for catechesis are "Going to Confession," "When to Contact the Parish about a Funeral," "What Should a Catholic Know about Cremation," "Letter to Families Concerning Financial Offerings" (the donation suggestion and not "fees"), "Words in Remembrance — Crafting What You'd Like to Say," "The Procession to the Cemetery," and "The Rite of Committal with Lowering of the Coffin." While there could be other items for this catechesis, these are helpful new resources for use in planning the OCF and in supporting families in their grief.

This book helps those in grief to move forward in hope, against the backdrop of belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and of their loved one.

John Thomas Lane, SSS
Pastor
Saint Paschal Baylon Church
Highland Heights, Ohio



**MIRACLE IN
MOTION:
LIVING A
PURPOSEFUL LIFE**
Antonio Martinez,
SJ, with David
Varden
Foreword by James
Martin, SJ
New York, New
York: Paulist Press,
2017
152 pp., \$18.95

After successfully passing the bar exam in Texas, Antonio (T.J.) Martinez, who felt drawn to the Jesuits while a student at Boston College, entered the novitiate of the Southern Province of the Society of Jesus. After his novitiate, a three-year regency at Dallas Jesuit High School, and theological and pastoral studies at Weston School of Theology, he was ordained to the priesthood in 2007. He was surprised when he was then sent to Harvard University to earn a Master's Degree in Education, which he completed in half the usual time.

Then came the surprise of his life! Anticipating that he would go on for further studies, his provincial instead appointed him the president of Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory of Houston. He was then told that he had no money, no land, no building, no faculty, no board, and no students. It was his job to get Cristo Rey up and running in Houston.

The Cristo Rey schools were developed by the Jesuits. Presently, there are almost 30 of them across the country. They are designed to provide economically-poor children with a quality college preparatory education. The students hold a job and work one day a week. The money they earn helps to pay for their education. Many of these jobs become a type of internship which exposes the students to the possibilities of their place in the world that they would not, without


the Cristo Rey experience, ever have imagined. The school also raises additional funds through attracting the support of philanthropic individuals, corporations, and foundations. Cristo Rey has a rigorous academic program and creates the kind of school spirit which offers the students a very positive sense of self.

Martinez went to work and after seven years of his leadership, the school had an enrollment, a state-of-the-art building, a 100% rate of graduates attending college, a whole host of internship sites, a wonderful reputation in Houston, and a very involved and generous board who attracted many philanthropic persons and foundations to support its mission. At the end of his time as president, Martinez received very bad news: he was diagnosed with Stage 4 stomach cancer.

This book is Martinez's legacy to the students who would continue to find a future for themselves at Cristo Rey long after he was gone.

It is clear from his writing how much Martinez loved the community of Cristo Rey, its students, faculty, and board. He was their ambassador to the larger community who were impressed when they heard the school's story, its mission, and its success. There is a wealth of Jesuit spirituality which Martinez passed on to the students. He impressed upon them the need to examine their lives, to see God in all things, and to consistently try to make themselves better (*Magis*) and to assist others in that same growth.

Father Martinez died in November 2014 before the book was finished. He was 44-years-old, a Jesuit for 18 years, and a priest for seven years. He gave the task of completing the book to a close friend and collaborator, David Warden. Martinez, the founder and animator of Cristo Rey Jesuit of Houston, lives on in this book and will continue to inspire and encourage generations of students to come.

It is an inspiring book about the passion of one man to radically change the destiny of young people whose lives were mired in poverty and hopelessness. His message to the students of Cristo Rey can be an inspiration to everyone who works with children and youth. 

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



EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS

Raymond Worhacz

Holiday, Florida

“... I was in prison and you came to visit me . . .” (Mt 25:36). After 18 years of daily Communion, I find myself kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament listening rather than speaking. Looking back, it is remarkable to see what God had in store for me when I began my Eucharistic journey to serve him through a corporal work of mercy, visiting the imprisoned. I knew the Holy Spirit wanted to use me as an instrument. Government credentials usually take eight weeks to process; mine were returned in two! I felt no fear; by the very first visit, I knew God was calling me to be a father to these men.

I was appointed to introduce them to Jesus Christ. There is no class division among men. We are all created in God’s image and one in Christ. The choices we make, the paths we take affect our lives. Do we come from a solid foundation of faith, love, and hope? Do we know who Jesus Christ is? Do we love him? How can we love Christ if we don’t know him? How can we love others if we don’t love ourselves?

Many who are incarcerated are not able to respond yes to these questions. They turn to God for help, but it is temporary, superficial. Some former inmates are quick to return to drugs, alcohol, or other addictions. Recognizing the need for forgiveness, many come to realize that God’s mercies are abundant. Some go through the gate of resentment; others go through the gate of forgiveness that leads to grace.

Sin makes it impossible for us to share in God’s life. Through his death and resurrection, Christ reconciles us to God. His gift of the Eucharist plays a tremendous role in our lives and in our spiritual growth. It was my privilege to witness to God’s love for these men. I was blessed to guide them through the gate of forgiveness to be part of the body of Christ, hoping they would leave the darkness behind and enter into the light.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard devoted his life to sharing the riches of God’s love in the Eucharist. He described himself as “like Jacob” — on a journey, always seeking. His great love, his passion was Christ in the Eucharist, and he served Christ through his gift of self.

We are told in John 14:1-2: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. In my Father’s house, there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?” Faith brings us hope. I hope some I serve will come to know and live the truth of God in Jesus Christ.





THE WAY OF THE LORD JESUS www.twotlj.org

emmanuelpublishing.org

New Website and Digital Edition!



Visit our newly designed website!

Emmanuelpublishing.org now features easy on-site access to the digital edition of *Emmanuel* along with additional access to thought-provoking web-based theological, liturgical and ecumenical reflections. Discover helpful Eucharistic parish resources in our online shop. Enhance your homiletic and worship preparations with our excellent Biblical and liturgical commentaries. Nourish your Eucharistic spirituality with a visit to the newly designed emmanuelpublishing.org.

Phone: (440) 449-2103

Email: emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com



*Grace is like the gentle breeze of the desert,
says the prophet,
it can barely be heard,
grace is an act of love of the Holy Spirit.
You cannot tell, says Jesus, where it comes from
or where it is going.*

Saint Peter Julian Eymard