

Emmanuel



Eucharistic Spirituality

November/December 2018



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

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



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



Emmanuel Magazine

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 124 Number 6



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FROM THE EDITOR

We live in times when it seems there are more affronts to the dignity of the human person than ever before, or they are reported more widely. Children of migrants and refugees along our nation's Southern border have been taken from the custody of their parents or guardians and placed in foster care in distant cities or in detention centers where conditions have been described as inhumane. Radical jihadists slaughter innocents, children, even fellow religionists, to advance their cause. Large pharmaceutical companies have been accused of being complicit in the production and distribution of opioids that are on target to claim a million lives in the United States by 2020. And there is the continuing holocaust of abortion and other assaults on the sanctity of life.

All of this greets us as we enter into the season of remembering the central mystery of our faith: the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

In an ancient sermon, Saint Leo the Great said: "Today our Savior is born; let us rejoice. Sadness should have no place on the birthday of Life. The fear of death has been swallowed up; Life brings us joy with the promise of eternal happiness.

"No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing. Our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no one free from sin, came to free us all. Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the unbeliever take courage as he is summoned to life.

"In the fullness of time, chosen in the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the Son of God took for himself our common humanity in order to reconcile it with the Creator. He came to overthrow the evil one, the origin of death, in that very nature by which he had overthrown mankind."

Pope Leo concludes: “Christian, *remember your own dignity* now that you share in God’s own nature.”

One reason the Church opposes anything that debases the human person, and speaks out forcefully in its defense, is that each of us has been fashioned in the divine image. No other creature so fully mirrors God in intelligence, freedom, imagination, and creativity than does the human person.

The bishops of Vatican II affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: “. . . by his incarnation, he, the Son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man.” Through Christ, in his incarnation and paschal mystery, every person has access to the high dignity of sharing in God’s own nature.

On April 10, 2013, Pope Francis spoke at a morning Mass about how dignity was restored to us when Jesus humbled himself to live among humanity and saved us by dying on the cross and rising for us. He led those in attendance that day in proclaiming: “Lord, I believe. I believe in your love. I believe that your love has saved me. I believe that your love has given me a dignity that I did not have. I believe that your love gives me hope.”

Pope Francis has repeatedly reminded any who will listen that every life is precious beyond measure in the eyes of God. Christ became incarnate and died for us to bring salvation to the world. With that amazing, ultimate gift, he also returned to us the dignity we had lost.

This Christmas, let us honor Christ’s incarnation by reverencing the dignity and gift of all.

In This Issue

A good place to begin is with Dennis J. Billy’s “Fulton Sheen on the Eucharist,” highlighting the genius of the perennially-popular churchman and TV personality, and James H. Kroeger’s introductory article on the missionary challenges of the 51st International Eucharistic Congress. For more seasonal fare, read Caroline Rood’s meditation on Mary and Peter Schineller’s “Pope Francis and the Spirituality of Christmas.” Scripture reflections, poetry, reviews, and so much more! Please consider gifting others with a subscription to the Magazine of Eucharistic Spirituality!

A blessed Advent and Christmas!



Anthony Schueller, SSS



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

The Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress: Its Missionary Challenges, Part I

by James H. Kroeger, MM

The theological and pastoral vision of the Cebu International Eucharistic Congress defines important priorities for the Church relative to the Eucharist and mission.

Maryknoll
Father James
H. Kroeger has
served in Asia
since 1970. He
was a member of
the Theological
Commission
which wrote
the Basic Text
for the Cebu
International
Congress
(2016). It clearly
reflects an Asian
theological
approach to the
Church and the
Eucharist.

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN PRIVILEGED TO HOST TWO INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES (IEC): the Twenty-third (Manila: February 3-7, 1937) and the Fifty-first (Cebu: January 24-31, 2016). Many parallels between these two congresses can be drawn; however, in the basic vision and orientation of both events, one pivotal theme constantly appears: the Eucharist and Mission.

The theme of the Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress was *"Christ in You, Our Hope of Glory": The Eucharist, Source and Goal of Mission*, inspired by the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians (1:24-29). The Basic Text of the congress, the source of many quotes below, asserts: "This international gathering holds the promise of generating a more courageous and decisive carrying out of the Christian mission in the world and the society that are becoming more and more indifferent and hostile to the faith and to the values of the Gospel.

"This encounter with Christ in the Eucharist can be a source of hope for the world when, transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit into the likeness of him whom we encounter, we set out on a mission to transform the world with our zeal to bring to those who need most the same acceptance, forgiveness, healing, love, and wholeness that we ourselves received and experienced."

Commenting on the 1937 IEC, Father Catalino Arévalo, SJ, congress participant, has recalled: "The theme of that IEC was (YES!): 'The Eucharist and the Missions'!" Arévalo gives one example that he remembers from his participation in the Children's Day Low Mass at the Luneta Park on February 6, 1937. Bishop Francis X. Ford, a Maryknoll Missioner, Vicar Apostolic of Kaying, Kwantung, China, made the

difficult journey by ship to the Philippines. He preached the sermon at the Mass. Arévalo notes: "He earnestly asked the children present to pledge to be 'true, valiant soldiers of Christ, ever bravely loyal to him and his kingdom. . . .' Bishop Ford pointed out the urgent need of priests for mission. . . . Yes, I do remember that morning, not very vividly now. But I think we received much grace from the Lord of the Eucharist, and maybe the grace of vocation was granted or confirmed for a good number of us."

The Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress has "mission significance" for the Philippine Church, which is preparing for "the joyous and historic observance of the 500th anniversary in 2021 of the coming of the Christian faith and of the Christian Church to the country." In addition, the congress is important for Asia. "Now that Asia is becoming a new center of history in the contemporary world, the holding of the Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress in its midst is an opportunity to radiantly manifest the continent's special and unique calling as a Church of love, communion, and mission. Given the multi-dimensional context in which the Asian Church accomplishes its mission, the continent has become a fertile field where the mystery of the incarnation continues to be realized through genuine inculturation that brings the Christian faith to an authentic dialogue with the various Asian cultures, religions, and races."

This presentation now turns to highlighting the "Eucharist-Mission" dimensions of the Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress. One finds rich insights both in (a) the Basic Text which shaped the perspectives of the entire congress, as well as in (b) the various speakers who made presentations during the sessions held from January 24-31, 2016. The weeklong congress contained rich insights manifesting how the Eucharist empowers the people of God for missionary evangelization.

I. Five Key Mission Themes Present in the IEC Basic Text

A. Dialogue as the Privileged Mode of Mission

In the concrete context of Asia, "the Church, which is always and everywhere a community-in-mission by virtue of her origin and relationship with Christ, is called in a very special sense to undertake her missionary mandate in a spirit of dialogue." "Dialogue as a particular approach to mission is . . . necessitated by the multiracial, multilinguistic, multireligious, and multicultural reality of Asia on account of which peoples should be in constant conversation among



themselves to ensure their peaceful coexistence.

"This mode of missionary engagement has its root . . . in the Trinitarian economy of redemption and call to communion whereby the Father engaged humanity in a loving dialogue of salvation with himself through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Dialogue is the way God realized his plan for our redemption in and through his Son who became man, shared our human life, and spoke in a human language to communicate his saving message."

"There is no other way, therefore, for the Church to realize her missionary mandate from her Master and Lord (cf. Jn 13:14) than by a dialogue of salvation with all men and women. . . . Vatican II's vision for the way the Church is to undertake her mission in the modern world likewise reflects a dialogical engagement with diverse races, languages, religions, cultures, and socio-political structures. This is true in a particular way in Asia where she has to engage in dialogue with those who share her belief in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior, but also with followers of every other religious tradition, on the basis of the religious yearnings found in every human heart."

Already in their First Plenary Assembly (1974), Asia's bishops (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences) discerned what special configuration this dialogue in the context of mission in Asia should have: "continuous, humble, and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions, in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own." This has been referred to as the "triple dialogue" in the last 40 years but has remained valid until the present time: "dialogue with the cultures of the Asian people, dialogue with their religions, and dialogue with the life-situations of poverty, powerlessness, of suffering and victimhood, which is the lot of a great number of people."

This triple dialogue has to be undertaken "as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives." For witnessing to Christ in word, that is, in the explicit proclamation of the Gospel of salvation, the use of stories and other narrative forms holds greater promise of effectiveness, for most Asians are able to relate better with "an evocative pedagogy, using stories, parables, and symbols."

The First Asian Mission Congress held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in October 2006 “recalled with fondness and with much gratitude that Jesus himself taught by using parables and insightful vignettes that revealed the depths of God’s reign — that he is God’s love story in the flesh! Stories have a special power to make understood even the deepest mysteries of the faith, to transform perspectives and values, to form community, and to establish fellowship.”

Vatican II’s vision for the way the Church is to undertake her mission in the modern world reflects a dialogical engagement with diverse races, languages, religions, cultures, and socio-political structures.

This dialogue “is not an end in itself; it is in view of sharing and receiving. It disposes one to respect others and to recognize their giftedness. It enables one to listen to what the others are expressing in and through their lives of the goodness of God. . . . For their part, Christians in dialogue should be ready to offer their faith, to give an account of the hope that is within them (1 Pt 3:15).” For further insights, see *FABC Papers 130: “Dialogue: Interpretive Key for the Life of the Church in Asia.”*

B. Mission in Dialogue with Peoples and Cultures

The Church’s mission in Asia has to be undertaken in dialogue with a wide variety of cultures. Asia is the world’s largest continent and “home to almost two-thirds of the world’s population; it is also host to an intricate mosaic of many cultures, languages, beliefs, and traditions.” Pope Francis has pointed out the many challenges that are being brought to bear on Asian cultures, among them, the new patterns of behavior caused by overexposure to various forms of mass media; traditional values, including the sacredness of marriage and the stability of the family, are being undermined by some damaging elements of the media and entertainment industries (cf. EG, 62). Also, in many parts of Asia, Christianity has remained a minority religion, often perceived as “too Western” and an “instrument of colonial domination.” Thus, by necessity Christian mission in Asia must include “a dialogue between the Gospel and the Christian faith on one hand and the culture of the Asian people, on the other.”

This effort, known as inculturation, “is motivated by a vision: that of genuine Christian communities in Asia — Asian in their way of



thinking, praying, living, and in communicating their own Christ-experience to others." Inculturation is not merely one possible option; it is, rather, a theological and pastoral imperative. "The mystery of the incarnation and the paschal mystery are at once the foundation and the model for the deep insertion of local churches in the surrounding cultures"; this includes many aspects of their life: celebration, witness, and mission.

Jesus, the Son of God, "became man, a Jew, and thus became part of the history, culture, traditions, and religion of the Jewish people. The Church, too, should incarnate herself in every race and culture where she finds herself. She must become part of every people among whom she ... [is] implanted." Why? It is "for the same motive which led Christ to bind himself, in virtue of his incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom he dwelt." The Church "must be assimilated into the life of a people that receives her; she cannot remain a stranger to them. She must incarnate herself in such a way that she can be regarded not only as the Church that is in Asia, but as the Asian Church, not only as the Church that is in the Philippines but as the Filipino Church."

This incarnational stance, "rather than jeopardizing the universality of the Church, will even foster such universality. Through the faith of the Church and through the celebration of his work of redemption, Christ continues to incarnate himself in the various races and cultures. He is the universal Savior because he can make himself part of the concrete realities of every particular people and there bring them redemption. The Church, too, is truly universal because she can incarnate herself in the concrete realities of every local church. When she incarnates herself, she enriches both the local people and herself. Incarnation brings about mutual enrichment to the people who receive the faith and to the Church who incarnates herself."

Inculturation is not a mere clever device to make the Church's faith, worship, and life attractive and acceptable to a local people. "Carrying out a dialogue with the cultures of Asia means to make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples so that they can live in a way that is uniquely Asian, that is, truly as a local church of Asia. The Gospel is preached to them using living symbols, images, realities, and stories that are part of their day-to-day existence as a people. They receive the word, make it the principle of their lives, values, attitudes, and aspirations. They are helped to

understand and experience their faith and to celebrate worship in a way that reflects the values they hold dear, using expressions that are part of their culture.”

The Church in Asia must regard with openness those elements that “the local culture can contribute to authentic Christian spirituality: a richly developed prayer of the whole person in unity of body-psyche-spirit; prayer of deep interiority and immanence; traditions of asceticism and renunciation; techniques of contemplation found in the ancient Eastern religions; simplified prayer-forms and other popular expressions of faith and piety easily available even to simpler folk, whose hearts and minds so readily turn to God in their daily lives. The Spirit is leading the churches of Asia to integrate into the treasury of our Christian heritage all that is best in our traditional ways of prayer and worship”; all this certainly applies to the celebration of the Eucharist. This is Asia’s gift of prayer to the Church.

C. Mission in Dialogue with Religions and Religious Traditions

Closely linked with its multicultural reality, Asia is also home to a wide array of religions and religious cultures. Asia is the birthplace and the host to the world’s major religions — Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism — as well as of many other spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Shintoism. There are also other traditional or tribal traditions which are practiced with varying degrees. These realities demand that “the mission of the Church in Asia should be undertaken in dialogue with religions and religious cultures.”

In her dialogue with the multireligious countenance of Asia, “the Church takes on the attitude of deepest respect and honor toward the other religions and faiths, acknowledging that these have somehow been instrumental in drawing people to God. As she endeavors to keep strong her rootedness in the Christian faith, she also seeks to better understand the life, doctrine, tenets, and rituals of other religious traditions in order to engage them in a mutually enriching and respectful encounter.”

It is a fact that these great religious traditions enshrine “spiritual, ethical, and human values that are expressions of the presence of God’s word and of the Holy Spirit’s continuing creative activity in the world.” The profound religious experience as well as the noblest longings of the



hearts of multitudes of Asians have been deposited in these religions; present adherents continue to draw meaning, guidance, and strength from them. How can the Church not honor and reverence these faith traditions?

The Church's positive disposition toward other Asian religions "conforms with the incarnational plan of salvation whereby Christ embraced everything that is human (except sin) in order to assume them within the radius of his redeeming love and power. It was within the religious tradition of Israel that Christ revealed the mystery of God and accomplished his saving mission. His apostles and the earliest foreign missionaries of the Church had the same dialogical stance in the face of the varied religious cultures of the Greco-Roman world."

In a dialogical and missionary spirit, the Church enjoins all Christians to assume an attitude of openness toward other religious traditions and discover "with gladness and respect those seeds of the word which lie hidden among them" (AG, 11). Moreover, she encourages Christians "to use cultural forms, teaching, arts, architecture, melodies, languages, and sciences of the other religious traditions, provided that these are not incompatible with the Gospel and the Christian faith, to praise the glory of the Creator."

This attitude of openness and sharing "will enable Christians to discover and therefore appreciate the heart and soul of their fellow Asians. Far from placing their Christian faith on shaky ground, this dialogue with other religious cultures and traditions will motivate Christians to find authentic ways of living and expressing their own Christian faith amidst the adherents of other faiths. It will help them discover the many riches of their own faith which they might not have seen before. This dialogue will help them discern in the light of God's word how their faith in Christ can be enriched by the other religious traditions, what in these religious cultures must be purified, healed, and made whole before being absorbed into the practice of the Christian faith."

Given the multireligious context of Asia, the Church's evangelizing mission will have to emphasize, first of all, direct Christian witnessing of the Father's love in simple, direct, and concrete ways. This means that "by living like Christ, Christians and Christian communities are called to draw their non-Christian brothers and sisters to faith in the one God revealed by Christ. Most of the time, this may be in the form of presence and solidarity with people to make them feel cared for and

wanted in their poverty and misery. It may be to respond to people's needs as Christ would do in the Gospel, making them feel welcome. Perhaps this attestation of God will be for many people the unknown God whom they adore without giving him a name, or whom they seek by a secret call of the heart."

Inculturation is not merely one possible option; it is, rather, a theological and pastoral imperative.

"In the midst of so much diversity and, many times, of conflicts of various kinds, the Church, by her own life, is called to witness to God's call to life-giving unity and harmony and be a visible sign and instrument of such unity. Equipped with their Christian faith and commitment, the lay faithful have a distinctive role to play in this dialogue on account of their presence and action in the world — family, politics, education, culture, social environment. In the manner of leaven, they are enjoined to direct the course of human affairs and history to the eschatological fullness that every man and woman of goodwill hopes for."

D. Mission in Dialogue with the Poor

While Asia is rich in culture and its people are rich in human and religious values, "a great multitude of them live in situations of poverty, powerlessness, marginalization, victimization, and suffering. They are poor not because their continent lacks natural and material resources, but because they are deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to live with dignity and ensure a stable future for themselves and their families. Oppressive and unjust social, economic, and political structures keep them from enjoying the rich natural patrimony of their lands."

In the face of the particular situation in Asia where multitudes are poor and have no access even to basic necessities to live a life worthy of their human dignity, "the Church in Asia has a special calling to be a Church of the poor. She must have the poor, the deprived, and the oppressed at the forefront of her life and mission. As in the case of the Church's dialogue with cultures, the Church's dialogue with the poor is a theological and moral imperative. The primary reason why the Church has to take on this preferential option for the poor is the very example of Christ, who became poor and who identified himself with them in a special way (cf. Mt 25:40)."



It is called a “preferential love,” not to exclude anyone but to express that the poor, the deprived, and the exploited have a priority claim to the Church’s attention, services, and resources. “The Sacred Scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, are replete with attestations to the fact that the poor have always occupied a privileged place in God’s heart, not the least, in the life and mission of Christ of which the Gospels are eloquent testimonies.”

The bishops of Asia (FABC) have for many years discerned that the Church in Asia must increasingly be “a Church of the poor,” with all its implications and consequences. This implies, first, that “those who have been placed as shepherds of God’s flock in Asia must lead a life of simplicity by which the poor can perceive that their pastors share in their poverty.” By this simplicity of life, which becomes an evident sign of the Gospel in action, “the poor will feel the genuine and heartfelt closeness of their shepherds and will feel more free to run to them for help and guidance.”

A second implication of the Church’s preferential love for the poor is that she should engage in active interventions for the liberation and alleviation of the situation of the poor. “It means being at the service of human development and of life itself — engaging in the important work of healthcare, education, and peacemaking. . . . It also means promoting a disposition of solidarity among all, that ‘new mindset’ which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.”

A third implication of the Church’s preferential option for the poor is that “she has to take a prophetic stance against the negative consequences of economic and cultural globalization, the ongoing impact of foreign debt especially upon the livelihood of the poor, and the environmental damage brought about by scientific, economic, and technological progress.” In a word, as the FABC noted in 1974, the Church (and all local churches) in Asia are challenged to “a continual endeavor to become more and more the church of the ‘*anawim*,’ a Church [which] does not merely work for the poor in the manner of a beneficent institution, but labors truly with the poor, sharing their life and their aspirations, knowing their despair and their hope, walking with them in their search for authentic humanity in Christ Jesus.”

In the Church’s dialogue with the poor, “the Eucharist, on one hand, upholds and reaffirms values that negate the causes of poverty. It

confronts selfishness and greed which are the roots of many forms of injustice, with the self-sacrificing love of Christ. . . . It confronts oppressive totalitarian leaderships which put political and economic advantages above people, with Christ's leadership of service — that of the Master and Lord who washed the feet of his disciples (cf. Jn 13:13). Above all, the Eucharist challenges utilitarianism, consumerism, and materialism which treat the poor and the weak as commodities and tools that can be used for one's gain and pleasure, with Christ's self-donation that breaks and shares oneself so that others may live. . . . From our participation in the Eucharist, we are sent forth to be witnesses of God's compassion towards all our brothers and sisters."

E. Mission in Dialogue with the Youth

Asia is considered the continent of the youth since almost two-thirds of its population is young people; it is home to about 60 per cent of the world's young people, many of whom are poor. Thus, mission in dialogue with the youth of Asia entails placing them among the priorities in the pastoral solicitude of the Church. Young people are not only the future of the world but its present precious treasure. The Church recognizes that "she has to deal with young people not only as the adults of tomorrow but more importantly the reality of today. . . . With their youthful energies, enthusiasm, and resourcefulness, however, they are even now dynamic agents of change and, therefore, a source of hope in society and in the Church."

The Church must have the poor, the deprived, and the oppressed at the forefront of her life and mission, as well as young people, placing them among her priorities in pastoral solicitude.

However, the youth "are also the most vulnerable to many destructive forces in the society and often fall victims to structures of exploitation. More than ever before, the realities that impinge upon young people today are both many and varied. Globalization, political changes, and the media explosion radically affect the lives of the youth in every part of Asia." Candidly admitting that many complex problems confront young people in the continent today, the churches of Asia are enjoined to "remind the young of their responsibility for the future of the society and of the Church, and to encourage and support them at every step to ensure that they are ready to accept that responsibility."



Suitable and adequate pastoral care should be extended to them, above all, by “sowing the truth of the Gospel in them as a joyful and liberating mystery to be known, lived, and shared with conviction and courage.” But since the world now is full of rocks and thistles, not to mention the scorching heat, youth pastoral care also involves helping young people to be a “good soil” where the seed of God’s word can spring up, take root, grow, and bear fruit a hundredfold (cf. Mt 13:4-9).

Youth pastoral care will mean “accompanying them in their journey, which is not easy, on account of the rapid and drastic changes that are happening around them but also of the dramatic changes they are going through physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually at this stage of human development. This kind of pastoral care is directed toward preparing the ground before the sowing, softening it, making it receptive. It also seeks to strengthen them against the many influences and distractions that compete for their attention and energies and can choke the initial growth of the faith in them.” This aspect of pastoral care is necessary even before the sowing of God’s word or simultaneous with it — that they may be good soil where the seed of God’s word can bear abundant fruit.

In Asia, the highly successful World Youth Day began by Saint John Paul II in 1985 has its counterpart, the Asian Youth Day, where young people from the various Asian countries are able to experience a strong sense of being a community through common prayer and Eucharistic celebrations, sharing of life-experiences, working together, sharing meals, and joining in one another’s songs and dances.

By such events, “the youth come to feel that the Church is with them, walking closely with them, believing in what they can do with their youthful energies and good will, empowering them. Journeying with the youth means recognizing the important role that they have in the Church now and as the future of the Church.” It is to see the youth as resources and not as problems. The Church’s mission today includes directing young people toward the Eucharist for sustenance in the face of their many uncertainties and questions.





EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Tears and Eucharistic Transformation

by Mark C. McCann

The Eucharist transforms us. Can it also transform what we bring to the table, even our sorrows, sins, and failings?

ONE OF MY GO-TO BOOKS I USED TO READ TO MY CHILDREN IS *OWL AT HOME* BY Arnold Lobel. It contains a series of sweet, short pieces about a child-like owl and his little adventures in his humble home. My favorite of the tales is "Tear Water Tea." In the story, Owl decides he wants to enjoy a special hot drink. He sits with his tea kettle and begins to think of very sad things: chairs with broken legs, unsung songs with forgotten words, spoons forever lost behind the kitchen stove, unfinished stories from books with missing pages, clocks that have stopped with no one to wind them, uneaten mashed potatoes, and pencils that are too short to use. With each sad thought, he fills the kettle with tears, and afterward, savors a cup of salty tear water tea.

This simple story has been a powerful reminder to me of how the Eucharist is a celebration of transformation from brokenness to becoming, an experience where we bring the tears we have stored in our hearts to the Lord's table so that we may savor the bittersweet satisfaction of the body and blood of Christ.

Surrendered Tears, Rest and Restoration

As Catholics, we have been taught to come to the Communion table worthy to receive the Eucharist. Yet we are reminded of just how undeserving we really are when we recite the prayer, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." That is the beauty and the power of the sacrament. Christ calls us to come before him, bringing our brokenness and our battered lives, our trials and our tears, so that we may receive the food that bestows newness of life on us. As the sacred

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phrase, “The body of Christ,” is spoken, to which we respond with our faithful “Amen,” we are free to partake of the divine healing our souls so desperately seek.

Believers in Christ have discovered that only when we give our tears to the one who is big enough to bear them, can we find the satisfaction for which we long. Anything else just leaves us empty. We cannot bury our hurts or cover them up. Nor can we wish the burdens away, drown them in addiction, or share our pain with a therapist or a friend to find rest and restoration. As we surrender our sorrows and our very lives to Christ in the Eucharist — making our own tear water tea — we experience lasting peace.

The Blessing of Tears, The Longing for God

The Bible has much to say about tears. To David, they are the natural expression of his grief and anguish (Ps 6:6-7) and become his “food” when others mock the God he loves (Ps 42:3). Here, David, the man after God’s own heart, is so distraught and his tears so many that they become his food and drink, his tear water tea. His suffering is so intense that he is completely consumed with a desire for God, to the point that his tears become his sustenance. Nothing else matters, except pouring out his heart to the Lord. David teaches us that it is in our deepest sorrow that we discover our deepest need for God.

It is in our deepest sorrow that we discover our deepest need for God.

In Psalm 80:5, we read, “You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.” Instead of manna from heaven or water from the rock, God gives his ravaged, exiled people the bread of tears. In their sinfulness and sorrow, it is these tears that draw them back to God, making them thirst for the living water of heaven. When we experience the trials and troubles of this life, we, too, taste the bitterness of our tears, and it makes us long for the satisfaction that only God can give us in the Eucharist.

A Bottle of Tears, A River of Restoration

Another thing we learn about our tears is that they are precious to God. For example, in Psalm 56:8, we read: “You have kept count of my

tossings; put my tears in your bottle! Are they not in your book?" This is a picture of God being so concerned with the griefs of his people that he records their tears, collecting them in a heavenly container to preserve them. This is how dear our sorrow is to our heavenly Father. In New Testament times, people were known to store their tears in bottles ("lachrymatories") as an expression of sorrow, usually for someone who had died. Loved ones would place these bottles in the grave of the dead as a sign of enduring love.

As we surrender our sorrows and our very lives to Christ in the Eucharist — making our own tear water tea — we experience lasting peace.

This is what God does with our tears, collecting them and storing them, only in a far greater and more blessed way. God keeps a record of tears shed in genuine faith and places them in the tomb of Jesus, the one who gave his life for the world. Our Father moves his people to weep openly for sin, injustice, and the lost. Consider what the prophet says in Jeremiah 8:23 [9:1]: "Oh, that my head were a spring of water, my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night over the slain from the daughter of my people!" And in Lamentations 2:18: "Cry aloud to the Lord! O daughter of Zion! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night! Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite."

Jeremiah knows that he could cry an ocean of tears but they would never be enough to pay for the sin of God's people. Yet he understands that God accepts our tears of repentance and records them. God takes our tears and turns them into blessings as we are drawn to his Son, turning rivers of tears into pools of restoration, renewing his people so they might go from strength to strength (Ps 84:5-7). We can draw from this great source of renewal in the Eucharist because we pour ourselves out to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has poured himself out for us.

Pouring Out Our Tear Water Tea

One of the most moving stories of tears takes place in Luke 7:36-50. It is the account of the sinful woman who anoints Jesus' feet with her tears and dries them with her hair in the home of Simon the Pharisee. The language and the imagery of the story suggest that this woman



is someone given over totally to a sinful life — possibly a life of sexual transgression. For so many men, she has dared to let down her hair, to disgrace herself in defiance of the law of God. Yet we see her pushing through the crowd in the courtyard of this prominent Pharisee to touch the one man she knows can save her from her sin and desperation and restore her relationship with God.

Most likely this woman had witnessed the words and deeds of Jesus. She had heard him call for love and repentance and offer rest for the weary and light for those in darkness. She had watched him eat with sinners, heal those broken in body and spirit, and welcome the outcast. Perhaps she had been present when Jesus fed the multitudes with the five loaves and the two fish. She may have known of other women who had come to him in tears, like the widow of Nain whose son had died and whom Jesus raised to life again. She had been so moved by this mysterious rabbi that she was compelled to seek him out. And so, she braided her hair, made herself look beautiful, and put on her finest clothes. She took a jar of her most costly perfume and came looking for something to fill her empty soul, ready for whatever was to come.

When she arrived, she met a man who looked at her with love and forgiveness. She let go of her past life of sin, broke the flask of her heart, and poured out all the secret tears she had stored up there over a lifetime, flooding his feet as she wept unceasingly. Then she let down her hair, this time to wipe away the tears and surrender herself to Christ, who could free her from sin and sorrow and offer her a new beginning.

Tears Transformed into Heavenly Bread

Jesus then proceeded, in a masterful way, to contrast the actions of the woman with the behavior of Simon, his host. Simon gave Jesus no kiss of greeting, no water to wash his feet, no oil to anoint his head. He offered him no real hospitality, making the meal they shared empty and meaningless. This woman, on the other hand, could not stop kissing the feet of Jesus. She washed them with her tears and anointed them with her most precious perfume. She brought all she had to the meal: her sins and sorrows, her hopes and desires, and a heartfelt repentance born of genuine love and devotion. In return, Jesus offered her new hope and the nourishing bread of God's love and forgiveness.

The woman came and made her own tear water tea with Jesus. She took all the tears she had stored in the receptacle of her heart and then let it be broken and poured out before the Master. If we look deeper at the story, we can see that all she did for the Lord, he did for her in an even greater way. He cleansed her with the water of his word of forgiveness, anointed her with the oil of gladness, and gave her the kiss of everlasting peace. He gave her himself, restored her life by taking the bitterness of her tears, and transformed them into the living water of grace.

God takes our tears and turns them into blessings as we are drawn to his Son, turning rivers of tears into pools of restoration.

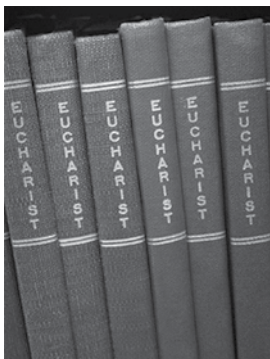
The Eucharist and Tears

This is a perfect picture of what the Eucharist is all about. As we approach the table of the Lord each Sunday, and even daily, we bring all that we are to the celebration. We open our hearts and pour ourselves out before the altar, knowing that Jesus gives us his life in the sacrament of his body and blood, the perfect gift of love that restores us and strengthens us for the journey of faith. Our Lord takes our tears and stores them up, recording our love in the Book of Life as he empties himself for us in the sacrifice of the cross.

In the celebration of the Eucharist, we hear the word that restores our lives, strengthens our weary souls, and brings us peace. Like the women who followed Jesus and served him and his disciples out of their means (Lk 8:1-3), we who have received freely, give freely in service to the kingdom of God.

Our tears are a precious gift. They lead us to the Eucharistic table where we experience the very life of Christ. Rather than recoiling from the bitterness of our sorrows, let us come unashamed before the altar, opening our hearts and offering our lives to the Lord who forgives our sin, frees us to love much, and exchanges the tears of our affliction for the Bread of Life.





EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Fulton Sheen on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR

Fulton Sheen's theology of the Eucharist was rooted in his grasp of the mystical union between Christ and the Church. It was also an expression of devotion, a sacrament he celebrated daily and revered deeply.

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.

FULTON J. SHEEN (1895-1979) WAS AN AMERICAN BISHOP, THEOLOGIAN, author, radio broadcaster, and Emmy Award winning television personality. He was born in El Paso, Illinois, and ordained a priest of the Diocese of Peoria in 1919. He received a PhD in philosophy from the Catholic University of Louvain in 1923 and a STD in theology from the Angelicum in 1924. He served the Church as a parish priest, taught theology and philosophy at The Catholic University of America for 23 years, was the national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith from 1950-1966, and became an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of New York in 1951. From 1930-1950, he hosted *The Catholic Hour* on the radio. Then, from 1951-1957 and 1961-1968, he hosted respectively *Life is Worth Living* and *The Fulton Sheen Program* on television.

In 1966, he was made the bishop of Rochester, New York, and resigned from that post in 1969 when he became the titular archbishop of Newport, Wales. The author of more than 34 books and numerous articles, he was highly regarded for his clarity of thought in both philosophical and theological concerns. In 2002, his cause for canonization was officially opened. In 2012, the Vatican recognized his life as one of "heroic virtue" and declared him "Venerable." In 2014, a miracle for his cause of canonization was recognized by a panel of medical experts and another comprised of theologians. He considered the Eucharist a central element of his life, the sacred pole around which all else revolved.¹

Sheen's Spiritual Outlook

Sheen was one of the leading churchmen of his day and had that rare combination of being a Catholic bishop, intellectual, and television personality that few, if any, have been able to emulate since. He held two doctorates, was a prolific author, and was hailed as a great communicator. Although he addressed a largely Catholic audience, he appealed to many outside the fold, who were attracted to the faith by his personal charisma and skills in public speaking. He had a talent for probing the deepest truths of the faith and presenting them in a way that everyone could understand. He was a man of God, a man of the Church, and a man of the people.

Sheen's spiritual outlook was rooted in his notion of the three phases of the whole Christ: "first, his earthly life; second, his glorified life; third, his mystical life."² He believed that each of these must be taken into account in our understanding of Christ's identity and purpose. "Those who consider his (Christ's) physical life alone," he claimed, "either develop a sentimental spirituality or else end by regarding him merely as a good man and a teacher of humanitarian ethics; those who consider him only in his heavenly life of glory, regard him as an absentee landlord, disregarding both his promise to send his Spirit, and his abiding interest in the souls which he came to save."³

Sheen believed that Christ was presently living his mystical life in the members of his body, the church: "He is not past; he has not left us orphans; he is with us and more intimately than we are with ourselves. He is still living in the world, moving amongst its poor, instructing the ignorant, comforting the doubtful, and healing the souls of men."⁴ In his mind, Christ's mystical life represents the culmination of his earthly and glorified existences and stands in marked continuity with them.

This continuity, however, does not mean homogeneity, but radical transformation. The historical Jesus, Sheen believed, was one with the glorified Christ. His resurrection and ascension, however, elevated him to another dimension. The glorified Christ, in turn, continues to exist mystically in the members of his body, the church. This continued existence happens as a result of the outpouring of his Spirit upon the church and the graces it makes available to the community of believers through the sacraments and its manifold gifts and fruits.

Sheen puts it this way: "It is within the power of man to prolong himself through space and time by doctrine and example. It is within Christ's



power to prolong himself, not only by doctrine and example, but also by his life.”⁵ Christ, in other words, continues to live his paschal mystery by extending his life in and through the community of the faithful. He does so in a very real and palpable way that remains continuous with his earthly and glorified existences. He is united to his body, the church, in the same way that the soul is united to the body. If the two are separated, the living organism ceases to exist. The Eucharist, for Sheen, was the spiritual food of the mystical Christ, the unifying force within the body of believers and the means by which the body remains united to its head.

Sheen’s Teaching on the Eucharist

One place where Sheen develops his views on the Eucharist is in his book *The Mystical Body of Christ*. The Eucharist, he states, “is the efficient cause of all the other sacraments” and thus “the source of the unity of the mystical body.”⁶ This unity is twofold: “(a) the unity of Christ and his mystical body; (b) the unity of the members of the mystical body with one another.”⁷ These two unities, he believes, are intimately related.

Sheen employs a number of analogies to describe the Eucharist’s role in maintaining the unity of Christ and his mystical body. He refers to the church as “the great tree of life” and says that the source of its energy lies not in its external structures but in something invisible and spiritual.⁸ He likens the Eucharist to the energy of the sun: “What the solar energy is to the tree, that the Eucharist is to the mystical body; what the leaf is to the tree, that each individual Catholic is to the Church. As each leaf draws force from the great invisible solar energy, so does each Catholic draw life through Communion with divinity in the Eucharist. Without the sun, the tree could not live; without the Eucharist, the Church could not live.

The more Catholic leaves there are on the tree of life or the Church, the greater her strength and her unity; and as the tree is one though made up of a multiplicity of leaves because all are nourished by the same sun, so the mystical body is one though made up of many Catholics because all are nourished by the same Eucharist. Such is the secret of Catholic unity — the communion of man with God.”⁹ The Eucharist, for Sheen, is indispensable to the life and well-being of the church. Without it, there would be no church, no community of believers, no communion with Christ.

Sheen also likens the Eucharist to the plasma in our blood: "Now, the Eucharist is to the mystical body what the blood plasma is to the human body, though in a far superior way. This great spiritual plasma, the Eucharist, flows and streams through the mystical body in every part of the world wherever Mass is celebrated. It offers itself first to this Catholic and then to that; dips the chalice of life to one, for the increase of its divine life; breaks its bread of life to another, for the remission of sin and its punishment, and in general strengthening every soul with its Christ-love.

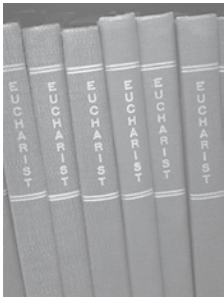
And just as the human body is one, though composed of many cells, because nourished by the same plasma, so the mystical body is one, though composed of many Catholics, because nourished by the same Eucharist."¹⁰ The plasma that runs through the veins of the Church is the blood of Christ himself. Without this precious blood, the church would be devoid of all life and vitality.

Sheen's spiritual outlook was rooted in his notion of the three phases of the whole Christ: his earthly life, his glorified life, and his mystical life.

Sheen also says that the Eucharist represents the perfection of a law that runs through all of nature: minerals are subsumed into a higher world of vegetation; plants enter the animal world by surrendering their lives to them; animals become more than animals when they are consumed by humans. In a similar way, we are taken up into the divine life whenever we receive the Eucharist.¹¹ What is more, just as natural life has catabolic and anabolic processes, the supernatural life involves the tearing down of the old Adam (the catabolic) and the building up of the Christ-pattern (the anabolic).¹²

Sheen maintains that both of these processes are at work in the Eucharist: "The amount of divine love we receive depends upon our capacity. The fuller we are of ourselves, the less room there is for Christ; the more empty we are of ourselves by crucifying our flesh, the more he can pour forth the torrents of his love."¹³

In addition to maintaining the unity of Christ and his church, Sheen states that the Eucharist also "con-corporates us to one another as brothers in Christ."¹⁴ The Church, he says, considers religion not only as "a personal relation between man and God, but also a social



relation.”¹⁵ It guarantees the social character of religion and reminds us that we cannot love God without loving our neighbor — and vice versa.¹⁶ It fosters this “holy fellowship” not through external structures, but by nourishing the interior life. It unites people not on the basis of economics or social status, but on the basis of their being children of God.¹⁷

According to Sheen, this common brotherhood crosses all ethnic, racial, and cultural boundaries and has concrete implications for the political, economic, and social order. “This brotherhood through the Eucharist, he states, was intended by our Lord to be the basis of all international agreements as well as relations between capital and labor.”¹⁸

The Eucharist, for Sheen, is “the end and perfection of all the others” and “intrinsically bound up with sacrifice.”¹⁹ It also reveals the extent of God’s love for us: “Now by a wonderful paradox of God’s love, the human race which crucified Christ is the same race which has been nourished by the very life they slew. He might have ended his life by sacrifice, but to let us take his life away, and then to take it up again from the grave, in order to give it to us, as *our life* — that is a love which is beyond a human comprehension. To be willing to die for us, was much; but to be willing to live for us all over again, was everything.”²⁰ “Sacrifice,” for Sheen, “leads to sacrament.”²¹ Jesus’ Eucharistic presence is possible only because he poured himself into simple bread and wine in anticipation of his kenotic self-emptying on the hill of Golgotha.

Some Further Insights

The purpose of the above description was to paint in broad strokes a picture of Sheen’s views on the Eucharist against the background of his overall spiritual outlook. The following remarks develop these insights in more detail to provide a better sense of the place of the sacrament in his life and thought.

1. To begin with, Sheen presents the Eucharist as the lifeblood of Christ’s mystical body. It is therefore primarily concerned with the third phase of the whole Christ, that of the mystical. That is not to say that it has nothing to do with the historical Jesus or the glorified Christ. Such a conclusion would run totally against many of Sheen’s underlying presuppositions of there being an intrinsic unity and

continuity among all three phases. Sheen's concern, however, is not so much with the Eucharist as an historical event or as a heavenly banquet but as the graced energy uniting the Church to Christ and her members to one another. This energy sustains the church and keeps it in existence. The church cannot exist without the daily bread of the Eucharist.

2. The Eucharist, for Sheen, unites the church with the sacred humanity of Christ. When the faithful receive Holy Communion, they are united with the body and blood, soul, and divinity of risen Lord. This mystical union takes place on the level of being and action. Christ has become one with the community of the faithful, who now join in his redemptive mission. As a result, Christ lives out his paschal mystery in and through the members of his body. He unites himself to the community of the faithful in much the same way that the soul is united to the body. The two can be separated only in death. Since the risen Lord has conquered death, however, death has no lasting power over his mystical body. Its reign is dwindling, short-lived, and doomed to fail. Just as the historical Jesus rose from the dead to become the risen Lord, so will his mystical body overcome the darkness of the grave and rise to new heights. The communion of saints, for Sheen, is a vivid reminder of the church's mystical destiny.

We are taken up into the divine life whenever we receive the Eucharist.

3. The Eucharist, for Sheen, does more than unite the church to Christ. It also unites the members of Christ's mystical body to one another. This fellowship among the members flows from Christ's union with the church. As Sheen points out, we cannot say we love God but hate our neighbor. Jesus took the Golden Rule seriously and expects his followers to do the same. Christ has identified himself with the community of believers so closely that to hate one member is the equivalent of hating Christ himself. This insight has many implications for Christian action in the world. If Christ has united himself so closely to the members of his body, then the actions of the members must reflect the spirit and mind of Christ. Doing otherwise gives scandal to Christ and his Church. Doing otherwise weakens the Church's credibility and lessens the impact of its apostolic witness in the world.

4. The Eucharist, for Sheen, is the cause of the church's unity.



It constitutes this unity, both with Christ and among its members, not through external structures, but by providing spiritual nourishment for the soul. This nourishment sustains the church's interior life and enables her members to take an active part in Christ's ongoing redemptive mission. Action, in other words, flows from being and reveals a person's deepest values. The Eucharistic action flows from Christ's being and reveals his deepest values in and through the members of his mystical body. It mediates the power of Christ's love to the church and enables her members to live as Christ lived and to serve as Christ served. For Sheen, it is the sacrament of love that binds the members of the church to one another and to Christ. It tears down the old Adam and builds up the Christ-pattern in the lives of the faithful.

5. Sheen has a gift for explaining theological concepts by engaging the imagination. To explain the Eucharist, he uses images from nature (e.g., a tree, blood plasma, nature itself) to give us a sense of what the Eucharist is, for whom it is for, and what it purports to achieve. In doing so, he stands in marked continuity with many before him, who used simple images and common everyday experiences as a way of explaining the things of God. Jesus' parables, the preaching of the apostle Paul, and the writings of church fathers such as Augustine and Gregory the Great immediately come to mind. His training in scholastic philosophy and theology, moreover, gave him an appreciation of the principle, "Grace builds on nature," and the insight that the "Book of Creation" is itself revelatory of the divine. His talent for making divine things accessible to his audience also stems from his years of experience as a radio broadcaster and television personality where he honed his communication skills to bring the Good News to a general audience.

6. For Sheen, the Eucharist involves both sacrifice and presence. The relationship between these two is clear: sacrifice comes first and leads to presence. This order reflects the catabolic (breaking down) and anabolic (building up) processes at work in the supernatural order of Christ's redemptive mission. When seen in this light, Christ's sacrificial offering on the cross represents the breaking down of the old self which makes possible the building up of the new. The old man must be put to death before the new man can bless the world with his transforming presence. Christ's kenotic self-emptying is a prerequisite for his unifying presence in the church. Each of these processes, moreover, is at work in the Eucharist. The same self-emptying love that Christ displays on Calvary enables him to pour himself into

simple bread and wine to become a transforming nourishment for us. These processes, moreover, are at work in everyone who receives the Eucharist: the sacrifice it embodies breaks down the old man in us, while the presence it engenders builds up the new.

In all who receive the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ it embodies breaks down the old man in us, while the presence it engenders builds up the new.

7. Finally, Sheen points out that the Eucharist not only makes Christ's sacrificial death on Calvary present to us in an unbloody manner but is also an even fuller expression of God's love for us. It was not enough for Christ simply to die for us on the cross. Rather than ending his life in sacrifice, he took up life again in order to give it to us. In the Eucharist, Christ's life becomes our life. Out of love for us, he emptied himself through death on the cross, poured himself into the bread and wine of the Last Supper, and gives himself to us in Holy Communion to dwell there by the power of his Spirit. Sheen would identify closely with the words of the apostle Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:19-20).²² The Eucharist, for him, makes it possible for us to live in Christ and for Christ to live in us.

Conclusion

In his day, Archbishop Fulton Sheen was a charismatic figure and a larger than life personality. He used his intellectual talents and skill as a communicator to preach the gospel message through his teaching, books, radio broadcasts, and television programs. He did so for decades and came across not only as someone who could understand and explain the faith in simple, down-to-earth terms, but also as someone who lived it. He has been declared "Venerable" in the eyes of the Church, and his cause for beatification and eventual canonization holds much promise.

The Eucharist was central to Sheen's life and thought. As a priest and bishop, he celebrated it daily and reflected often on its significance for the life of the Church. He understood very well the role it played in uniting the Church to Christ and the faithful to one another. He saw it as the lifeblood of Christ's mystical body, the vital energy that enabled the Church to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ down through



the ages. The Eucharist, he believed, was Christ's gift of himself to the Church. Through it, he would be a nourishing presence to his disciples until the end of time (cf. Mt 28:20).

The Eucharist, for Sheen, was the end and purpose of all the other sacraments. The others all presuppose it and either lead up to it or flow from it. Sheen's love for the Eucharist reflects his deep love for Christ and his Church. He saw the social implications of the sacrament and understood that receiving Holy Communion meant fellowship not only with Christ, but also with one another. The Eucharist, he believed, held the secret to international peace and world brotherhood. It represented the hope of a redeemed humanity baptized in the blood of Christ and nourished by his quiet, sustaining presence in their midst.



Notes

¹ For a biographical profile of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, see <http://fulton-sheen.cua.edu/bio/index.cfm>.

² Fulton J. Sheen, *The Mystical Body of Christ* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), 19.

³ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 357.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 357-358.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 359.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 360.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 361-362.

¹² *Ibid.*, 363.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 365.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 367.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 369.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 374.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 375.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² This scripture quotation comes from *Holy Bible. New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

An Advent Reflection on the Blessed Virgin

by Caroline Rood

At the center of God's great redemptive plan is Mary, chosen, loved, and offered as the mother of the Messiah and as an exemplar for all who follow him.

GOD FORETOLD THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH BY THE VIRGIN MARY THROUGH THE prophet Isaiah, and in keeping with this plan of redemption, in the fullness of time brought her forth into the world.

I have come to believe that Mary was immaculately conceived, as the Church professes, because God in his wisdom ordered creation so that only human perfection could survive the impact of conceiving him in human form and carrying him to term in her womb. She gave birth to uncreated Life, to the living Word and the Bread of Life. I receive Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist and continually need the sacrament of reconciliation. Any woman who has inherited the fall would collapse, unable to contain him in the consuming fire of his presence, at the very moment of his entrance into her body.

The Word expressly chose to come into this world through a woman, both to remind us what we do know and to teach us what we do not, that, as almighty God, he does not need the male seed or plans orchestrated by the human will to enter his own creation when, where, and as he pleases, and to accomplish what he intends to do.

I believe that, in keeping with his plan, Mary's "Yes" to God, her "fiat" at Gabriel's annunciation of the event, untied the knot of Eve's disobedience, the very knot that all human beings struggle with, and have since the dawn of time. Here was the beginning of the most vital paradigm shift we will ever know — the hour given to us as the grand denouement of the human race.

God intends for us to have Mary as his masterpiece, that we may have a woman to emulate whom he has used to redeem the work of Eve.

Caroline Rood resides in Burlington, Vermont. She is in the tenth year of her consecration to Mary.



Through one woman the world began its fall into sin and decline, and through another woman God began the great act of our redemption. Mary is at one and the same time the daughter of God, the Mother of God, the sister to Jesus Christ, and the firstborn of his bride, the church.

God invites each of his children to become Mary's child as well, that we may receive the benefits of her spiritual maternity and be reborn into Christ's redemption of our souls and spirits, our hearts and minds, our very flesh and life. Mary is with us in the Holy Spirit, living in a singular way as one commissioned by him in the world of things invisible, to act as a midwife to the Lord in this birthing, and to accompany us as our new mother throughout our lives on earth. God uses Mary anew in preparing us for heaven and eternal life.

I have chosen to consecrate myself formally to our Lady each year through Christ, that I may learn to walk daily with her. By making this vow as a public statement before a witness, I strengthen my commitment to God and deepen my sense of my place before him as my Creator. This enables me to live in an honest and conscious recognition of my common ground with the poverty of humanity.

Mary's "Yes" to God, her "fiat" at Gabriel's annunciation of the event, untied the knot of Eve's disobedience.

I encounter with Mary, and best fulfill, my need and desire to be pure of heart in thought, word, and deed, that I might grow in understanding her chastity and its value, and see the truth of her beauty. I believe that her singleness of heart and mind are unparalleled in human history, and that many people do not dare to recognize her greatness or to honor themselves enough to approach God in their need for such a woman, such a mother; nevertheless, she reigns and is intimately available as God's answer to our need for a new birth.

I offer myself, then, to God, that he might bring me into her presence in the world of things unseen to us on this earth. I pray that through her constant intercession and intervention in my life, God will give me the grace to enter the process of allowing her "Yes" to become my own. I pray that I may become as a living fire of love, like Mary, one who worships him in Spirit and in truth. May she truly be my mother, my mentor, my companion, and my friend as I journey here, a stranger in a strange land, through the hour of my death!





EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Pope Francis and the Spirituality of Christmas

by Peter Schineller, SJ

What kind of love does Advent/Christmas call us to remember and to imitate?

CHRISTIAN LIFE INTERSECTS WITH, IS ILLUMINATED BY, AND REVOLVES AROUND THE TWO great mysteries of Christmas and Easter. At Christmas we celebrate the mystery of the incarnation — the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. During Holy Week and Easter, we focus on the paschal mystery — the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, followed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Church's liturgical year revolves around these two cycles: Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter/Pentecost.

Naturally, there may be more emphasis on one or the other in our way of living the Christian life. My reflection here is to show how Pope Francis is highlighting, exemplifying, and emphasizing the meaning of Christmas in our lives. Specifically, what does a spirituality and way of life that is modeled on the incarnation and Christmas look like? How does Pope Francis preach, teach, and exemplify this?

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

The Mystery of Christmas

In an Advent homily on December 18, 2013, Pope Francis elaborates on the meaning of Christmas: "God, in the Christmas mystery, reveals himself not as one who remains on high and dominates the universe, but as the one who bends down, descends to the little and poor earth. It means that, to be like him, we should not put ourselves above others, but indeed lower ourselves, place ourselves at the service of others, become small with the small and poor with the poor. . . . The Christian serves, he lowers himself."

The Holy Father goes on to say that Greek theologians explain this attitude of God with a somewhat difficult word, *synkatábasi*, "the humble and accommodating disposition (condescension) of God, who lowers himself to make himself one of us." And he adds, "We must do



what the Lord does, do what he says, and do it as he says it: with love, with tenderness, with that condescension towards the brethren."

I see this as very close to how Pope Francis describes the mission of the Church and how he fulfills his public mission as the bishop of Rome. The mission of the Church is one of going out to and reaching down to the weak and vulnerable. This is the image of the "field hospital" that he first proposed in some of his earliest pronouncements. In this way, we follow the pattern of the incarnation, of Christ who was rich and became poor for our sakes. The apostle Paul expresses it in this way: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:7-8).

God's greatness, as disclosed at Christmas, consists in reaching down to and embracing the needy and the vulnerable.

Pope Francis is not only teaching this but living it when he reaches out to the handicapped, migrants, children, prisoners, and the neglected on the margins of society. He is imitating the love shown by Jesus Christ in becoming incarnate and sharing our humanity, Christ who reaches out to heal the sick and to lift up the lowly.

God's greatness, as disclosed at Christmas, consists in reaching down to and embracing the needy and the vulnerable, those unable to help themselves.

Pattern for Our Christian Living

Surely, a case could also be made for how Pope Francis lives and preaches the paschal mystery, the death and resurrection of Christ, but I believe we are missing something significant if we do not also pause to reflect on how Pope Francis is urging us to take seriously the mystery of the incarnation and allow it to become a pattern for our lives.

Christmas provides a direction to the Christian life and a model, that of humble service. In the light of Christmas, to be great is not to be all-powerful, but to be willing to empty oneself and become a child and a servant, as Christ did in the incarnation.

Might we not see this emphasis on humble service even in the pectoral cross Pope Francis wears? It is a cross with a figure on it. But it is not the usual figure of Christ suffering, dying, and nailed to the cross — the paschal mystery, the heart of Holy Week and Easter. Rather, the image is that of the Good Shepherd, the tender, seeking Christ with the lost sheep he has rescued around his neck and the ninety-nine in the background.

This is the apostolic, active Christ moving among and smelling like the sheep. It is the Christ who humbled himself and became a servant, a shepherd for our sake in the mystery of the incarnation. This countercultural way of life, of generous, humble service, eventually led Christ to be rejected and put on the cross.

A key virtue of the Christian therefore — and one exemplified by Pope Francis — is humility. By this he means not so much thinking little of ourselves but the ability to lower oneself, to reach out to and to serve others, as in the washing of the feet. It means showing love, respect, and genuine regard for others. This is the movement and the direction of Christmas, where Jesus Christ, who is co-creator with God and Lord, empties himself to become an infant, a child (“omnipotence in bonds,” as Cardinal John Henry Newman described the Christ child).

Humility is not so much thinking little of ourselves but the ability to lower oneself, to reach out to and to serve others.

We see this stress on humility, extraordinary humility, again in a homily of Pope Francis for deceased cardinals and bishops in November 2015: “This is how the Son of God lowered himself to us, stooping like a servant to us to take on all that is ours, to the point of throwing open the doors to life. . . . This style of God, who saves us by serving us and annihilating himself, has much to teach us. We imagine a triumphal divine victory; instead, Jesus shows us a very humble victory. Raised on the cross, he lets evil and death beset him, while he continues to love. For us, it is difficult to accept this. It is a mystery, but the secret of this mystery, of this extraordinary humility, consists entirely in the strength of love.”

Indeed, Pope Francis holds before us the “extraordinary humility”



demonstrated in the mystery of Christmas, the mystery of the incarnation, Christ's assuming our human nature, that continues even to the cross. Christmas is the time to go to Bethlehem to adore the Christ child, and then, like Pope Francis, to seek to imitate the Savior's "extraordinary humility" and self-emptying love.

Without succumbing to over-simplification, there are two movements in the spiritual life and in our relationship to God: the downward, descending movement where the divine enters into human history and the upward movement whereby we, with Jesus, ascend to God the Father. Advent and Christmas focus on the downward movement while Lent, Easter, and the Ascension focus on the upward.

It seems to me that Pope Francis is very much in tune with and exemplifies and lives the downward movement. Moreover, he calls all Christians to get caught up in that dynamic movement of grace and redeeming love. As Jesus Christ emptied himself and became poor, in humble service to humanity, so must we in accord with the spirit and spirituality of Christmas.

Our participation in the Eucharist reinforces this. In the sacrament, we receive him who emptied himself for our sakes and became human. He comes to us anew under signs of broken bread and a cup of wine.



In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

Rev. Robert V. Fleiter - Archdiocese of Saint Louis

Rev. Michael Noreika, SSS - Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

Rev. Dennis Ruane, SSS - Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament

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



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Precious Pearl

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.

THIS PARABLE CONCERNING THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE (MT 13:45-46) IS TWIN with that of the Hidden Treasure, but it has significant differences. The lead character in the parable of the hidden treasure was not a man of means — he had, out of necessity, to sell all his possessions to buy the field — whereas the merchant in search of fine pearls was, apparently, a relatively wealthy individual and perhaps a connoisseur of pearls. The plowman did not expect to find anything, but the merchant was on the lookout for a surpassing jewel. Yet the focused truth of the parable is the same: it is worth every effort to come into possession of it.

In the ancient world, pearls had a certain fascination for those who could afford them. Pearls were prized not only for their monetary value but also for their beauty. People found pleasure in handling a pearl and admiring its luster.

Perhaps the fascination of this jewel stemmed, in part, from the fact that it originated in far-off places like the shores of the Red Sea, which for the people of Palestine at the time of Jesus was the main source of pearls. A merchant, however, might scour the markets of quite distant lands in search of a pearl of surpassing beauty.

It is quite suggestive that Jesus would compare the “kingdom of heaven” to a pearl. To the people of the ancient world, a pearl was, as we said, a greatly prized possession, something of value, beauty, and delight. So, the kingdom of heaven, in a far surpassing way, is a reality of value, beauty, and delight.

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*.



To possess this reality, to live within its actuality is to open one's mind, heart, and soul lovingly to the will of God. This means that the giving of one's will and life to God does not entail anything that is grim, gloomy, and agonizing; it is, rather, a thing of satisfaction and blessedness. Beyond the discipline, the sacrifice, the self-denial, the "cross" that every true follower of Jesus must shoulder, there lies the supreme goodness, truth, and beauty that are to be found nowhere else. There is only one way to bring peace to one's heart, truth to one's mind, joy and beauty to one's life, and that is to open one's self absolutely to the will and love of God.

A Surpassing Reality

Suggestive, also, is Jesus' reference in this parable to "a pearl of *great price*." There are other pearls, but only one pearl of great price. In other words, there are many fine things in this world and many things in which a person can find goodness, beauty, and delight. Such things, for example, can be found in knowledge and intellectual exploration, in literature, art, and music. They are to be found in human relationships and close friendships as well as in the service of one's fellow men and women. All such things are sources from which it is possible to derive an experience of goodness, beauty, and delight; but they pale before the supreme goodness, beauty, and delight of God's kingdom.

In both the Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Parable of the Precious Pearl, the protagonist "goes and sells all that he has" to obtain his great discovery. The renunciation involved, however, is not without a joy and satisfaction in finally possessing the treasure and the precious pearl.

With these parables, Jesus assures his original disciples, and us, that our renunciations for the sake of attaining the kingdom of heaven will have their reward.





EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Counsels for Spiritual Life from Saint Peter Julian Eymard

Leave the Past to His Goodness and Sanctify the Present

THE APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST WAS ALSO A GUIDE TO THE INTERIOR LIFE AND TO EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY FOR many. In a letter to Ms. Giguet on July 20, 1856, Father Eymard urges her to accept the cross of the physical pain she is suffering as a way of sanctifying the present. He advises her to see where God's providential care is sustaining her. At the time he wrote these words, Eymard himself was experiencing pain and loss as he left his beloved Marist community to pursue the Eucharistic grace which was consuming him.

"I am responding to your letter immediately. It afflicts me to see that you are still ill, but since God wants it, adore this little cross or this great cross, which his love offers you in order to help you grow in his love.

"See divine Providence in everything, loving and feeding you with God's love. Your devotion and love for God will make this apparent humiliation seem glorious and agreeable.

"And so, my daughter, no more tears or sadness. God wants you this way and you are pleasing in his sight. Leave the past to his goodness and sanctify the present. Life passes quickly, and when it is spent wholly for God, the present is sweet and the future beautiful. Therefore, have courage and confidence.

"Continue to pray for me. I am very grateful to you for it, because I really need it. May God bless, comfort, and strengthen you!"





PASTORAL LITURGY

Sacrosanctum Concilium at 55

by John Thomas Lane, SSS

The first document considered at Vatican II was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, underscoring the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church.

Blessed Sacrament Father John Thomas Lane is the pastor of Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. He has degrees in education, music, theology, and liturgy, and speaks and writes regularly about liturgical theology and ministry. He is the author *Daily Prayer 2019*. For questions or further materials, please contact him at jtlanesss@gmail.com.

THIS YEAR, THIS COLUMN TOOK A FRESH LOOK AT HALLMARK LITURGICAL documents. We end the year with *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC). For present-day liturgists, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy began an important conversation 55 years ago. Some critics have charged that SC “changed” the Church and instituted a revolutionary, new era that was not part of the Church’s history.

On one level, it surely has! While this column will not be a history lesson that points to the steady stream of threads that prove otherwise, the Church always concerns itself with the liturgy (see Paul in 1 Corinthians). As Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ, stated in *The Liturgy Documents: Volume 3*, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication, 1991, 2, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* created a whole generation of Catholics awakened to a new “blueprint” for reforming and renewing a powerful element in the life of the Church.

Enduring Impact

First, the bishops of the Second Vatican Council took it upon themselves to write and to focus on the liturgy as the first order of business during this ecumenical council. They could have chosen many other issues. However, they understood that what we now commonly call “liturgy” is the most important aspect of our Catholic Christian life. It is what most identifies as Catholics. How often do we hear people say, “I am a Catholic and I go to Mass,” or “. . . I used to go to Mass.” Liturgy defines us. It inspires our faith formation, our prayer, and our universal mission. This is why the fathers of Vatican II took their time to study and to write a document that would lead to the renewal of the Church’s liturgy and

the Church itself.

Second, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* assisted us in knowing about the liturgy. Previously, the laity were considered spectators at Mass. Now all understand that they are participants and are called to be active. By knowing and fulfilling our parts, we learned about our role in public worship and praise of God, in living our baptismal promises, and in being good stewards. Liturgy is an “exercise of our priestly office,” forming us in Christ, the head of the Church.

Third, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* educated us about Scripture and the importance of God’s word. We have heard the Lectionary now in our spoken languages — the vernacular — and become familiar with the format of the Liturgy of the Word, the interplay of the readings, the responsorial psalm, the acclamation, the importance of the letters of the apostle Paul, etc. This is our routine now for more than 40 years. Most places sing the psalm, a few sing the acclamation after the readings, which I believe is powerful due to the fact we can hear God’s word and have this opportunity for biblical formation and catechesis. We can’t help but sing “Thanks be to God!”

Sacrosanctum Concilium mandated the updating of rites from their historical roots and treasured past: the Prayer of the Faithful (universal prayers), the Sign of Peace, various liturgical processions (especially that for Communion), the Sacred Triduum celebrated in all of its power and glory, the catechumenate restored, devotion and liturgy placed in a balance, and countless other pieces that now play a prominent place in how we pray and even enter the Church and become Catholic.

There are many items in SC that have yet to be fully implemented: catechesis, the liturgy of the hours, cultural adaptations, etc. Past columns in the last 20 years have touched on these and highlighted hopes for continued implementation from pastors of souls. It took generations for the first codification of liturgical books after the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century to fully realize their potential. The second and third generations of books since Vatican II, e.g., the *Roman Missal*, have helped us continue the catechetical and implementation process.

A recent example from a wedding helps illustrate this. When I shared with the couple that there was an updated ritual and pointed out some of the new items, such as the *Gloria* and the acclamation after the consent (“Thanks be to God”), they said, “Cool! We’re so glad that they made it joyful and something the people can sing.”

Let us continue to bask in the many ways we make liturgy meaningful and uplifting for our people, and a joyous affirmation of our faith. Take a look at *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on its anniversary, December 9, and cherish the meaning it has for us today and for the future. Recognize that liturgy is, as the ancient phrase states, the “work of the people.” While we have been doing very good work for 55 years in implementing the council’s vision of the renewed liturgy, we still have more to do to ensure that God is worshiped “in spirit and in truth.”

Reminders for November and December

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

- Saturday, November 24: Saint Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest and Companions, Martyrs of Vietnam. It is good to remember that not all who died and are remembered in this memorial were Vietnamese. Terminology is important and to acknowledge this fact by stating, “The Martyrs of Vietnam.”
- Saint Juan Diego is on a Sunday this year, but his memorial is in the new supplement.

Some of the civic and ecclesial days to keep in mind as we pray with God’s family:

- Veterans Day is Sunday, November 11 (observed on Monday, November 12);
- Organize or participate in a Thanksgiving service around Thursday, November 22;
- Celebrate the entrance into the catechumenate during the month of November and not on the First Sunday of Advent. It is not required to celebrate the Rite of Acceptance on the First Sunday of Advent;
- Plan an overview of the Gospel of Luke (Year C Sunday Lectionary).

See the *Book of Blessings* (BB) to prepare special blessings and prayers for the following:

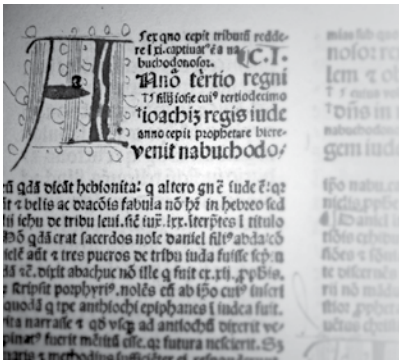
- November 2 (All the Faithful Departed): Visit to the Cemetery, BB, Chapter 57;
- November 22 (Thanksgiving): Blessing of Food, BB, Chapter 58;
- December 2 (First Sunday of Advent): Blessing of Advent Wreath, BB, Chapter 47;

- December 25 (Christmas): Blessing of Manger or Nativity Scene, BB, Chapter 48;
- Christmas Time: Blessing of Christmas Tree, BB, Chapter 49;
- Christmas Time: Blessing of Homes, BB, Chapter 50.

And don't forget the special chants that are found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*:

- The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas);
- The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts (Epiphany).





BREAKING THE WORD

Scriptural Reflections - Homiletics

by Barbara Shanahan

November 1, 2018
All Saints

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.

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

I think it is safe to say that there are two aspects to sainthood: a human, earthly side and the heavenly, transcendent side. Is a saint something you hope to become or are you a saint in the making now? Once while teaching primary grades, the lot fell to me and my first-grade class to prepare the school liturgy for the feast of All Saints. "Saint" is not an easy concept to communicate to six-year-olds, so we decided that "friend of God" was the best way to frame this. Next day at Mass, Father entered into a dialogue homily with the children, asking if there were any saints present; if so, please stand up. Jumping to their feet were 45 little first-grade "saints"! His homily was predicated on the idea that saints were in heaven with God! My kids had it right in one important and simple way: a saint is one who takes seriously being a friend of God.

In his apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis speaks about our being saints in the making; about our call to holiness. With the gospel portrait of Jesus clearly in view, he states that "the Lord asks everything of us and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created" (1). This is the reward of the saint, of the one who seeks holiness above all else. Later in the document, he states that "a Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness for "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thes 4:3). Each saint is on a mission planned by the Father to reflect and embody . . . aspects of the Gospel" (19).

Each of the texts proclaimed on this feast speak about this human aspect of a life lived in faithfulness to God and about the blessed life that awaits us, the rewards promised by God to those who have lived their earthly life with faithfulness.

- Revelation speaks of those who have survived the time of trial and are now privileged to stand before the throne of God wearing white robes and carrying palm branches.
- Psalm 24 asks, "Who can climb the LORD's mountain or enter his holy place?" The response comes back: "The clean of hand and heart." These shall receive blessing and reward from God who saves.
- 1 John 3 says that all who hold onto the hope of being a child of God receive the reward of being made like him, "for we shall see him as he is"!
- Matthew underscores that in each of the beatitudes something runs counter to conventional expectations. We are asked to trust that God blesses those who place their trust in these words.

The beatitudes are the most familiar section of the Sermon on the Mount. How do we breathe new life into the demands of Christian living we find here? Familiarity can be our greatest obstacle to this. We know the words so well! But have we heard them deeply within ourselves? In the apostolic exhortation mentioned above, Pope Francis takes each of the beatitudes and lays out for us ways they can take on tangible significance in our daily living. Thus, our pursuit of holiness is focused on the example and teaching and ministry of Jesus. Will we ever master all that is contained here, much less all the gospel writings? Scholars speak of this as an "eschatological discourse" pointing to promises held in hope for a future time. For example, will mourning ever cease on this planet? Yet in faith we know and believe that we look forward to a better homeland!

In the Sermon on the Mount are found the words, "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Can't that stop you in your tracks! But here again is the challenge to holiness, the challenge of being a saint in the making. We have our eyes fixed on God and on Jesus who became one like us, and we try to be perfect. Sainthood is the reward for the effort we make. We will never be perfect, but the model we have to keep before us is perfect!

A suggestion: find the apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* online. It is well worth the read!

November 4, 2018
Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Deuteronomy 6:2-6; Psalm 18:2-3, 33-4, 47, 51; Hebrews 7:23-28;
Mark 12:28b-34**

We hold onto hope and are often inspired by the fact that most people, believers or not, extend kindness to others because of the common bond of humanity we share. Today's gospel reading pairs love of others with love for God, suggesting that the love we show our neighbor is the tangible side of our love for God. Standing behind our deeds of kindness is the real challenge we face of loving God.

Mark, borrowing from the passage in Deuteronomy, includes not simply the injunction to "love God," but repeats for us how we might do this; qualities, if you will, of the nature and intensity of that love. Deuteronomy begins with the word "listen," the essential disposition if we are to hear the divine voice with human ears and love the Lord with our whole heart, being, and strength. Mark, describing these same qualities, mentions loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, strength, and understanding. If you think about it, we are to love God with the totality of our being — physical, mental, and spiritual. The effort we make would be transformative. It becomes a powerful force that shapes us and inspires us. Think about someone you love in this way and about how vital and life-enhancing the experience is.

This is not a love that is bound by rules or checklists. It is a love that is prodigal and unpredictable. There is no steady beat to this kind of love, open as it is to endless possibilities, inviting us to a change of heart, mind, and understanding as one grows. To love with all our powers of mind and body and heart is to leave no part of ourselves content to stay in one place. We do not cling to our own security or interests but open ourselves to the variety of ways the other (here, God) has demonstrated love for us. How else can we learn how to love?

Deuteronomy is adamant, in the verses that follow today's selection, that these thoughts must never be forgotten. They need to be remembered, recited, taught, and posted on the doorways of our houses, worn on our sleeves! We can become complacent about such things if we do not daily recall how God loves us and how we must be open to love our God. We will never love as God does, but we are

called to remember and be motivated to love totally because of what we know about God's love.

The passage from Hebrews takes the theme of loving God in another direction. How we love God is set before us in the passages we have considered. But why are we so motivated to love God? We have a few more weeks until the end of this liturgical year to ponder the message of this New Testament writer, indeed a masterful theologian.

Today's passage places us in the central section of the "letter." Hebrews draws on the significance of God's promises to Israel. These include the law, the covenant, the sacrificial cult with its repeated rituals that restore Israel to right relationship with God.

The point being made is that the present realities introduced by Christ have changed all that. The writer/speaker is doing what we just said: he is stretching the mind, heart, and understanding of his hearers. He tells them that the one sacrifice of Christ, the High Priest, accomplished what the longstanding cult of Israel tried to effect: bridging the gap between the people and God. All the elaborate rituals of Israel's worship could not accomplish this; they had to be repeated endlessly. But Christ, because of his unique relationship with God — the final word spoken to Israel, the very imprint of God's being (Heb 1:1-4) — once and for all accomplishes our salvation.

November 11, 2018

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Kings 17:10-16; Psalm 146:7, 8-9, 9-10; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Our attention is drawn to the widow in the readings for today. In the ancient world, widows were vulnerable members of society. Women were under the protection of father or brother and then husband or son. Outside these relationships, it appears that women were deprived of rights and social status. But the "widow, orphan, and stranger" were to be safeguarded according to the Torah. They are among those whom God especially favors (see Ex 22:20-23). Those who exploit them are spoken of in harshest terms by the prophets of Israel and characterized as wicked, deserving of severe punishment.

The Torah required that Israel never forget what God did for them when they were vulnerable slaves in Egypt. In turn, Israel is called to act as God did in showing compassion. Does this challenge us as we form opinions and make laws regarding today's most vulnerable: refugees, exiles, minorities, and immigrants? Are these the modern-day equivalent of "widow, orphan, and stranger"?

We should take note of the carefully drawn portrait of the two widows in the readings. We may have to put on the shoes of our ancient ancestors to understand their role in the stories. Today, widows are not necessarily without status, rights, or financial security. So, what can they tell us?

A widow is someone who has lost a sure, reliable life partner who lent security and comfort and a sense of well-being. Experiencing such a loss can possibly leave one more willing to take life as it comes, to accept what is and to loosen one's grip on things because the greatest loss life can bring has already been experienced. Living life from this perspective teaches where our strength really lies.

The widow can be the personification of the beatitude "Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Widows must grow a kind of self-assured dependence because of their solitary life. The experience of aloneness can teach valuable lessons, including a greater dependence on God. Simple trust is part of this. Spend what you have, do what you must, and face whatever comes only to be surprised that "the jar of flour will not go empty or the jug of oil run dry." What did the widow of Zarephath have to lose by putting trust in the prophet's words or the widow in the Gospel by giving her last coin? Even today the widow should be cautious of those who might exploit her generosity and vulnerability. Heaven help anyone who would do such!

In the Gospel, Jesus is "people watching" when he spies the widow putting two coins into the temple treasury: "all she had, her whole livelihood." Mark gives us a contrast between the scribes and the widow. Scribes were a class of religious functionaries, experts in Jewish life and traditions. They knew all the right things to do — externally anyway! Both widows teach us what true piety and devotion require: to trust the word of God even though there may be no tangible reason to do so and to keeping nothing back from God, even the little we have.

The sentiments in the psalm assure us that God provides for “the stranger, the widow, and the orphan.” Powerful rulers will return to the dust, but it is God who grants salvation and sustains life in ways we cannot provide for ourselves. All this is gratuitous gift! We give our little to God, who in turn bestows unfathomable blessings.

Much of what we have been saying refers to attitudes important in our relationship with God: how shall I come before the Lord? Worship and rituals in ancient Israel served one purpose: to restore right relationship between God and the people. In the Letter to the Hebrews, Christ is presented as the High Priest who does what the ancient rituals of Israel never quite achieved: restores right relationship with God.

The function of the priest was “to offer gifts and sacrifices” (5:1). The gift of himself that Christ offers changes reality, unlike the priests of the old covenant who repeatedly offered the blood of animals that brought no lasting change. In the old order, the way into the sanctuary (access to God who dwelt there) was hidden (see 9:8-9), but now through Christ, the way is known. We have direct access to God! The sacrifice of Christ has cleansed our consciences to worship the living God (9:11-14). Christ accomplishes what we can only give grateful thanks for having received. Worship is gratitude and requires faith and trust, Did the widows know this?

November 18, 2018 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Daniel 12:1-3; Psalm 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11; Hebrews 10:11-14, 18; Mark 13:24-32

The dawning of belief in the resurrection and life after death is slow to shed light on the Old Testament and not altogether accepted even in the New Testament. Israel held fiercely to life and its belief in a God who saves his people, whether from an enemy, illness, destruction, or death. Israel did not focus on life in the next world as much as on the good world of God’s creation.

At the same time, life was not always perfect. Suffering and tragedy are explained away as the consequences of human choices. This explanation worked until it didn’t. Many evils existed that are not the

direct result of human failure. Israel comes to grips with this dilemma in its writings, especially the Book of Job. Where is God in the midst of this? Do we not ask the same question today when a “time unsurpassed in distress” (Dn 12:1) or “a time of tribulation” (Mk 13:24) comes upon our world?

Suffering of unimaginable proportions has touched the world of Daniel and the world of Mark around 70 CE. For Daniel, it was the imposition of a Greek way of life and outlawing traditional practices, that threatened Jewish identity and brought about the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem. For Mark, it was the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Romans. Both instances gave rise to martyrs put to death for remaining faithful to their beliefs.

In the Book of Daniel, Israel crosses into new terrain declaring that those who suffered persecution and death at the hands of the Greeks out of fidelity to the Torah would be rewarded. It could not be otherwise! Their trials were not any sort of punishment. These faithful ones would wake to everlasting reward. The passage also speaks of accountability for those who perpetrated the evil. These would know everlasting disgrace. Another group, identified as “those with insight . . . who lead others,” will shine as stars in the firmament. Ultimately, goodness and fidelity reign.

The message of Daniel must be understood in all its newness against the backdrop of the time when it was written; maybe a time not unlike our own in many ways. There is a certainty that God knows the suffering of his people and will respond in ways that surpass our grasp or understanding. God will just do it!

The Gospel, as we noted, has many parallels with Daniel. Here it is not Michael, the divinely-appointed guardian of Israel, who will save, but “the Son of Man.” This title applied to Jesus is also borrowed from the Book of Daniel: in chapter 7, this enigmatic figure refers to a heavenly being who represents a new kingdom, a contrast with other regimes described as fierce beasts. The victory won by the Son of Man is given to the holy ones of the Most High, those who suffered death out of fidelity to God, those who are given eternal life.

We detect in both Daniel and Mark the characteristics of a literary style known as “apocalyptic.” This form of writing appears when the world is in turmoil and out of control, when there seem to be no answers

to the problem that exist. The world is in disarray and nothing makes sense. The stars are falling! The images are not to be taken literally. If the world is falling apart, apocalyptic announces with certainty that a new age is about to dawn. Out of this turmoil, God will destroy the old order and establish a new order. It is profoundly hopeful, and places confidence in God, who is the Lord of history. Psalm 16 expresses the faith, trust, and deep peace of one who knows the truth of the words, "With God at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (8).

A fitting culmination are the final words from the passage from Hebrews: "Their sin and evildoing I will remember no more. Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer offering for sin." Indeed, in and through Christ, all things are restored and made new. The worst evil can no longer afflict us.

November 25, 2018

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Daniel 7:13-14; Psalm 93:1-2, 5; Revelation 1:5-8; John 18:33b-37

The feast of Christ the King fittingly takes us into the realm of mystery. Each reading has a visionary element about it, some reality that transcends what the bodily eye can see but that the mind's eye stretches to grasp about God's gracious design for his creation. Do we all carry about within us our own vision of this? What is yours? Today we hear of the vision of three: Daniel, John of Patmos, and Jesus as told by John.

To appreciate what the Book of Daniel is trying to communicate, it would be helpful to read the beginning of Daniel's vision (7:1-8) and recall what we said in our reflection for the Thirty-third Sunday of Ordinary Time, specifically the description and function of apocalyptic writing.

When some evil that holds sway seems outside our control, imagery is used to convey a truth. The animals described represent a parade of empires, one more brutal than the next. These threaten the people of God. The empires are brought up from the sea, another image of primal chaos. Recall that God ordered this darkness and primal abyss at creation (see Gn 1:1-2). Now, that chaos is unleashed and threatens the faithful for a time. But in the presence of the "Ancient of Days,"

judgment is pronounced and the threat posed is rendered powerless. "One like the Son of Man" appears in the vision and is given rule. This one ushers in a kingdom that is very different from all that came before.

The writer of Daniel is expressing belief in God who rules even in the midst of chaos. Evil, self-serving, oppressive regimes ultimately will crumble and one after the likeness of God will establish a lasting dominion. Let us not read the Book of Daniel as though it is about the past. This is a message we need to hold onto today.

Revelation is another visionary book in apocalyptic form, also written during a time of chaos to give hope and to strengthen the faithful who are threatened. This is the purpose of apocalyptic writing. Here, our sight is focused on Christ, who he is and what he does: "first born of the dead, ruler of the kings of the earth . . . who loves us and frees us by his blood." The vision lifts us right into the clouds!

In the exchange between Pilate and Jesus, you might have the sense that two different conversations are taking place. Pilate is firmly planted on the earth, but Jesus' vision takes him somewhere else: "My kingdom is not of this world." As is typical of a vision, not everyone can grasp what cannot be seen with the eye.

Each of the three readings speaks hopefully and convincingly of the power of God, the reign of God, and the kingdom of God. Yet a part of each of these visions includes the reality of suffering that must be endured. In Daniel, the beasts were given an extension of their dominion for a time. The passage from Revelation says the people of the earth will look on the one they have pierced. The glory and power achieved came at a great price. In John, there are no soldiers to rescue Jesus from the fate that awaited him; his kingdom was established in receipt of violence so that we might have life.

We are assured a place in this kingdom. Yet all the trials and obstacles have not been eliminated. Sometimes our vision may not include this bit of reality. Getting to the full realization of the vision can be costly and demands endurance. But the prize *is* promised us.

The eternal, ancient concept of God as Israel's king provides continuity with today's feast. Psalm 93: "Your throne has stood firm from of old, from all eternity, O LORD, you are." How important it is for us to

understand the ancient traditions as these now help us grasp who Christ is and what is being revealed about the meaning of his life and mission and destiny, and how this changes all things for us!

December 2, 2018 First Sunday of Advent (Year C)

Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

There is a day in the Jewish calendar when the public reading of the Torah comes to the final chapter of Deuteronomy (the last book of the Torah) and without interruption the reading continues with the first chapter of Genesis (the first book of the Torah). The beginning! This festival day is called "*Simchat ha Torah*," meaning "rejoicing with/in the Torah." The spirit of joy associated with this festival derives from the idea of the never-ending cycle of God's love, revealed in the words of the Torah. There is no ending and no beginning; it is continuous! Members of the community are invited to take the scrolls from the ark that houses them and dance with them!

For us, this First Sunday of Advent is similar. Advent is a return to primal time: we already know in faith the "end of the story" as we remember the beginning. There is a divine reliability and security in the eternal nature of God's promises that we hear proclaimed in the familiar readings of the Advent season. Reflect on how this strikes you: is repetition "boring"? Is it reassuring? Do we listen with new ears to what we have heard over and over in the past? Do we find a deeper resonance and a deeper joy as we look back and look forward? As we experience changes in our life, do the words strike a different chord within us?

The readings set before us today are an interesting mix of hope and encouragement, mystery and warning. We must read and listen carefully or we can be overtaken by the fearful specter of signs in the heavens and chaos around us. Remember what we said in earlier reflections from Daniel regarding the Son of Man. This enigmatic figure, ushering in the reign of God, will bring about a kingdom of peace. The language tells us this will not be an ordinary day! Although this all remains a mystery hidden from us, we have to know that the

good God has only a future full of hope in store for us who believe.

Jeremiah speaks in various ways of this future: “days are coming . . .”; “in those days, at that time.” He refers here to God’s time, the moment when all that would oppose the plan and purpose of God will be undone. Recalling the hopes attached to the promises made to the dynasty of David, this would be a time of unprecedented peace when all will know justice and be treated with respect, especially the lowly and vulnerable. This is what the words and promise originally intended. It is not a time of unlimited prosperity where the rich get richer and portfolios are bulging. This is not justice! This is not success! God’s time will be a time when justice would be done to the lands afflicted. How many afflicted ones need to believe in these words today? They cannot be given hope if we who teach and study and preach do not own the hope ourselves.

At the beginning of the liturgical year, it is interesting to note the thoughts that are given first place for our consideration. Luke confronts the reality of human existence. How many generations since he wrote have believed these words were meant for them as we are prone to do today? Fear surrounds us on all sides. Fear for ourselves, for our world, and surely for our nation.

Yet there is a challenge for us too. What can keep us from becoming paralyzed by fear is a firm belief in the future life as imagined by God. It is for us to be bearers of this truth. To help with this, we have the word of God that will not pass away. And how often in this word does God promise us hope! We need to keep guard over our hearts then, to pray and hold onto this peace, believing in the promises God makes. Eternity dwells within us as we expectantly await God’s coming. The joy of Advent announces that. Let us, too, rejoice in our word of hope!

What does the year ahead hold for us? Each year finds us closer to God than the year before! Do you feel this to be true? “May the Lord strengthen your hearts to be blameless in holiness . . . at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes 3:13).

December 9, 2018 Second Sunday of Advent

Baruch 5:1-9; Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

If we become observant readers of the prophetic books, we will note a cyclical pattern there. We might say it conveys a basic theology found throughout salvation history: Israel sins, God “punishes,” the people turn back, and God restores them to his favor. It seems as if Israel is always either turning toward the Lord or away from him. This very simplistic explanation for the evil that threatens the people is that “God is punishing them for sins.”

In later biblical writing, this idea is challenged and deemed inadequate in explaining why there is suffering in the world. The important message to be found here is that God is always ready to extend mercy and restore the relationship. Israel, and we, will always need God’s mercy and God is always ready to offer it to us. This is the message we should hear.

A selection assigned in the liturgy may not provide us with the entire cycle of sin, punishment, turning, and restoration/forgiveness. Short passages may only reflect one direction (Israel either turning away from God or returning to God). We should know it is only part of the story, not the last word. Not unexpectedly, the Advent readings will reflect this pattern. The cycle should pulse within us as we live in gratitude for the gift of salvation, aware of our need for God’s mercy that is always offered to us.

The passage from Baruch finds us in the pleasant place of “restoration.” I would suggest you read from Chapter 4 to appreciate what this “restoration” means in light of what has been lost. Jerusalem is personified as a grieving woman who has given up her children into exile (4:19-22), who is left as a widow (4:11-13). The words allow us to capture something of the profound sense of loss when Jerusalem is destroyed and the people are left to question if God has abandoned them. Here is the first movement in the cycle: judgment and consequences. As readers of the Bible today, we would no longer imagine God as punishing with military defeat in the way our ancestors would have thought. The important point here is the enduring

confidence in God who will bring the exiles back home (4:26-29).

In the passage assigned for this Sunday's liturgy, we see a reversal of fortunes. We read in 4:20 that Jerusalem has taken off her garment of peace and put on the sackcloth of mourning. Now (5:1), she takes off this robe of mourning and puts on the splendor of glory from God. Light and hope characterize this procession of exiles returning home.

This is one of those passages, not unlike many similar passages from the prophet Isaiah. The words are like a soothing balm. Why can't it be like this always? The words are all too applicable to the reality of today. How many families sound like the widowed mother of Chapter 4 who sends her children away or must take them away? Does anyone leave home and go into exile willingly, without a reason? Will these ever return home, arms laden with sheaves or their beloved children? It seems that Baruch might have been a book for exiles or those living away from Jerusalem who remember and carry within themselves the image of "home," the holy city where God dwelt, not forgetting the promise of God that he would dwell again in their midst. If this is so, then wherever the exiles pray to God, God is there and that place is "home."

How often the political reality gives us the backdrop for the biblical narrative. God's plan and purpose is accomplished in the mysterious unfolding of human history. So, it was in Baruch's time and so it is in the world of John the Baptist. The voice of the powerful is set alongside the voice of the one crying out in the wilderness. Then, as now, the voice of the powerful can be wildly deceptive and not speak for or to our best selves. It is for each of us to listen to the small voice within, the voice of the wilderness, that invites us to distance ourselves from the din and tend to repentance — turning to the Lord who speaks in the silence and darkness of these Advent days.

December 16, 2018 Third Sunday of Advent

Zephaniah 3:14-18; Isaiah 12:2, 2-3, 4, 5-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18

The salvation promised in the words of Zephaniah, like the words from Paul's letter to his beloved community at Philippi, are words that

we never grow weary of hearing. “The peace of God that surpasses understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus” and “The LORD your God is in your midst . . . who will rejoice over you with gladness and renew you in his love.” The longing we have for such peace and closeness to God is rooted at the core of our being. For over 2,000 years, these words, in their simplicity and their mystery, have given hope to countless people, even though there are some who would question that God is bringing such peace and comfort. Life challenges these words; yet they inspire us. Why is it so?

Zephaniah, writing about 600 years before Paul, speaks of Jerusalem and the people being cleansed and a remnant restored. These will see God dwelling in their midst once again. The text we read today describes this joyful experience. Paul, after instructing and correcting the Philippians and offering Christ (and himself) as an example for them to follow (Phil 2:5-1), encourages them to enjoy the fruits of their efforts in rejoicing and in peace. The sentiments we never tire of hearing and the words of hope that have inspired generations come as a blessing in response to our efforts to live faithfully. Living in Christ is a responsibility that falls on us; it is not something that is done for us or to us. It calls for a conscious commitment from us.

What do we find in these readings that gives us some guidelines for our search? Earlier, Zephaniah urges the people “to seek the LORD . . . to seek justice . . . to seek humility” (Zep 2:3). Those who respond are only a “remnant.” *Remnant* is a favorite word used by the prophets. It suggests that only a few fully grasp what it means to be a true Israelite, knowing how to live in right relationship with God. “I will leave as a remnant in your midst, a people humble and lowly who take refuge in the name of the LORD” (Zep 3:11-13). For Paul, the Philippians are called to serve God through prayer and thanksgiving, by showing kindness and remembering the things Paul values and how he loved them and wished for them to know Christ as he came to know him.

In the Gospel, the people pose the same question to John that we might ask: “Just tell us, what we are supposed to do?” Like Zephaniah and Paul, John spoke good news — that God was in their midst! How and where do you encounter God in your life? How do you rejoice in this realization? Is it a dawning understanding that grows with life as you experience it? The uniqueness of each of our situations suggests that “no one size fits all”! Each of us will respond to God differently. We are not duplicates with a single set of rules and answers. One day one

response will be the right one, and the next day something different will be called for.

"Shout with joy and exaltation, O City of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel" (Is 12:6). Jerusalem (Zion) represents the dwelling place of God for Israel, the tangible sign of God's presence with them. Jesus comes into the world as Emmanuel — God with us! The temple gives way to the demands of faith, as we come to realize how "great in our midst is the Holy One of Israel" and how beautiful is a life of faith in Jesus Christ!

December 23, 2018 Fourth Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:1-4a; Psalm 80:2-3, 15-16, 18-19; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-55

The inspired writer of the Letter to the Hebrews takes the liberty of placing on the lips of Jesus the words of Psalm 40. They invite us to listen and understand the incarnation from the inside. Be aware that translations can differ. The psalm says, "You delight not in sacrifice and offerings but *in an open ear*" (*Revised Grail Psalter*). Hebrews states this differently: "*a body you prepared for me.*"

Both expressions invite us to ponder different aspects of the incarnation, but our reflection take us to the same place: the willing obedience of the Son to the Father and his becoming human so as to become one of us to redeem us and all of creation, restoring all to God and engendering creation with his Spirit. The passage from Hebrews continues: "Behold, I come to do your will, O God." The psalm states: "I delight to do your will, O my God; your instruction lies deep within me."

In earlier reflections for the last Sundays of Ordinary Time, we spoke about the Letter to the Hebrews. There is a large section of that letter that speaks about the temple cult, drawing comparisons between the effectiveness of ancient rituals in contrast with the work of Christ. Today's passage is from this section. Temple worship had as its main objective to secure the dwelling of God among the people. Concern for ritual purity and sacred space and keeping of sacred time all was about maintaining God's continued presence. Israel devised a temple

cult that included sacrifices, holocausts that would appease God.

In light of that, how striking is the passage we hear: “You neither desired nor delighted in sacrifices and holocausts”! Instead, God desires and delights in the open ear that accepts and does God’s will. This pleases God! By the Son’s acceptance of the Father’s will, the old is replaced in ways we can only begin to comprehend.

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, we bring the mystery of the incarnation to full flower in the birth of Christ. However many ways you are able to ponder the rich layers of meaning the Bible puts before us will help you to grasp the radical importance of what took place in that cave at Bethlehem. The Bible always means more than it says. You have to look beneath the surface of the words.

We might be more familiar with the words of Micah as Matthew quotes them in the account of the Magi inquiring into the whereabouts of the new King. In the context of his writings, Micah is not predicting a future event or providing us with geographical and biological information. He is linking the mission of the awaited ideal ruler (Messiah) with the ancient hopes of Israel. David of Bethlehem was the simple shepherd king who would rule over God’s people. He and his sons after him were given the divine mandate to rule with the compassion, mercy, and peace of God. As Israel’s story unfolds, things did not work out as God had planned. The reality was never achieved in the political sense, but when Matthew quotes this verse from Micah he is saying that here is the one to fulfill God’s plan perfectly.

Mary’s Magnificat, her canticle of joy, like the words of Micah, make us consider the gentle reign of God, who cares for the least among us. So much is heard today about making things great. The only one who can do this is God. God’s manner of judging greatness is something quite different from what many understand this to be. Trace the whole of salvation history to see whether this is consistent with God’s way of deciding and leading. In the remaining days of Advent, let us, with Mary, quietly maintain a heart that rejoices in God and that proclaims his goodness.

December 25, 2018 The Nativity of the Lord

Mass at Midnight: Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Mass at Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12; Psalm 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

Mass During the Day: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18

The rich banquet of readings suggested for the three Mass settings for the feast of Christmas invite us to partake of this sumptuous fare and be filled with wonder at all that God has done and continues to do in our midst. Each of these readings opens to us the meaning of the incarnation of the Son of God and the lasting significance of his birth in human flesh.

It is important to note how these two mysteries, the incarnation and the birth, are connected with the story of Israel. Christ is the fulfillment of Israel's hope for enduring peace (Isaiah 9) and for a lasting restoration to God's favor (Isaiah 62). Israel held onto such hopes during its long and circuitous relationship with God. In Christ, centuries of waiting are brought to conclusion. This is the grand sweep taken in by the proclamation of God's word this Christmas Day. Our appreciation of this requires us to be familiar with the story of God's unfolding revelation in Israel's history so we can understand how Jesus is the fullest expression of God's promises and covenants. This is a long and beautiful story. Something important is missing in our understanding of who Christ is without this insight.

Since the Lectionary has recently included readings from Hebrews, we will focus on the Mass During the Day that includes the introduction (*Exordium*) from the Letter to the Hebrews. The beginning verses state what we have just said: God has been "speaking" in times past! How does God "speak" or communicate? God has been persistent in this! God creates by a word! God rescues and saves, God enters into covenants and speaks in prophetic warnings and words of hope. The Bible is full of stories of the overwhelming goodness, mercy, and generosity of God. But this is a new time! *Now God will speak through a Son!* What can be said of the "Son"?

The idea of God is far beyond our imagining, but in Christ we encounter another human person we can know. Hold onto what is said: the Son is the “reflection” (mirror image) of God. The “imprint of his being”; an imprint is an exact replica of the original! The “refulgence of his glory.” This is the “God that no one can see and live,” but again, in Christ, we have one like us through whom the love, mercy, and grace of God are made known to us face-to-face! He is the perfect expression of God, who shared a preexistent life with God and partnered with God in the work of creation. This is the one before us who accepted our human condition to accomplish our salvation, restoring us and all creation once and for all to right relationship with God; who, after completing his mission, returned to the Father, forever exalted in glory!

If the words leave us breathless, no wonder! Again, we are lifted up into the enormity of God as we gaze on the figures in the little cattle stall of Bethlehem. God must take delight in our wonder. How fitting to be out of our element!

Take special note of how many ideas from Hebrews also appear in the Prologue of the Gospel of John. Jesus is the one who existed with God, who is the Word God speaks, who took leave of heaven, coming to dwell on earth, becoming one like us. This Word became flesh and reveals the glory of the Father. John adds that the Son returns to the Father’s side, exalted in glory. The same elements are found in both Hebrews and John.

Hebrews speaks of the “name” of the Son as being more excellent than the angels. Perhaps people then, as now, can imagine angelic beings. But the Son is something else again! “Name,” in biblical thought, has to do with identity. It reveals the personality and the character of a person, his or her worth and dignity. What is emphasized here is the unique relationship the Son shares with the Father. Angels were a mysterious presence, mediators of the divine presence, but the Son is closer to God than the angels! His communication will outshine theirs!

“Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted his people! He has redeemed Jerusalem!” (Is 52:9).

December 30, 2018

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5; Colossians 3:12-21; Luke 2:41-52

Pope Francis asks the question: "How are things when it comes to joy in the home? Is there joy in your family? The presence of God in the family makes for the presence of joy and happy times." These days it seems that so many families are simply trying to keep up with busy schedules and handle the essential demands, the result being that more important things get set aside. It is so easy to stand outside the door of any family and tell them what would make the greatest difference when there are so many other things claiming to accomplish the same thing. It seems you have to own and value what Pope Francis is saying: Is the presence of God in the family a priority, and what difference does this make? Is this valued for what it can create within the home?

The words from the Letter to the Colossians are beautiful, and they hold out an ideal. We are created in the image of God and our life's work is to let this reality shine forth from us. The qualities of heartfelt compassion and kindness are covenant qualities that the Bible attributes to God. The virtues of humility, patience, gentleness, forgiveness, and love are found embodied in the life, mission, and teachings of Jesus. Peace is the gift breathed on the Church, the Easter gift of Christ and given in the Spirit. Peace is like the rudder that gives us stability.

Saint Augustine, reflecting on the passage from John, imagines Jesus saying to each of us: "I left you in peace, I expect to find you in peace." This is something we must hold on to. We are each created in the image of God, and the way we live bears this out. We grow in this image and each person influences that growth and life in those around them. Thus, we share the life of God! The attitude of thankfulness is mentioned three times in the passage. How does a grateful heart influence the way we live and the way we relate with others? It is the basis of joy and consideration for others.

None of this comes naturally. It takes work and prayer and looking beyond ourselves. Trust in each other is essential, along with a willingness to forgive. The description of family life given here is not

necessarily a religious description. The virtues cited were valued in the Greco-Roman world of the first century CE. It was believed that if the family was stable and well-ordered, so would society follow suit. But we have reasons to look more deeply at what motivates us as Christian parents, children, and families. The difference is that God is the foundation of all that defines the peaceful home. These values become part of life if we own them, value them, study them, and pray to make them our own.

The precious lives to be nurtured in the family, parents as well as children, need joy. They need play. They need time away to appreciate and grow that grateful heart and spirit. Nothing that is said here is new. Everyone knows how important it is to refresh the spirit with joy and togetherness and prayer. Each family should make this a priority. Everyone knows what it is to be respected and valued for his or her unique role in the family.

At times, hard decisions will need to be made to follow such a course. If one realizes that these decisions are based on our growing awareness of God and the opportunity we have to share the power of creative love, perhaps it would be easier to set aside the things that need doing to make laughter, kindness, forgiveness, and prayer happen each day. "Is there joy in your family? The presence of God makes for joy in the family" (Pope Francis). And joy in the family will hopefully spill over and touch the world with such simple values!





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Art Review



MADONNA AND CHILD WITH THE ORIGAMI ANGELS

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Not too long ago, a Filipino woman came up to me after Mass and asked me to pray for her and her family. With tears streaming down her cheeks, she told me her story. She, like so many strong, self-giving women from the Philippines, had left her country to seek work that could help support her family in a time of crisis. Her husband had very serious medical issues that prevented him from working and created challenging medical expenses. Additionally, she had two children to support.

Her choices were limited in her country. So, like many other Filipino women, she left the land she loved to find employment opportunities elsewhere. Thankfully, she found work. In fact, she was working two jobs — one job during the day and another at night, with no time off to attend to her own well-being. And she did all of this to provide for her family, despite the pain and sorrow of not being able to be with them and living alone in a foreign land.

Through her tears, she told me she had just received word that her husband's condition had worsened. She had been laboring away from her country for two years, hoping her tireless efforts would help improve his health so that she could come home. Now she was standing before me weeping and asking for my prayers.

While this woman's story is particularly heart-wrenching, millions of other Filipino Overseas Foreign Workers (OFWs) make similar tremendous sacrifices every day to help support their families back home. The same could be said of so many people from China, India, and Mexico, the three leading countries with citizens working abroad and sending money home to support their families. It seems humanity has a long way to go to realize the basic Catholic values of economics based on the intrinsic value of the human person and the preservation of the family.

With all this in mind, gaze upon Janet McKenzie's striking painting *Madonna and Child with the Origami Angels*. Can you not see some of that same strength and determination in the face of this Asian representation of the mother of Jesus? Does she not convey some of the character of the Filipino OFW who will provide for her family, come what may? Does not the Christ-child look completely supported and secure in her arms? Or are their intimate embrace and Christ's closed eyes a sad acknowledgement that mother and child must soon part because the world is too unjust to keep them together? Is the somewhat somber tone of this painting a reminder of the cross that these two will bear in an often-cruel world? Is this a goodbye?

Advent and Christmas may not be when we wish to think about these realities. After all, we, too, need the joy and celebration of these seasons to lift the weight of the burdens we carry. Yet, surely, we can find some way, in the generosity of the season, to help those struggling in such circumstances. Christmas is a time where we celebrate the birth of the one who brings hope and salvation. What better way to celebrate the birth of our Savior than by helping bring hope to those families that are most in need!

Janet McKenzie's painting reminds us of the importance of hope in a subtle, inculturated manner. The "origami angels" of the title are symbols of that hope. As the theologian (Chung) Hyun Kyung has so eloquently written of these origami angels or "cranes" in McKenzie's painting, "In Asia, we fold paper cranes to help God hear our prayers, our deepest longings and hopes. . . . With the origami cranes behind them, showing the unfolding of peace, justice, and reconciliation, this dark Madonna with her child appears in a soft light of healing, wholeness, and transformation."¹

May we not only experience hope, "healing, wholeness, and transformation" this Christmas, but also be agents of hope, "healing, wholeness, and transformation" for those most in need. I pray especially for that Filipino mother's tears. May she be comforted and reunited with her family this Christmas!

Note

¹ (Chung) Hyun Kyung, "Madonna and Child with the Origami Angels" in *Holiness and The Feminine Spirit: The Art of Janet McKenzie*. Ed. Susan Perry (New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 63.

Poetry

All Saints Church of the Kitchen Table

during this forever moment
we give thanks
over coffee, cream, and sugar
all things cereal, orange juice
litany of scrambled eggs, bacon, toast
bless us
for the altar is spread with mercy each morning
words fleshed sacred to the touch
speaking in tongues of laughter filling saucer and cup
midnight snacks
chanting while opening jars of grandma's pickled okra
across memories, stories that will help bury her tomorrow
children fed growing like wildflowers
around this our meadow with the festival hum of bees
placemats and paper plates fit for the feast
mac and cheese, fish sticks and tea
paper towels wipe faces linen clean
sunday and thanksgiving christmas and easter rising
chocolate cake birthdays and ice cream
come dressed in vestments most sacred most holy
pjs, slippers, jeans
come as you are
all are invited to this table
where we are all the citizens
and somewhat saints who psalm imperfectly *amen*
around this our meadow with the festival hum of bees

Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS

Graced Mindfulness

The darkness was deep with a heaviness of spirit
Perhaps, you had been too close to sorrow
Too close to the fears of the night
Too close to the old to recognize the new
In grace-filled light
You saw what all along had been there
Waiting for you to awaken from your separateness
Waiting for you to put down your defensiveness
And ease back into conversation with your soul.

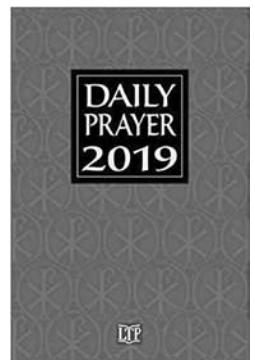
Patricia Chehy Pilette

Book Reviews

Daily Prayer 2019 continues a longstanding tradition of liturgical and prayer resources from Liturgical Training Publications. This year's author is no stranger to readers of *Emmanuel*. Blessed Sacrament Father John Thomas Lane is a regular contributor. He is the pastor of Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio, and has authored *Guide for Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* and contributed to numerous other liturgical publications.

Editions of *Daily Prayer* have been helping Catholics to deepen their faith through prayer for over a decade. The format is straightforward and easy to use. For each day of the year beginning with the start of the liturgical year in December 2018 and ending on December 31, 2019, the reader is given a scripture reading taken from the daily liturgy, a psalm, a reflection on the reading, intercessory prayers, and a closing prayer.

The premise and format of this book enables Catholics to put into practice one of the central principles of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which counsels us that the liturgy is the source and summit of Christian life. For many, participating in daily liturgy is out of reach for a variety of reasons. *Daily Prayer 2019* enables the reader to structure his or her daily prayer on the richness of the Church's liturgical year and feasts.



**DAILY PRAYER
2019:
A BOOK OF
PRAYER FOR
EACH DAY
OF THE
LITURGICAL
YEAR (Year C,
Year I)**

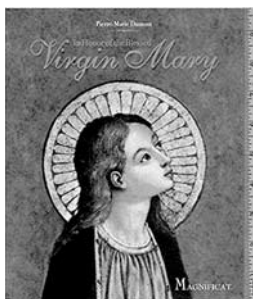
**Chicago, Illinois:
Liturgical Training
Publications, 2018
424 pp., \$12.00**

In one of the reflections in the book, Father Lane writes, “Jesus continuously invites his followers to look at the bigger picture.” At times, our prayer can become myopic and self-centered, focusing on our own immediate needs. Through the reflections and intercessory prayers presented, the author challenges us to expand our prayer to include the broader needs of our Church and our human family, enlarging our vision of living and practicing our faith.

In addition to its value as a personal prayer aid, *Daily Prayer 2019* offers parish ministers a valuable resource in providing prayer experiences for meetings and forming catechetical leaders in both day schools and religious education programs. RICA participants might also find in this resource a path to developing a liturgical spirituality.

Throughout its 17-year history, *Daily Prayer* readers have expressed how much this resource has helped them to grow in their spiritual life. Thanks to the insightful writing of John Thomas Lane, the tradition will continue with *Daily Prayer 2019*.

Mary Muehle
Associate of the Blessed Sacrament
Cleveland, Ohio



**IN HONOR OF
THE BLESSED
VIRGIN MARY**
Pierre-Marie
Dumont
New York, New
York: Magnificat,
2017
192 pp., \$24.95

Magnificat is a widely-read resource for liturgy and personal prayer. Founded in France in 1992 by Pierre-Marie Dumont, it debuted in the United States six years later under the editorship of Peter John Cameron, OP. *Magnificat* is known for its compact size, richly varied features and articles, and exquisite full-color covers.

In Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary brings together reproductions of 40 covers, enlarged details from them accentuating specific elements of the artwork, commentaries by Dumont, reflections on the mysteries of Mary's life, and hymns drawn from the Church's treasury of sacred music.

Dumont's book is not a “collector's work” or a “coffee-table volume” for the artistically inclined, as one might first assume. The highlighted covers weren't chosen primarily for their artistic merits, but because, placed together, they offer a sweeping meditation on Mary's life and role in God's redemptive plan. Included are moments that are part of the scriptural record of the Virgin (e.g., the annunciation, the visitation, the nativity, the Magi, the presentation of Jesus in the temple, the

wedding feast of Cana, the crucifixion, etc.) as well as others from the Church's liturgy, tradition, and devotion (e.g., the wedding of Mary and Joseph, Anne and Joachim ["God's Grandparents"], the dormition, the queenship of Mary, etc.).

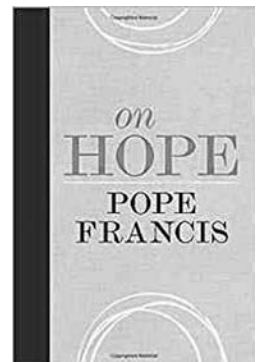
Dumont's intent is to open up the exalted mystery of the woman whom — echoing Mary's hymn of praise in Luke 1:46-55 — the "Almighty has looked on with favor," "done great things for," and "lifted up." The book is described as an "act of filial homage." That being said, his commentaries on art and faith are interesting and informative. They examine the masterpieces and the respective artists, often in the light of today's social-ecclesial reality.

What do you get in the 40 chapters? Chapter 13, "The Begetting of Light — The Nativity," is typical. In it, you will find an ancient hymn, *O Gloriosa Domina*, by Venantius Fortunatus (530-609), in Latin and in English; Dumont's commentary on the Flemish-born painter Jan Stephan van Calcar's *The Nativity*, with full-page and detail color renderings; and a concluding reflection by the twentieth-century Swiss physician and theologian Adrienne von Speyr. Together, they offer an uplifting presentation, both from the viewpoint of art history and that of belief and prayer.

I am not a subscriber to *Magnificat* nor have I ever been. I know many people who are faithful readers of it. Anyone who loves beautiful artwork and insightful analysis will appreciate *In Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. The believer, however, will find in it so much more to nourish his or her faith life and prayer. (It would make a very thoughtful Christmas gift for a cherished friend or parish minister!)

Anthony Schueller, SSS
Editor, *Emmanuel*

In this collection of 14 general audiences given between Advent 2016 and Lent 2017, Pope Francis offers reflections on various facets of the virtue of hope. His claim that "optimism disappoints, but hope does not" is tested throughout the book (1). He claims that hope brings a smile even when we walk through a desert. It gives the little ones cause to march on through God's history, even in spite of the history that powerful leaders try to impose. Unlike worldly hope that merely wishes for an event to happen, Christian hope reaches for what already



ON HOPE
Pope Francis
Chicago, Illinois:
Loyola Press,
2017
112 pp., \$12.95

exists in the paschal mystery (64).

The pope draws from Isaiah, Genesis (especially the stories of Abraham and Rachel), Judith, and Jonah in addition to the Gospels and Paul in developing his thoughts on hope. In contrast to scriptural images of hope, Francis justly criticizes the hope afforded by money, alliances, ideologies, and even fortune-tellers (40-41). Those who try to make their own future brighter through abortion, power, success, or vanity will be disappointed. Hope leads people to prayer and can transform their world even to the point where they will come to friendly terms with “sister death,” as Saint Francis of Assisi claimed (51).

Occasionally, the pope might have explained more fully how Old Testament expressions of hope are transformed by New Testament insights. For example, he praises Judith for her courage in beheading Nebuchadnezzar’s general Holofernes (Jdt 13:4 ff.). For Francis, her faith and prayer show that God allows death as an instrument of salvation (56-57); yet it is also true that Jesus seems to qualify that kind of hope (Mt 26:52). If Francis had more time to develop his thoughts, he might have explored the interpretation of Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe, who summarized the story of Judith by the observation, “Chastity went forth to do battle against lust, and holy humility forward to the destruction of pride. He fought with weapons, she with fasts. He in drunkenness, she in prayer” (Epistle 2.29).

Hope looks for help, and that means that compassionate people will come to the aid of those who hope. They will build bridges for them, and not walls (71). Furthermore, hope respects creation and does not destroy it. Hence, Francis criticizes those who contaminate water in their careless effort to extract minerals from the earth (82).

This useful collection of papal reflections on hope can stir conversation and much reflection on the virtue of hope. Scholars and ordinary faithful alike can benefit from reading them.

Gerald J. Bednar, PhD
Saint Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology
Cleveland, Ohio

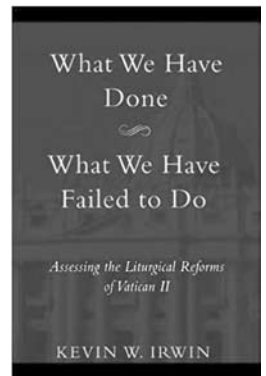
On pages two and sixteen of this book, Father Irwin shares its purpose: “. . . to shed light on, and to invite discussion about, the experience in which Catholics have been engaged since the Second Vatican Council in implementing and praying the liturgy as reformed after the council.” He begins by focusing on ten specific questions in a reverential tone, “yet not uncritical of what has been done to implement the reform rites.” Irwin cites examples of what we have done very well; I hoped he would have shared a deeper insight into what we have not done well, or “failed to do.”

The title is something I struggle with, for I come from a more positive approach; it is nice for him to focus on the “Confiteor” text, yet he writes, “This book will, I hope, be of particular benefit for all those involved in preparing and leading us in the reformed liturgy: bishops, priests, deacons, readers, servers, cantors, musicians, [Communion] ministers, and the variety of pastoral ministers whose daily efforts shape how and what we celebrate.” The book is of great value for those familiar with a working history of liturgy and would help inform those new to the Church to understand the liturgical transition since the Second Vatican Council.

The book is divided into ten chapters focusing on areas the author deems most important: Church renewal, active participation, making memory together, the sacramental principle, liturgical translations, the proclamation of the word and the liturgical homily, liturgical roles and presiding at liturgy, the arts, liturgical education and mystagogy and devotions and spirituality. Each chapter is a good assessment of the topic and offers key insights.

Irwin highlights that the objective of the liturgical reforms was the renewal of the Church, particularly at the intersection of Church life and liturgy. He cites exposure to the RCIA, the cycle of readings, the improvement of the liturgical year, especially the Triduum, the anointing of the sick, the liturgy of the hours, and the restoration of evening prayer as examples of this renewal. He offers an excellent reflection on symbol and the history of translating liturgical texts. Irwin carefully points out inconsistency and redundancy in the Church’s language, specifically in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, about our liturgical life, such as “active participation.” The section “Questions for Liturgical Preaching” should be mandatory reading for preachers.

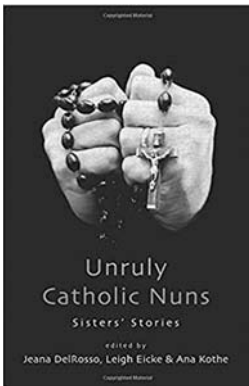
While I hoped for more insights into the future, this book is an excellent



WHAT WE HAVE
DONE,
WHAT WE HAVE
FAILED TO DO:
ASSESSING THE
LITURGICAL
REFORMS OF
VATICAN II
Kevin W. Irwin
Mahwah, New
Jersey: Paulist
Press, 2014
272 pp.,
Paperback, \$24.95

assessment of the history and present reality of liturgical celebration. Irwin is noted for his fine writing, his excellent observations, and his devotion. His on-target analysis reminds us of the prime importance of celebrating the liturgy well, allowing it to become the “source and summit of our lives” and revealing a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

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



**UNRULY
CATHOLIC
NUNS:
SISTERS' STORIES**
Ed. Jeana DelRosso,
Leigh Eicke, and
Ana Kothe
SUNY Press,
Excelsior Editions,
2017
146 pp., \$19.95

The “unruly” of the title *Unruly Catholic Nuns* carries a straightforward etymology, with the prefix “-un” negating the sense of “rule,” in a notion whose familiar synonyms include “uncontrollable,” “ill-disciplined,” and “intractable.” Jeana DelRosso, Leigh Eicke, and Ana Kothe take delight in the contrast between this wayward litany of descriptors and the historical image of nuns bound by obedience to the rules of their congregations and Church. The book is the third in the editors’ series on the errant theme, following *The Catholic Church and Unruly Women Writers: Critical Essays* (2007) and *Unruly Catholic Women Writers: Creative Responses to Catholicism* (2013).

In an orderly presentation of its “disorderly” focus, the collection offers 24 selections of prose, poetry, and drama, some less than a single page, none longer than 20 pages. Subtitles for its three sections come from Julian of Norwich’s *Showings*: Part One: “Our Father Wills”; Part Two: “Our Mother Works”; and Part Three: “The Holy Spirit Confirms.” Engaging “the global conversation about the role of women religious in the Catholic Church” (4), DelRosso, Eicke, and Kothe, in their introduction, hail the “intelligent, dedicated, often strategic” maneuverings of sisters pursuing “the work that God calls them to do” (2). “What’s unruly about that?” the editors seem to suggest.

The book’s thought-provoking array of creative writing, unified in substance but varied in topic and expression, invites readers to answer that question in the particular. The opening selection, “The Nun Speaks to Her Church,” is a poem prompted by the 2009 Vatican investigation of U.S. sisters written by one surprised, after almost six decades of service, to find “now that I am 75, / you do not trust me” (12). “The Chancery,” by Jean Molesky-Poz, recounts the day she

signed official papers releasing her from vows, wrenching to her but a moment of mere bureaucracy at the diocesan offices. Mary Ellen Rufft, inspired by her practice as a psychologist, offers “The Altered Boy” in the voice of a pedophile’s victim and “Bed or Bread?” in the voice of a woman forced by poverty into prostitution. Pat Montley provides first a reflection on her path out of religious life and then a beguiling one-act play, “The Renunciation,” in which the angel Gabriella invites Mary to become the Messiah, only to have Mary negotiate the role of mother of the Messiah instead.

Although brought together for a popular audience, works have been solicited from authors with substantial resumes. Contributors include co-founders of FutureChurch, New Ways Ministry, and the Vancouver Catholic Worker, as well as a winner of two Catholic Press Awards, a double winner of the Nassau Prize, and a nominee for the Pushcart. Among them are sisters, former sisters, even former Catholics; Carole Ganim finds value in being “out of order” (55) while Pat Montley professes, “The unruly life is not a comfortable one. But for me it is the only honest one” (68).

Certainly, in its “unruliness” the compilation pushes far beyond the usual territory of pastoral writing. Nonetheless — nonetheless — the overall impression it conveys is one of grateful, respectful admiration for religious women. Patricia Dwyer’s enduring embrace of those who shared religious life with her can extend to all the women who tell their stories here, whether in or out of bounds: “We remain sisters” (88).



Christine De Vinne, OSU
Professor of English
Ursuline College
Pepper Pike, Ohio



EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS

Anita McMahon

New Port Richey, Florida

I believe God sends persons and events into our lives to help us grow in relationship with him. Thirteen years ago, the Blessed Sacrament Community began serving our parish. Their presence brought the privilege of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the charism and words of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, and the gift of themselves they so generously share with us. This presence has been a gift on my journey.

After the death of my husband, I learned of a retreat on the *Cloud of Unknowing* being given in Ohio. I was familiar with the book and felt called to the silence of the retreat and the theme itself. Those five days profoundly changed my relationship with God. I made a commitment to daily prayer and in the silence began listening more to what God was asking of me than telling God what I wanted. I came to realize that all the graces I received in those days were the fruit of my love of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Soon afterward, I was accepted into a formation group for Associates of the Blessed Sacrament. I experience this today as a call to service and to letting go of my old self. The healing, encouragement, and direction I receive from those who journey with me are true blessings.

Our parish vision statement is "Living the Eucharist in Loving Service." In an effort to use my gifts in a more focused way, I volunteered to be a weekend sacristan as well as a lector and Communion Minister at Mass, ministries I have practiced for years. The *Rule of Life for Associates* emphasizes that we collaborate in all that is required for the worthy celebration of the sacred mysteries (5). Tears often fill my eyes as I wash the hands of the priest and hear his humble prayer of contrition as he prepares for the consecration. My memory floods with invocations to the Lamb of God who takes away sin, grants mercy, bestows peace.

I am at times overwhelmed by the closeness of the Spirit who changes "the fruit of the earth and the work of human hands" into the body and blood of Christ. The miracle of transubstantiation calls to mind that Jesus gives himself up for me, so that I am better prepared to give of myself. I go forth freed of all that impedes my walk with God, asking blessings on those I love and to be given the grace to serve. I often repeat the words of the psalmist, "What shall I return to the Lord for all he has given to me?"



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Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation
(required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

Date of filing September 2018. Emmanuel, (ISSN 0013-6719) is published bimonthly with 6 issues a year, at 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092, at an annual subscription price of \$35.00. Editorial office is at 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Editor: Rev. Anthony Schueller, S.S.S.. Publisher: Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Sole owner is the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament 5384 Wilson Mills Rd., Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. There are no known bondholders, mortgages, or security holders. Contact person is Elizabeth Zaller (440) 449-2103. Non-profit tax status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during preceding 12 months.

Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: Total copies - 1117; mailed outside county paid subscriptions as stated on *PS form 3541* - 772; Mailed in county paid - 0; other paid distribution outside USPS mail - 38; paid distribution by other classes of mail through USPS - 98; Total paid distribution - 908; Free or nominal rate mailed distribution outside county copies included on *PS form 3541* - 0; Free in county copies - 0; Free copies mailed at other classes through USPS - 0; Free distribution outside mail - 48; Total free distribution - 48; Total distribution - 956; Copies not distributed - 161; Total - 1117; Percent paid - 95%

Number of single issue copies published nearest to filing date: Total number copies - 1000; Mailed outside county paid subscriptions as stated on *PS form 3541* - 740; Mailed in county paid - 0; and other paid distribution outside USPS mail - 38; paid distribution by other classes of USPS mail - 98; Total paid distribution - 876; Free or nominal mailed outside county - 0; Free in county - 0; Free or nominal rated mailed through other USPS classes - 0; Free distributed outside mail - 0; Total free or nominal distribution - 0; Total distribution - 876; Copies not distributed - 124; Total - 1000; Percent paid - 100%

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Anthony Schueller, S.S.S.

(Signed) Anthony Schueller, S.S.S., Editor, Emmanuel.

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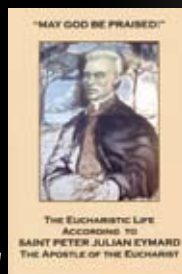
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The Eucharistic Life According to Saint Peter Julian Eymard

A collection of articles on Father Eymard.

Editor: James W. Brown.



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Eymard
Sp. J. S.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard