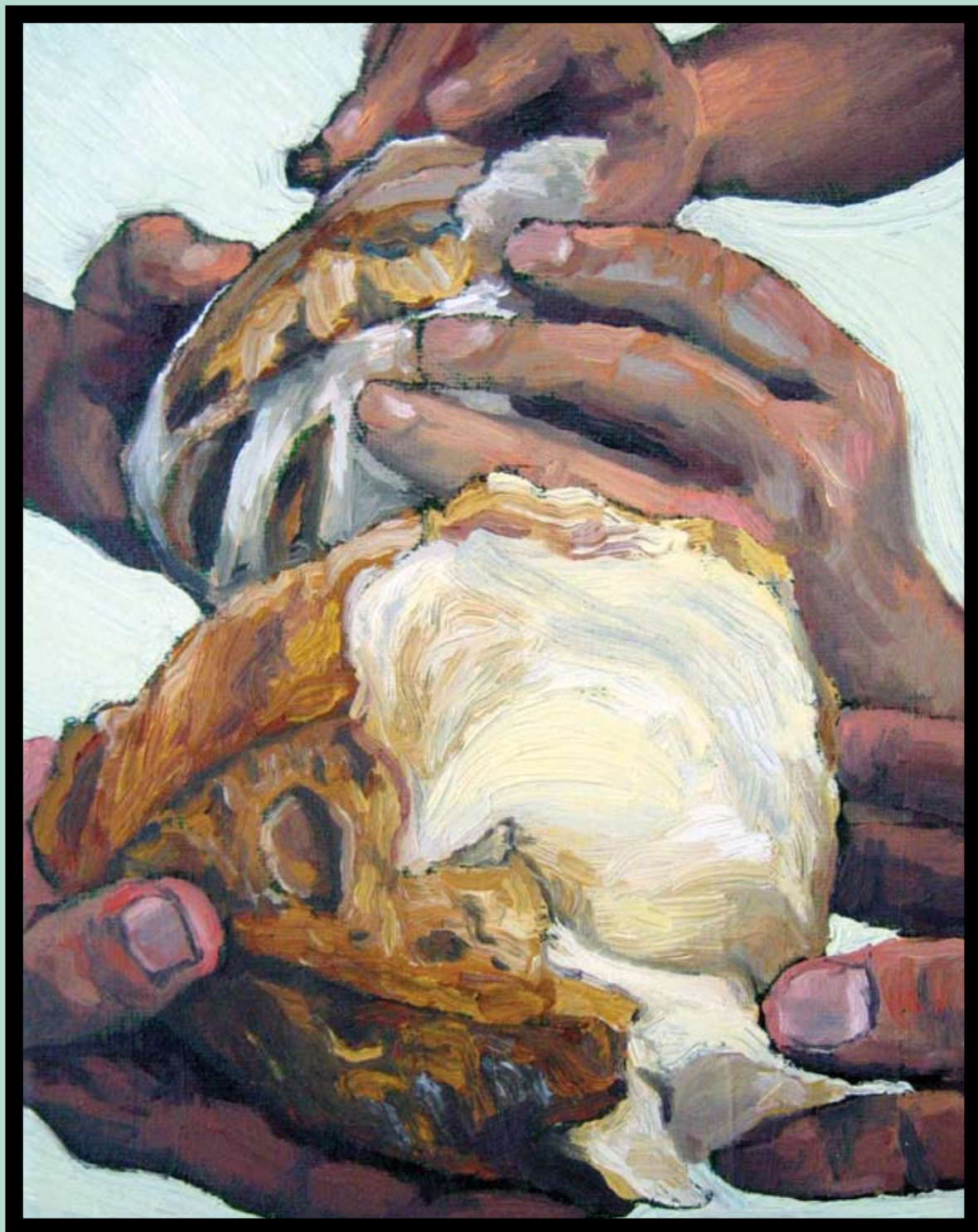


# *Emmanuel*



*Eucharistic Spirituality*

July/August 2019



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EDITOR  
ART DIRECTOR MANAGER  
LAYOUT  
CIRCULATION MANAGER  
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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

BOARD

Lisa Marie Belz, OSU  
Thomas Dragga  
James Menkaus  
Gilbert Ostdiek, OFM

COVER

John Christman, SSS  
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[emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com](mailto:emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com)

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# Emmanuel Magazine

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 125 Number 4



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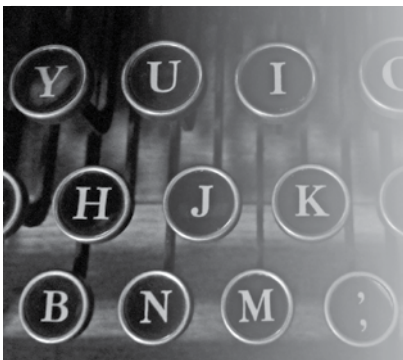
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## FROM THE EDITOR

A couple years ago, I viewed a fascinating documentary on a major cable channel about Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, a leading disciple. The hypothesis put forth was that as the figure of the Mary of Nazareth achieved ascendancy in Christian theology — as the new Eve and a model of faith and noble character — Mary Magdalene, whom certain noncanonical writings regard as equal to any of Jesus' male followers, declined in a male-dominated church to an unflattering portrait of a reformed prostitute.

The scriptural record does not support this idea. Mary Magdalene is presented as a loyal disciple who stood by the cross of Jesus as he was dying, was among the devoted women who went to the tomb early on Sunday morning to anoint his body, encountered the risen Lord in the garden, and was missioned by him to announce to his anxious followers that he was alive.

The evangelist Luke says of Mary: "Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, *from whom seven demons had gone out*, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Susanna, and many others who provided for them out of their resources" (8:2).

I write this because three years ago, during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis raised the obligatory memorial of Saint Mary Magdalene to full status as a feast. On June 10, 2016, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments published *Apostolorum Apostola*, in accord with the mind of Pope Francis. In the decree, the Congregation stated that this "decision is situated in the current ecclesial context, which calls upon us to reflect more deeply on the dignity of women, the new evangelization, and the greatness of the mystery of divine mercy."


I have often said publicly that my maternal grandmother Agnes was among my first evangelizers. After my mother passed away suddenly at the age of 43, Grandma left behind a well-earned retirement of Canasta, leisure activities with friends and family, and personal pursuits to move in and care for the grieving husband of her older daughter and three minor children. It was at her feet that we first learned to pray and experienced the comfort of her love until the day she fell sick four years later and died.

She has been followed by many women evangelizers — aunts, cousins, neighbors, Racine Dominicans, women religious of other communities whom I have met and ministered with over the years, and so many women whose friendship, goodness, and compassion have inspired me . . . and still do!

In honoring the “Apostle to the Apostles” on her feast, let us thank God for the women disciples who accompany us on the journey of faith.

### **In This Issue**

Redemptorist Dennis J. Billy continues his series on authors and Church figures who wrote on the Eucharist. He introduces us to the prophetic witness Catherine de Hueck Doherty, who sought to enrich Western Christianity with insights from the Eastern Church and also served the poor. Mary Jane Romero, OSB, offers a beautiful reflection on the sacramentality of the Church. We hope that these and all that this issue has to offer will be a blessing for your summertime reading and prayer.

Thank you for being loyal subscribers to *Emmanuel*, and please, if you are so moved, consider giving subscriptions to the Magazine of Eucharistic Spirituality to others. Like so many Catholic periodicals today, we face the crunch of declining print subscriptions and rising production costs. We appreciate you very much. 

Anthony Schueller, SSS  
Editor



## *EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING*

# Meal and Sign of the New Covenant

by Anthony Schueller, SSS

*“O sacrament of devotion! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!”*

Father Anthony Schueller, SSS, serves as the current editor of *Emmanuel* and as the provincial superior of the Province of Saint Ann of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in the United States.

ONE OF THE MOST STUNNING SIGHTS THAT NATURE CREATES, WHEN THE SUN BREAKS through the clouds on a rainy day, is a rainbow stretching across the sky. The rainbow, the author of *Genesis* states, is a reminder that God is always with us. God’s covenant love is one of the enduring truths to which we look in seeking to understand the Eucharist.

Scripture reveals how God desired to enter into an abiding relationship with his human creatures. It fills the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, and David. In the Book of *Genesis*, for example, we hear:

God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “See, I am now establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that was with you: the birds, the tame animals, and all the wild animals that were with you — all that came out of the ark. I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth.” God said: “This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature” (Gn 9:8-14).

God’s desire for a covenant runs through the prophets as well. It is a central theme in the Gospels, proclaimed in the letters of the apostles and evangelists and in the Book of Revelation. In short, God, from all eternity, sought to be covenanted to us.

In this brief reflection, we will examine how the Eucharist reveals God's covenant with us in Jesus Christ. Every time we celebrate the sacrament and receive the Lord's body and blood, God's promise to us, "I will be your God, and you will be my people," is repeated.

## **The God of the Covenant**

In the ancient world, covenants (what today might be called "agreements" or "treaties") were commonplace. The crux of any covenant involves responsibilities imposed on both parties to it. God promises to be our God — to give us his Spirit, to reveal himself to us, to put his law in our hearts, to forgive us, and to care for our welfare. For our part, we promise to be his people — to be faithful, to turn to him in times of need, to renounce any form of idol worship, and to obey his commands.

Throughout history, God has faithfully upheld his side of the covenant, while we humans have not been as faithful. Our fidelity has been erratic. We have disobeyed God's commands and worshipped idols. Over and over again, we have sold our birthright for paltry things. But instead of rejecting us, God continues to reach out to us in the hope of drawing us home.

Our covenant with God is not meant to be contractual, like a legal agreement. The story of the Jewish prophet Hosea and his wife, Gomer (Hos 1-3), underscores this. Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea and caused him deep suffering and pain. Through this relationship, God disclosed that the people of Israel have treated God just as Gomer treated Hosea. And secondly, God told Hosea to take Gomer back, to forgive her, to be reconciled to her. Hosea's love for Gomer and his forbearance in overlooking her transgressions imaged God's love for unfaithful Israel. The love story of the prophet and his wife is a reflection of God's covenant love for us.

## **Jesus — Faithful Servant of the Covenant**

In Jesus, God at last found one who would uphold the covenant in every way. Not once did Jesus violate his part of the covenant. Not once did he sin. And what's more, when Jesus broke the bread and blessed the wine at the Last Supper, he who lived the covenant perfectly *became the new covenant between God and us in his blood*. On Calvary, Jesus ratified this everlasting covenant with God, for all of us. He became the innocent Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).



This is the mystery we remember and enter into every time we participate in the Eucharist. We embrace God's new covenant with us and pledge ourselves to uphold our side of it. Anthony La Femina writes:

From ancient biblical times, the sacred union of covenant was constituted by means of a sacrifice and/or a sacred banquet (e.g., Gn 24:30; 31:54; Ex 24:1-11). The Lord Jesus used these familiar methods at the Last Supper to establish God's new and everlasting covenant. To establish this covenant, Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist, which he made both a sacrifice and a sacred meal. Jesus expressed his eager anticipation to celebrate this covenant event through the institution of the Eucharist when he exclaimed at the Last Supper: "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Lk 22:15). By establishing the new covenant through the Eucharist, Jesus made his spouse, the Church, to be a Eucharistic people by reason of her very origin.

### **The New Covenant in Christ's Blood**

The new covenant is both *an event* that took place on the cross two-thousand years ago and *a sacrament* that transcends time and place. The sacrifice of Jesus will never be repeated; it happened once for all people (Heb 10:14). Yet Jesus commanded us to relive this sacrifice whenever we celebrate the Eucharist (1 Cor 11:24).

*God, from all eternity, sought to be covenanted to us and to one another.*

The eighth-century monk and priest, Saint John of Damascus, said: "You ask, how can the bread become the body of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ? I shall tell you: the Holy Spirit comes upon them and accomplishes what surpasses every word and thought. . . . Let it be enough for you to understand that it is by the Holy Spirit that the Lord, through and in himself, took flesh" (*An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 4.13).

We will never fully understand the mystery of the Eucharist, but neither should we let that stop us from receiving its blessings. Perhaps it is enough for us to know that Jesus has told us: "Do this in memory of



me.” The Holy Spirit helps us to understand that eating and drinking of the Lord can be life-changing. It can help us be faithful in fulfilling our covenant with God.

### **Safeguarded by the Eucharist**

When we receive the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion, we are strengthened in our fight against sin. The more we partake of the Eucharist, the more the tendency to sin in us is lessened.

*In Jesus, God at last found one who would uphold the covenant in every way.*

When Jesus said, “This is my blood that has been poured out for the forgiveness of sins,” it is certain that the offering of his blood contained an element of protection. In Egypt, when God had Moses prepare for the angel of death, God told him to have the people take some of the blood from their Passover sacrifice and put it “on the two doorposts and the lintel” of their homes. “When I see the blood,” God promised, “I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you” (Ex 12:7, 13).

Now, if God used the blood of a lamb to protect the Israelites who partook of its roasted flesh, will he not protect us from the ravages of sin when we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God? In eating and drinking of Christ, we are not just renewing a covenant, we are entering into the strong, loving arms of God. We belong to him, and God will protect us and keep us as we stay close to him in Christ.

### **A Bond of Devotion, Unity, and Charity**

In his commentary on the Gospel of John (*In Joannis Evangelium*, 26, 13), the great bishop and theologian Augustine of Hippo exclaims: “O sacrament of devotion! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!” His words help us to understand and appreciate the immense beauty and power of the Eucharist. There is a central truth that underlies it all: God desires that we *internalize* Jesus, that we eat and drink of his very life.

Every piece of bread that we eat is made up of thousands of grains of wheat. Every cup of wine that we drink is made up of many grapes. Yet




when we eat Jesus' body and drink his blood, we are all partaking of one Eucharist. We are all entering into one eternal covenant.

Just as Jesus and the Father are one, God wants us to be one — not separated by division, disobedience, indifference, or strife, but bound together in an enduring covenant of love and faithfulness. The Eucharist has the power to take us to a deeper level of understanding and unity. It makes us — individual members of the church, like grains of bread in a single loaf or crushed grapes in one cup — *members of one communion, one church, one body of Christ.*

*In eating and drinking of Christ, we are not just renewing a covenant, we are entering into the strong, loving arms of God.*

In a meeting with bishops from around the world in Rome on March 4, 2015, Pope Francis said: "The bishop does not gather people around himself, or his own ideas, but around Christ, present in his word and in the sacrament of his body and blood." He added, "The bishop is the principle of unity in the Church, but this does not take place without the Eucharist." Otherwise, "unity would lose its divine pole of attraction, and would be reduced to a solely human, psychological, and sociological dynamic."

So great is the mystery of the Eucharist, the meal and sign of the new covenant! "This is my body given for you. . . . This is my blood of the new and eternal covenant. . . . Do this in remembrance of me." 



## *EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING*

# Celebrating the Apostle of the Eucharist

HE ONCE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS “A LITTLE LIKE JACOB, ALWAYS ON A JOURNEY,” always seeking. But, in truth, it was there from the beginning — the great love and the driving passion of his life: Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

One day young Peter Julian Eymard, just five years of age, wandered off from the family home. His sister and half-sister searched frantically for the boy and finally located him in the parish church, standing on a stool close to the tabernacle of the high altar. In response to their anxious questioning, he answered simply, “I am here listening to Jesus.”

### **The Early Years — 1811-1839**

Like all of us, Peter Julian Eymard was conditioned by his familial and cultural background as well as by the social and political milieu of his time.

Life in France during the first half of the nineteenth century was difficult. Years earlier the French Revolution had radically altered the political, social, and religious landscape of the country. As a teenager, Eymard would experience the Industrial Revolution which swept across Europe. As a young man, he witnessed the dawning of the Age of Romanticism in art, music, and literature.

Peter Julian’s road to the priesthood, as well as his life as a priest, was shadowed by the cross. An intransigent anti-clericalism marked French society, and his father, having seen several sons die, did not want his only surviving son to become a priest. His first attempt to pursue the priesthood ended in serious illness. Following his father’s death, he tried again, and on July 20, 1834, at age 23, was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Grenoble.

The Church of Eymard’s day was greatly affected by Jansenism, a



religious movement which focused on the gravity of human sinfulness and a corresponding belief in the unworthiness of human motivation and activity. Thus, in his seminary years and first years of ministry, Eymard was influenced by a predominantly reparation spirituality. He would struggle his whole life to seek that inner perfection that would enable him to offer the gift of his entire self.

Perhaps it was the intensification of this spiritual struggle along with his lifelong devotion to Mary that led him to enter religious life. On August 20, 1839, Father Eymard professed vows as a member of the Society of Mary (the Marists).

### **The Marist Years — 1839-1856**

Throughout his life, Peter Julian had an intense devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. He knew about the apparition of Our Lady of La Salette and enjoyed traveling to various Marian shrines. It was Father Eymard's apostolic work for the Society of Mary that would put him in contact with the various currents of Eucharistic piety that were flowing through the French Church and elsewhere in Europe.

*Naturally drawn to contemplation, Peter Julian was an amazingly energetic and hardworking priest and religious.*

Despite persistent health issues, Peter Julian was an amazingly energetic and hardworking priest and religious. Naturally drawn to contemplation, the demands of his ministry, especially his preaching schedule and the various administrative duties assigned to him, made it impossible for him to live a purely contemplative life. He was an outstanding organizer of lay societies, a zealous educator, a well-prepared preacher, and something of a prophetic figure in his Marist community, even to his superiors.

Father Eymard was especially effective at preaching Eucharistic devotions, very popular at the time. It was on one such occasion, on Corpus Christi, May 25, 1845, that he had a powerful experience that would change the course of his life. While carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession at Saint Paul's Church in Lyons, he felt an intense attraction to Christ in the Eucharist and resolved to "bring all the world to the knowledge and love of our Lord; to preach nothing

but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Eucharistic.”

This grace would gradually consume his life and his energies over the next several years. When responsibility for writing a rule for the new Third Order of Mary was entrusted to him by Father Jean Claude Colin, the Marist founder, Peter Julian asked permission to write a Eucharistic rule. Father Colin answered that this was not the charism of the Society of Mary. Nevertheless, the idea for such a rule had already been written in the mind and heart of Father Eymard, and, in 1856, he made the painful decision to leave the Marists in the hope of a founding a religious congregation dedicated to the Eucharist.

### **The Years of Founding — 1856-1868**

Founding the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament was not an easy task. Faithfully following the Holy Spirit’s inspiration brought Father Eymard relational conflicts, situations of personal embarrassment, financial troubles, and physical exhaustion. The first hurdle was getting approval for the new Eucharistic institute.

*As early as 1845, Father Eymard began to move away from a Eucharistic spirituality of reparation to a spirituality which emphasized the love of Christ.*

The work of preparation for First Communion, especially among adults, was the aspect of Eymard’s vision that interested Archbishop Marie Dominique Auguste Sibour of Paris when the two met and the priest shared his project. Eucharistic communities and organizations were springing up throughout France — many of them emphasizing only prayer and reparation — but Archbishop Sibour rightly perceived that Eymard’s understanding of the Eucharist was not limited merely to adoration but to reaching out to those who were estranged from the Church and evangelizing them. He gave approval on May 13, 1856. This date is observed in the congregations Father Eymard founded as the feast of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.

Father Eymard immediately directed his ministry to the young workers, the “rag pickers,” and other barely employable men who made up a large segment of the labor force of Paris. No sooner did he



attract a few followers to join him than he had to close the house and move to another location. This happened twice within the span of a few years. At times, the Eymardian communities were so poor that a neighboring convent of sisters fed the priests and brothers. Not being able to provide food and shelter did not help Father Eymard attract vocations!

### **“Gift of Self”**

As early as 1845 — and perhaps owing to the grace of his experience at Saint Paul’s in Lyons on Corpus Christi — Father Eymard began to move away from a spirituality of reparation to a spirituality which emphasized the love of Christ. In 1865, just three years prior to his death, he made a long retreat in Rome. During this retreat, he was struck by the overwhelming realization of Christ’s love for him, a love which he felt was taking over his entire life. In response, he wished to make the “gift of self”: of his will, his personality, and his affections, to God and to Christ in the Eucharist.

*His life was a true journey to Christ in the Eucharist.*

Anticipating the renewal brought about by the Second Vatican Council, Saint Peter Julian Eymard had a vision of Eucharistic communities of priests, deacons, brothers, sisters, and lay people living lives of total dedication to the spiritual values that are inspired by the celebration of the Eucharist and deepened through prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

His life was a true journey to Christ in the Eucharist, a journey begun intuitively on that day when a small boy wandered away from his family home to go to church — to listen to Jesus in the tabernacle.

### **A Continuing Witness**

The life of the Apostle of the Eucharist continues to inspire people around the world to live a more dynamic Eucharistic life uniting liturgy, times of contemplation and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and service to others in Christ’s name.

Peter Julian Eymard died 151 years ago on August 1, 1868. He was

canonized by Saint John XXIII on December 9, 1962, and his feast was inserted into the Church's universal calendar in 1995 by Saint John Paul II.

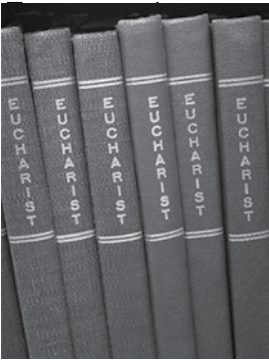
### **Prayer to Saint Peter Julian Eymard**

Saint Peter Julian,  
the Lord gave you,  
as he once did to Jacob, his servant,  
an ever-searching faith.  
All your life long, you sought the way  
to deepen your union with God  
and to satisfy the hungers of humanity.  
In the Eucharist, you discovered the answer to your searching:  
God's love was there for you and for all humanity.

Answering this gift of love,  
you made the gift of yourself to God  
and gave yourself to the service of his people.  
Your life, modeled on that of the Cenacle,  
where Mary and the apostles were united in prayer,  
inspired your disciples to live  
in an atmosphere of discernment and prayer.  
Their apostolic zeal caused them to build Christian communities  
where the Eucharist is the center and source of life.

Saint Peter Julian,  
accompany us on our journey of faith.  
May our ardent prayer and our generous service  
help us to contribute to the building of a world  
where there is justice and peace.  
May our celebrations of the Eucharist  
proclaim the liberating love of God  
for the renewal of his Church  
and the coming of his kingdom.  
Amen.





## EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# Catherine de Hueck Doherty on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR

*Catherine de Hueck Doherty sought to bring the mystical vision of the Christian East to the West in order to renew it and to serve the poor and marginalized.*

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.

CATHERINE KOLYSCHKINE (1896-1985) WAS BORN IN NIZHNY-NOVGOROD, RUSSIA, and raised in an aristocratic family. At the age of 15, she married her cousin Baron Boris de Hueck. The couple served on the Russian Front during World War I, lived through the Russian Revolution, and barely escaped the hands of the Bolsheviks. As refugees, they fled first to England and then to Canada in 1921, where their son, George, was born.

In their early years in Canada, the couple's marriage became strained and was later annulled. After some successful years on the lecture circuit across North America, she felt drawn to live entirely for Christ by selling all of her possessions and giving them to the poor. In 1930, she made provisions for her son, dedicated herself to Christ with the blessings of Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto, and began her apostolate as a lay apostle by living the hidden life of Nazareth among the poor in the slums of Toronto.

In the years of the Great Depression, she founded Friendship House, a lay apostolate in Toronto which, following the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi, begged for food and clothing in order to give to those in need. Internal tensions and misunderstandings led to the closing of this apostolate in 1936 and its relocation to Harlem, New York, in 1938, where she championed the cause of black civil rights. She married journalist Eddie Doherty in 1943 and went with him to Combermere, Ontario, in 1947, where they edited a newspaper and later, in 1954, founded Madonna House, a house of hospitality whose members professed the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. In 1955, she and her husband made a promise to live as



celibates for the remainder of their years. The Eucharist, as we can we imagine, held a prominent place in her spiritual vision.<sup>1</sup>

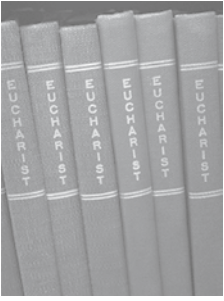
## Doherty's Spiritual Outlook

In large part, Doherty's spiritual outlook was shaped by her experience of the Russian Revolution. Being a member of the aristocratic class, she lost many family members during this tragic upheaval in Russian society and barely escaped death herself. She believed the revolution was caused by the society's failure to instill authentic Christian values into the fabric of ordinary life. The purpose of Christianity, she believed, was not to oppress, but to serve. The revolt of the poor against the established structures of the day was a symptom of the moral collapse of a Christian society. To follow Christ meant to live in service of others, especially the poor. It was hypocritical, she believed, to profess the Christian faith and to live for oneself rather than for others. Doherty dedicated her life to living gospel values by serving those who lived on the fringes of society.<sup>2</sup>

Doherty sought to restore Christian values in a heavily secularized world. With that view in mind, she started a newspaper with her husband entitled *Restoration*. Her vision was to rebuild Christian culture from the ground up. Everything could and should be done for the glory of God.

One of the ways she sought to do this was to bring the mystical vision of the Christian East to Western ears with the hope that it would bring back a sense of the transcendent in the ordinary events of daily life. She became widely known for this attempt to bring the spiritual sensitivities of Eastern Christianity to the Western world. Eastern spirituality, she believed, could serve as a leaven that would awaken the spiritual sensitivities of the Christian West and bring about a renewal of the universal Church.<sup>3</sup>

One Eastern Christian concept that she brought to the West was that of "poustinia," the Russian word for "desert." Her book *Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man* (1975) describes this concept in this way: "The word to the Russian means much more than a geographical place. It means a quiet, lonely place that people wish to enter to find God, who dwells within them. It also means truly isolated lonely places to which specially called people would go as hermits, and would seek God in solitude, silence, and prayer for the rest of their lives."<sup>4</sup>



Modern man, she believed, needed silence and solitude in order to understand his place in the world and rediscover the pull of God tugging at his heart. Such a place does not need to be completely withdrawn from human society. It could also be a simple cell or a corner of a room to which a person turns in order to wash oneself in the waters of solitude. Ultimately, the goal is to enter the poustinia of one's own heart and be able to bring solitude of heart with one, wherever one goes.

Another Eastern Christian concept popularized by Doherty was the "sobornost," a Russian word for the unity of mind and heart made possible by the action of the Holy Trinity in one's life. Such unity was beyond our natural human capacities and was made possible by the gratuitous gift of God himself. The unity within God pours itself into the human heart and brings about a deep unity between the individual and God and among all the faithful.

The unity of the Church is a reflection of "sobornost" and offsets the tendency toward isolation and individualism so rampant in Western society. In her book *Sobornost: Eastern Unity of Mind and Heart for Western Man* (1977), she describes the concept thus: "People can be united on political and economic unity or policy, but the word 'sobornost' goes much deeper than all that. It means a unity that has passed through the Gospel as a 'gathering factor' for in Russian, 'sobornost' means 'gathering.'"<sup>5</sup> For Doherty, both "poustinia" and "sobornost" have very much to do with the Eucharist. This sacrament is, at one and the same time, both a "desert" and a "gathering." It brings us solitude of heart and gathers us together into one body.

### **Doherty's Teaching on the Eucharist**

One way of approaching Doherty's understanding of the Eucharist is to look at some of her prayers from her diaries. One in particular stands out. Dated December 8, 1935, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, it reads: "At Mass, a flood of joy! I will never forget this Mass — the closeness of God, a feeling of profound union, a vivid and terrifying realization of my unworthiness, a sense of joy and reverence for being chosen to do his work, a realization of the privilege. I received a thousand glimpses into my reality. I thought I was in heaven: all my sorrows, all my burdens lifted, just my soul and him remaining — a lifetime in an hour!"<sup>6</sup>

In this single prayer, the themes of both “poustinia” and “sobornost” converge. On the one hand, the Eucharist is a deserted place where Doherty could encounter God in the solitude of her own heart (“poustinia”): “. . . just my soul and him remaining.”<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, it was also a place where she experienced a deep sense of unity with God (“sobornost”): “the closeness of God, a feeling of profound union.”<sup>8</sup> The Eucharist nourished her internally in the quiet solitude of her heart, imparted a deep sense of oneness with God, and gave her a deep reverence and respect for the privilege of being chosen to do his work.

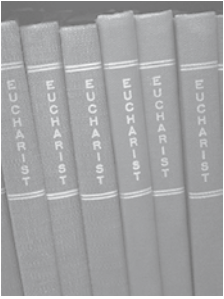
The Eucharist, for Doherty, was the primary source for the restoration of Christianity in a secularized world. In an earlier prayer, dated November 13, 1933, she writes: “O God, I went to Mass today. How full of beauty is the Church — eternal, glorious beauty. What a privilege is the Roman Catholic Church. It is a gem beyond any understanding. A lover beyond comparison.”<sup>9</sup>

*Arising from her Eastern spirituality, Doherty believed that the Eucharist brings us solitude of heart and gathers us together into one body.*

The Eucharist was the treasure in the field or the pearl of great price that one should seek to possess at all costs (Mt 13:44-46). It inspired her to take the words of Jesus to heart: “What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?” (Mt 16:26). The Mass brought transcendence into the here-and-now, making it incarnate, even immanent. It carried her to the threshold of the sacred into an encounter with the divinizing and transforming grace of God’s Spirit.

If Doherty dedicated her life to bringing the spirituality of the Christian East to the West, the Eucharist was the place par excellence where East and West met. At Eucharist, heaven comes to earth, and earth touches heaven: “God became man so that man might become divine.”<sup>10</sup> These words of Saint Athanasius of Alexandria resonated in Doherty’s heart and lies at the very heart of her Eucharistic spirituality.

The Eucharist, Doherty asserted, also has both a purifying and a fortifying effect on the soul. On the one hand, it cleanses us of sins committed after baptism: “The sacrament of the Eucharist washes our sins away, for we come to it no matter how holy we may be, with the



dust of the world upon our holiness. Few of us are really holy, but the sacrament of the Eucharist itself takes away our sins. True, some of the sins we have to confess, but if there is contrition the sacrament of the Eucharist will wash the dust away. Yes, it will."<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, it strengthens the soul and makes us capable of doing great things for God: "Incredible as it might seem, you and I have the strength of God, for God is in us and he has said, 'Amen, amen I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he shall also do, and greater than these he shall do . . .' (Jn 14:12). Now the road to sobornost is yours for you are penetrated with God. Now nothing is impossible to the prayer of faith, and to you. Now sobornost becomes a reality. It is truly closed with flesh, the flesh of Jesus Christ."<sup>12</sup>

The Eucharist brings Christ's presence into the world and enables him to act through the members of his body. It immerses us in the saving action of Christ's paschal mystery and continues his redeeming presence in the world through the body of the believers.

### Some Further Insights

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

1. To begin with, the traumatic effect of the Russian Revolution on Doherty's life led to her determined effort to counteract Communism by means of a reinvigorated Christianity by introducing the insights of the Christian East to the secularized Western society. By bringing together the insights of both East and West, she sought to combat the extreme individualism that had crept into Western society and that threatened to erode its very foundations.

Her attempt at renewing the Christian culture upon which the West was founded had its roots in the breakdown in Russia society occasioned by the Communist revolution. This collapse stemmed from the failure of Christian society to be faithful to the gospel values manifested in the beatitudes and a life of service to the poor. The Eucharist, she believed, embodied these values and lies at the very heart at any authentic Christian renewal of mind and heart.

2. Doherty introduced the Russian concept of “poustinia” (or “desert”) to the West, because she believed the problems of the Western soul could only be resolved by an encounter with silence and solitude, which ultimately could be found in the deepest recesses of the human heart. She spoke of this “desert” both as a physical place, such as a hermitage far removed from human society, and as a metaphor for the “poustinia” within the human heart, which one could live in even in the hustle and bustle of the marketplace. The Eucharist led the soul into these deserted places with the heart and enabled it to encounter the stillness, solitude, and peace of Christ. For this reason, it was often filled with “a fear and incredible joy at his nearness.”<sup>13</sup>

*The Eucharist was the primary source for the restoration of Christianity in a secularized world.*

3. Doherty also emphasized the importance of the Russian concept of “sobornost” (or “unity”) for the renewal of society. This “unity” was not the superficial unity based on ideology or policy, but was something that went beyond the capacities of human nature and was made possible only by the divinizing action of the Holy Trinity. The unity within the Trinity, in other words, penetrates the human heart and transforms it to create deep bonds of unity with God, with the Church community, with the rest of humanity, and indeed, with all of creation. For Doherty, the Eucharist represents the deepest form of this Trinitarian unity, since it gives glory to the Father, through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ and does so in the unity of the Holy Spirit, along with the entire community of the faithful gathered together in worship.

4. Doherty emphasizes the cathartic, purgative effects of the Eucharist, saying how it cleanses those who gather for it of the sins committed since baptism. This purgative dimension reveals the mercy of God to his children and prepares them for the spiritual journey ahead of them. Detachment and purgation from all created things is an essential first step in everyone’s journey to God.

The penitential rite of the sacrament affirms that we are all sinners in need of God’s mercy and that we must humbly ask his forgiveness for our sins. While she recognizes that, because of their seriousness, some sins must be confessed through sacramental reconciliation, she



does not understate the purgative role of the Eucharist itself. As the “sacrament of sacraments,” she also recognizes that it is the sacrament of God’s love and tender mercy.

5. Doherty also emphasizes the fortifying dimension of the Eucharist. This sacrament empowers us to perform actions in the name of Jesus Christ. It puts us in touch with the living Christ and enables him to act through us. It clothes us with his living, glorified flesh and strengthens us to do things far beyond our natural capacities. Because of the Eucharist, our humanity is united with Christ’s humanity and elevated in such a way so as to touch his divinity.

This participation in the divine life deepens our faith and enables us to call on the power of God to act through our humble humanity. The Eucharist, for Doherty, channels God’s grace into the hearts and minds of the faithful and inspires them to do great things for the glory of God. For her, “the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist penetrates the faithful beyond our ken.”<sup>14</sup>

*The Eucharist, for Doherty, channels God’s grace into the hearts and minds of the faithful and inspires them to do great things for the glory of God*

6. Doherty draws a close connection between the unity wrought by the Eucharist and service to the poor. It is through the Eucharist that Jesus enters today’s world and actualizes his redeeming mission through the members of his body, the Church. Doherty was at the forefront of the development of the lay apostolate and was deeply convinced that the work of the Gospel was meant not merely for clergy and religious, but for all believers. Her commitment to the poor and marginalized was rooted in her deep faith in Jesus and his beloved mother. With them at her side, she believed it was possible to do great things for God. And that she did.

7. Pope Saint John Paul II once said that the Church breathes with the two lungs of the Christian East and the Christian West.<sup>15</sup> Doherty’s life is a perfect example of how the two traditions can meet to form a vital spiritual organism that emphasizes both spiritual growth and apostolic outreach. Although she lived most of her life in North America, she never lost touch with her Russian roots and used concepts from Eastern Christian spirituality to revitalize an increasingly secularized


Christian West. For Doherty, the Eucharist was the place where the Christian East and West could meet, interact, and be mutually nourished in desert solitude (“poustinia”) and profound God-centered unity (“sobornost”).

## **Conclusion**

Catherine de Hueck Doherty dedicated her life to Christ by serving society’s poor and marginalized. She did so by living the hidden life of Nazareth in their midst and trying to bring an ounce of love, hospitality, and compassion to their lives. She tried to imitate Christ by giving not from her surplus but from her need.

Doherty was a forerunner of the lay apostolate at a time when the laity were often viewed as passive onlookers rather than active participants in the Church’s missionary activity. She wanted to change that impression of the laity. First at Friendship House and later Madonna House, she sought to bring the face of Christ to society’s poor and faceless in an active and zealous way.

Doherty believed that the West had become increasingly secularized and was desperately in need of a spiritual renewal. She sought a reconstruction of the foundations of Western society by injecting into it some key concepts from Eastern Christian spirituality, particularly “poustinia” (Russian for “desert”) and “sobornost” (Russian for “unity”). For her, the reconstruction of the West would happen only with an inward quest for solitude and a corresponding outward search for unity.

Doherty was convinced that the Eucharist had an important role to play in the spiritual renewal of society. On the one hand, it nourished people’s souls with the body and blood of Christ, thereby uniting his humanity with theirs and enabling them to participate in his divinity. On the other hand, it empowered them to go forth and spread the Good News of Christ’s redeeming love for humanity, especially the poor and marginalized. Her love for the Eucharist was rooted in her love for Christ and Christ’s love for the poor. In her eyes, the three were all so very closely intertwined. 

## **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> This and more information on Doherty’s life, writings, and related publications, see “Catherine Doherty,” <http://www.catherinedoherty.org>.



<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1975), 30-31.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Sobornost: Eastern Unity of Mind and Heart for Western Man* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1977), 11.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine de Hueck Doherty, *Jesus: Prayers from the Diaries of Catherine de Hueck Doherty* (Combermere, ON: Madona House Publications, 1996), 107.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>10</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation*, 54.3.

<sup>11</sup> Doherty, *Sobornost*, 78.

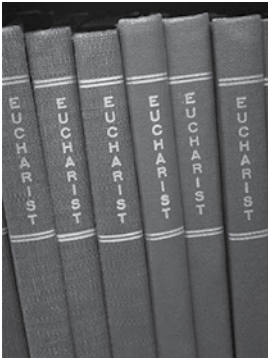
<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Doherty, *Jesus*, 107.

<sup>14</sup> Doherty, *Sobornost*, 78.

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (encyclical letter "On Commitment to Ecumenism," May 25, 1995), 54 in "The Holy See," [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25051995\\_ut-unum-sint.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html).





## EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# The Sacramentality of the Church

by Mary Jane Romero, OSB

*When the sinful aspect of the Church is all too evident, we must never lose sight of its divine mandate and of the Lord who is the center of its life and the source of its grace and holiness.*

ANY IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE CHURCH LEADS TO THE STUDY OF CHRIST, OF THE incarnation, and of the total mystery of God's plan of salvation. Perhaps the order of enumeration should be reversed; however, supposing someone wishes to study only the Church, it would ultimately lead to the realization that the source, the center, and the end of the Church is Christ Jesus, and through him to the Father.

A study of the Church includes a confrontation with salvation history: the mystery of God becoming man, and the mystery of the God-man, Christ, accomplishing the work of our redemption by his life, death, and resurrection. Slowly, as the study progresses, a design emerges; a divine design by which the eternal God wills to draw all people to himself.

### **The Centrality of Jesus**

God created man and woman in the divine image and destined us to share God's life. Sin marred the image and frustrated God's initial design. God willed to redeem us by means of Jesus, God and man, "the image of the invisible God,"<sup>1</sup> "who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned."<sup>2</sup> This gives us an insight into the design of the plan of salvation God has for us.

Taking our human nature into account, God will lead us to invisible divine realities by means of visible realities. Christ Jesus both restored the image and reconciled us to God, for "the man Jesus, as the personal visible realization of the divine grace of redemption, is the sacrament, the primordial sacrament because he is intended by the Father to be

Sister Mary Jane Romero is a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Missouri. She currently works in the community archives and writes for *Spirit & Life* magazine. She has published two books: *Seeking* (out of print) and *Praying in the Spirit of Saint Gertrude*, available from: Benedictine Sisters, 31970 State Highway P, Clyde, MO 64432-8100.



in his humanity the only way to the actuality of redemption."<sup>3</sup>

Christ Jesus is the embodiment of this plan. He becomes the means by which two worlds, the human and the divine, are bonded together. He "is the sacrament of God's saving grace because in his historical existence he is both the external, visible sign as well as the invisible, divine reality of that grace."<sup>4</sup> By means of his divinity, through which he possesses the fullness of grace, he is the source of grace for us. Through his humanity he represents us as the perfect worshipper of the Father. In Christ Jesus, God invites humanity to himself and through him he receives the perfect response. The divine design is accomplished.

Those who acknowledge God's plan and its accomplishment through Christ are caught up in the lifelong process of being changed into the image of God's Son. "All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit."<sup>5</sup> This history of the transforming of human nature, the marred image of God, into the image of God's Son is sacramental history. The sacraments make it possible for all people of every age to experience Christ who is historical and yet transcends history.

This answers the question that presents itself as to how those who are separated from the historical God-man by space and time can have access to the Father through him. To have only memories or a spiritual encounter with Jesus would not satisfy us who rely on our senses for any communication. Christ forestalled this problem. He entrusted his followers with a mission: "As the Father sent me, so I send you."<sup>6</sup> The Father sent his Son to manifest the invisible God in a visible way. His human nature is an outward sign of a divine reality. Now he turns to his followers and gives us the same mission.

### **The Mystery of the Church**

Here the mystery of the sacramental Church is unfolded before us. The Church, the assembly of believers, is entrusted with the continuation of the grace-giving life of Christ. "God provides for all the possibility of a corporeal encounter with the glorified Christ, and in him with the Trinity, through the sacramental Church which is the earthly, visible redemptive instrument of the invisible Lord. The Church is the continuation and enduring presence of God's mercy in Christ."<sup>7</sup> This

sacramental characteristic of the Church results from her union with Christ, or rather, from her oneness with him.

There are two basic points that help balance our concept of the Church which is temporal but also transcends the temporal. The first point is the question: Who is the Church? And the reply: people. The Church is not a nebulous abstraction that cannot serve as a visible sign. The Church consists of real people who participate through divine grace in the Christ-life with which the Church has been entrusted.

The second point is that the Church, though consisting of visible members, remains like Christ himself a mystery that lends itself to exploration, not explanation. The Church is the sacrament of Christ. The relationship of the Church with and in Christ, culminating in a mystical identity, is a reality that is compared to the mystery of the incarnate Word. "Just as the assumed nature inseparably united to the divine Word serves him as a living instrument of salvation, so does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit who vivifies it by way of building up the body."<sup>8</sup>

*Those who acknowledge God's plan and its accomplishment through Christ are caught up in the lifelong process of being changed into the image of God's Son.*

During his earthly life, our Lord settled the elements that were to make up his Church. He preached the gospel message which outlined the Christian lifestyle, he chose the apostles and bade them to carry on his work. He performed certain actions that conferred his grace. His disciples continued to perform these acts not for the sake of refreshing their memories but to reenact the grace-filled event and communicate the healing power of Christ. We call these actions sacraments.

What justification is there in the statement that the sacraments communicate the life of Christ to us? Our justification comes not only through faith in Christ but also through faith in the plan of God that is perfected by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. At the Last Supper, Christ foretells that in the future his followers are to be guided by a living principle within, by the Holy Spirit sent by the Father. He promised that the Spirit of truth would guide her and confirm the Son's revelation and salvation in the hearts of all people.



The Holy Spirit remains with the Church not as a conserving agent but as a creative Spirit. It is through this Spirit that the plan of God “that all things shall find its perfection in him” is fulfilled. “The Spirit’s action starts from Christ and he distributes all the different gifts which come from him. It is the special function of the Spirit to communicate to all and each something of the fullness of the Godhead which dwells in Christ.”<sup>9</sup>

It follows that each of us participates in the divine life as a member of Christ’s body; we belong to a visible institution, a structured Church. All through our Christian history to the present day, there is a danger of identifying the Church with hierarchy, laws, and external rites. This viewpoint completely overlooks her unique mission of making Christ present to the world. It is by considering her sacramentality that we avert this tendency to overemphasize her external aspects.

### **The Sacramentality of the Church**

Sacraments are visible not for visibility’s sake, but to signify outwardly what they effect inwardly. Nevertheless, the fact that the Church has a visible structure, a hierarchical office, and external laws remains. Romano Guardini justifies the existence of structure and opposes those who say that “the Church is not an objective reality, not something purely interior, a relationship between those who believe in Christ.”<sup>10</sup> He points out that the Church was placed within the reality of history already in the New Testament.

*The human element in the Church is more easily recognized by its evident weaknesses than by its hidden sanctity.*

The example of Saint Paul is cited as a person who would have been most likely to dispense with structure. His actions in going to the apostles, telling them of his conversion, and joining in the activities of the established Christian community show his faith in the structured Church as divinely ordained. Later, in his writings he interpreted the Church, using the concept of the body, an organic unity with a hierarchy of members. “The Church is visible because she is a body, hence they err in a matter of divine truth who imagine the Church to be invisible, intangible, merely ‘pneumatological’ by which Christian communities are united by an invisible bond.”<sup>11</sup>

The human element in the Church is more easily recognized by its evident weaknesses than by its hidden sanctity. The Church is “at the same time holy and always in need of being purified.”<sup>12</sup> Even a superficial glance at history reveals the failures in its members at every level from the highest to the lowest. Just as Christ invited sinners during his earthly life, so will the Church invite all during her earthly existence. “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”<sup>13</sup>

Often, however, we do not grieve over the sinfulness of those who come to her from without, but the sins of those within the Church who have fallen and obscure her true nature. Still, this must never divert our focus from the sanctifying power within the Church. Any member who deplores the sinfulness of her members and uses this as an excuse to withdraw from its visible structure is denying its very purpose and looking at the Church from a very superficial angle.

The Church is a sacrament: a visible sign of an inner reality. This fact can never be stressed or studied sufficiently. But the goal is to deepen our insight into the plan of God for the world’s salvation as well as to help us realize our individual responsibility. If the study remains theoretical or intellectual, it will remain sterile. The ongoing search into the mystery of the Church should effect a sense of awe and wonder within the believer. This sense of awe will produce an attitude that is basic to living the life of the Church. It results in an openness to the illumination of the Spirit.

*The deeper we enter into the mystery of the sacramental Church we will realize that it is through her that we encounter Christ.*


We had the examples of great Christian men and women whose relationship with the Church culminated in authentic holiness. First of all, “we think of the mother of Jesus who because of her unique relationship with Christ has a real relationship with the other members of the Church.”<sup>14</sup> Her role within the Church is singular and deserves our study and contemplation.

Other of her members, although less privileged and more like the rest of us, deserve our attention. An example of those who wish to express their union and loyalty to the Church is Charles de Foucauld. Although he cut himself off externally from the visible connection with the Church, among savage tribes he was an embodied essence



of the Church. His desire was to stand before his Eucharistic Lord and through him pour out graces upon those who came for his help.

To conclude, I wish to cite the example of Edith Stein, Saint Benedicta of the Cross, who realized in a high degree the meaning of being a member of the Church. It is in speaking of prayer that she brings out this point: "Every genuine prayer is prayer of the Church: through genuine prayer something happens in the Church, and it is the Church herself who prays in it, for it is the Holy Spirit living in her, who in every individual soul 'asks for us with unspeakable groanings.' . . . What is the prayer of the Church if not the self-giving of the great lovers to the God who is Love."<sup>15</sup>

Each member contributes vitally to the life of the whole Church according to the gifts and insights given. To participate and contribute to her prayer that is, as Edith Stein states, self-giving is our aim. The deeper we enter into the mystery of the sacramental Church and her sacramental signs, the more we will realize that it is through her that we encounter Christ. As our faith in him grows and develops, so does the demand for a response that is self-giving and that leads to total commitment. This total commitment will foster a deeper union with Christ. Then, as union with Christ becomes the driving force of our lives, we will experience, though not fully understand, the purpose for which he instituted a sacramental Church. 

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Col 1:15.

<sup>2</sup> Heb 4:15.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, OP, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* (New York: Sheed & Ward), 1963, 15.

<sup>4</sup> John Powell, SJ, *The Mystery of the Church* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1967), 63.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor 3:18.

<sup>6</sup> Jn 20:22.

<sup>7</sup> Powell, op. cit., 63.

<sup>8</sup> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 8. *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott, SJ, Guild Press.

<sup>9</sup> Ives Congar, OP, *The Mystery of the Church* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969), 23.

<sup>10</sup> Romano Guardini, *The Church of the Lord* (Chicago: Henry Regney Co., 1966), 88.

<sup>11</sup> *Mystici Corporis*, 14.

<sup>12</sup> Vatican II Documents, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Lk 19:10.

<sup>14</sup> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 60-64.

<sup>15</sup> Hilda Graff, *The Scholar and the Cross* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1955), 126.



## EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”: Living Out the Prayer of Saint Francis

by Victor M. Parachin

*The “little poor man” of Assisi, Saint Francis, is loved and respected by all. His example and the prayer that bears his name inspire a way of living that incarnates the Gospel.*

WHEN REVEREND RUSSELL WILLOUGHBY, THE MINISTER OF THE HISTORIC LITTLE Brown Church in the Valley, in the Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles, met with a family to plan a memorial service for a woman who had ended her life by suicide, he was told by the family that only a handful of people would attend. However, shortly before the service was to begin, the church was packed to capacity with family members and friends of the deceased.

During the service, the woman’s brother spoke, saying his sister left behind a suicide note in which she stated: “There are only three people who really love me in the whole world.” As he read her words, there were audible gasps from many in attendance. No one seemed to realize she felt so unloved. Many began to weep as they reflected on how sad and lonely the woman had felt.

Perhaps the originator of the following prayer at times attributed to Francis of Assisi had someone in mind like this woman when he included these words in it: “O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek . . . to be loved as to love.” The prayer reminds us to seize every opportunity to speak and to show love to others in our lives. To say, “I love you” to another person may be the three-word antidote to the despair the person may privately be struggling with.

### Praying and Living the Prayer

Francis is one of the most universally loved figures in history, and the prayer “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” is prayed and revered by people worldwide. However, the prayer should not only be recited; it

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



is a prayer that challenges us to move from thought to action.

A very helpful spiritual exercise is to review the sentences of the prayer and make them your own personal mission. Here are some ways to live out the prayer.

*"Where there is hatred, let me sow love."* "The consciousness of loving and being loved brings a warmth and a richness to life that nothing else can bring," wrote Oscar Wilde. One who witnessed this kind of love in action was the singer Tony Bennett.

Tony was ten years old when his father, John Benedetto, died. Though he has few memories of his father, one stands out and has influenced him all his life. His father, an Italian immigrant to America, operated a small grocery store in New York City. The family lived above the business. One evening they heard noise downstairs. A man had gotten drunk and was attempting to break in, but having a hard time doing it due to the alcohol. Benedetto crept downstairs and discovered the man unconscious. Evidently, he had tripped over some egg crates. The police were called and they explained that if Benedetto pressed charges, the man would be arrested and jailed.

Letting out a sigh, Benedetto walked over to the man asking: "Do you have a job?" The man shook his head no, too embarrassed to speak. Then Benedetto told him: "Well, you have one now. You can work for me if you want to." The man accepted the offer of employment immediately.

Thinking about that incident, Tony Bennett realized that "my father didn't do it out of pity. He truly felt we had been blessed in America and were obliged to share our blessings with those who were less fortunate." Let his story inspire you to be the one who reaches out with love and compassion where there is hatred, distance, offense, malice, animosity, and resentment.

*"Where there is injury, pardon."* This sentence should be connected to the biblical exhortation in Leviticus 19:18: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge . . . but love your neighbor as yourself." Both the prayer and the biblical text challenge us to extend forgiveness and to try to heal a damaged relationship. When we sincerely reach out and offer forgiveness, there are always beneficial, positive results.



In his book *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health*, physician and author Dr. Andrew Weil, MD, writes: “Regardless of the outcome, you will have demonstrated a willingness to repair a connection that was once important to you, and that willingness in itself is healthy. If you succeed, you will have regained a lost friend. If you do not succeed, you will still have improved your wellbeing, because forgiveness benefits oneself, not just another. By forgiving, you can lessen your own emotional pain and experience increased inner peace, no matter what the response of the other person.”

*“Where there is doubt, faith.”* Through your words and actions, help another person dream more, do more, learn more, and become more. Many people experience times of self-doubt. Rather than go on, they give up. All it takes to prevent that from happening is someone to inject faith back into their lives by saying and showing “I believe in you.”

*The prayer should not only be recited; it is a prayer that challenges us to move from thought to action.*

Consider Lang Lang, the first Chinese pianist to be engaged by the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic. As a boy growing up in Shenyang, China, he fell in love with the piano and practiced six hours a day on a beat-up old piano, the only one his parents could afford to buy. By the time he was eight, it was clear that for him to have any chance at success, he would have to study in Beijing, the nation’s capital and cultural center. Because of his family’s low income, Lang Lang began to doubt that his dream of becoming a concert pianist would ever come about.

However, his mother and father showed faith in their son when they decided to take a huge risk on his behalf. His mother remained in Shenyang to work and to send money while father and son relocated to Beijing so he could train with higher-level teachers. The only apartment they could find for the money they had was in an unheated building with five families sharing a single bathroom.

Because the music school was far from their apartment and the bus fare too expensive, Lang Lang’s father “drove” his son on his bicycle each day to and from school, an hour-and-a-half each way. By the time Lang Lang was nine, he began winning competitions. As his



skill developed, he received invitations worldwide, eventually playing with the Chicago Symphony and performing at Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

*"Where there is despair, hope."* "Hope arouses as nothing else can arouse a passion for the possible," said the author and minister William Sloane Coffin, Jr. Wherever you see despair, inject hope.

That is what Joanne did when she was asked to visit a woman in a psychiatric hospital who seemed to have neither family nor friends. Though hospital policy permitted only family to visit, the nurse in charge permitted Joanne to visit one time for ten minutes.

The hospitalized woman's eyes exhibited great sadness and despair. When the time was up and Joanne was preparing to leave, she quietly and gently told the woman: "You are loved. You are a very special person, and God loves you." Once home, Joanne began to write regular notes of encouragement. "Just wanted to remind you today that God loves you" was one. In another she simply wrote biblical verses of encouragement such as "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Ps 34:18). Joanne continued to pray for the woman.

A year later, there was a knock at her front door. When Joanne opened the door, she did not recognize that the person standing before her was the woman she had visited in the psychiatric ward. This time her eyes glistened with joy and energy. The woman, Ann, thanked Joanne for her visit and notes. Opening her purse, she removed a collection of the cards and letters Joanne had mailed. "I want you to know that it was your letters that helped me get out of that hospital. I read them over and over again, until they sank deep into my mind and heart. They gave me hope when I had no hope."

*"Where there is darkness, light."* This sentence from the prayer should bring to mind the direct teaching of Jesus: "You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine" (Mt 5:14, 16). There are so many who live in darkness: the darkness of illness, of poverty, of loneliness and neglect. Let the light that you have shine into the dark places of life.

Journalist Arnold Fine tells of a powerful incident from his childhood days living in the Bronx, New York. He and a friend went to the home of a very poor woman in the neighborhood who sold pretzels. The

boys knocked on the door and when there was no answer, they peered into a window where they saw the woman lying on the floor, apparently unconscious. Because the boys were not strong enough to break open the door, they asked a passing stranger to assist. The man broke open the door, and when they went inside, the house smelled of gas. They turned off the gas stove and opened all the windows. The woman soon revived.

However, it was clear to the two boys and the stranger that the woman lived in dire poverty. The man, noticing a book on her shelf, picked it up, asking the woman: “Would you sell me this book. I’m a book dealer. I sell old books and I would be more than happy to give you 200 dollars.” The woman told him to take the book without payment, saying, “After all, you saved my life.”

He responded, saying it would not be fair for him to just take the book and then reached into his wallet, handing her \$200. Fine says they all left the house together, but the man, late for an appointment, ran ahead of the boys. When he reached the corner, Fine saw the man pause, look at a garbage can, and throw the book into it. It was only then that Fine and his youthful companions realized that the man did not want or need the book, but wanted to help the woman financially, without embarrassing her.

*Giving of ourselves is not about abundance and totality, just sharing.*

*“Where there is sadness, joy.”* A day before Christmas, Andrea became ill. She missed out entirely on her family’s traditional Christmas Eve meal. Her fiancé knew how disappointed she was, so as soon as she recovered, he attempted to recreate the family Christmas Eve dinner just for the two of them. “The meal itself was pretty terrible,” Andrea recalls. “The meat was overdone, the potatoes were lumpy, and the gravy was toxic, but I gave my fiancé’s sweet attempt four stars. I’ll never forget that Christmas Eve dinner because of his effort to bring me joy.”

Additionally, when seeking to live out the prayer, do not become concerned or discouraged about your ability to do this successfully. Be guided by this wisdom from Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister: “The question is not whether what we have to give is sufficient for the situation or not. The question is simply whether or not we



have anything to give. That's what real hospitality is all about. Not abundance and not totality. Just sharing."

### **The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive;  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.





## EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# Pondering the Parables: The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard

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.*

FAR FROM DEPICTING AN IMAGINARY SITUATION, THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16) describes something that occurred frequently at particular times in Palestine, namely, the practice of hiring day-laborers for occasional work. Soon after the grape harvest ripened towards the end of September, came the rains. If the grapes were not gathered in before the rains fell, the harvest was ruined. Since getting the harvest in was a race against time, any available laborers were welcome, even if only an hour of work was all they could put in.

### **The Narrative of the Parable**

Like the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Mt 18:21-35), this parable can be seen as a drama that unfolds in several acts: the hiring of workers at various times of the day; the paying of wages at the end of the day; and a dénouement, the dialogue between the landowner and the workers who grumbled at the pay received.

The narrative of the parable holds a few surprises, the first of which is the fact that the landowner, rather than his steward, goes out from morning till evening to recruit laborers. Important to note, also, is the fact that all the laborers agree, explicitly or implicitly, to a just wage, a denarius.

A second surprise is anticipated when the payout to the laborers is reversed, for normally those who had worked the full day would be the first to receive their wage. Then, the truly shocking surprise appears: the landowner, portrayed as both just and generous, pays those who were hired last, at early evening (the "eleventh hour"), the

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*.



same amount as those who were hired at dawn.

The parable concludes with a dialogue between the landowner and the disgruntled workers. The landowner's countering response to their complaint is threefold: 1. he did them no injustice; 2. he is free to do as he wishes with his money, namely, to be generous to those hired last; and 3. he questions the attitude of the disgruntled, "Are you envious because I am generous?"

*The parable describes something that occurred frequently at particular times in Palestine, namely, the practice of hiring day-laborers for occasional work.*

The parable is then capped with the famous saying, "Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last," a saying which, according to some scripture scholars, may be an interpretive addition to the parable, making the point that in the reign of God "the first," the Jews or Jewish-Christians, have no advantage over "the last," the Gentiles.

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

The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard can be interpreted within a narrower or a broader perspective. In the first perspective, the parable looks to the early disciples, perhaps even to Jesus' closest disciples, the Twelve. We are to understand that an early call to discipleship has no relevance to status in the kingdom of God. Whenever it should happen that we are called to that kingdom, we are admitted to full participation. The kingdom does not become the "possession" of those who were first called by Jesus, not even of those designated to hold positions of prominence or authority.

*God reverses the categories of value and worth that we tend to erect to separate ourselves from others.*

An interpretation of the parable within a broader perspective looks to God's saving and generous intervention in regard to those who might be seen as outside the bounds of God's care. The justice of God is not to be measured against human justice. Divine justice, for example, forgives our unpayable debts and summons us to forgive others without limit as an expression of gratitude. If we do otherwise, we

risk the judgment pronounced on the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:21-35). Like the complaining laborers, we are challenged by mercy and goodness to move beyond our stringent sense of justice.

God's ways are not our ways. God reverses the categories of value and worth that we tend to erect to separate ourselves from others. The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard invites us not only to renounce any attitudes of resentment where the gift of God's grace to others is concerned, but even to rejoice with all who are the beneficiaries of God's great generosity.



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## *EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY*

# Counsels for Spiritual Life from Saint Peter Julian Eymard

### **You Are Where God Wants You**

THE APOSTLE OF THE EUCHARIST WAS ALSO A GUIDE TO THE INTERIOR LIFE AND TO EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY for many in his day. In a letter on July 12, 1867, Father Eymard wrote to Edmée Brenier de Montmorand, who had committed to remaining single and educating the children of her sister Isabelle, who died at the age of 42.


“I am writing to you from the home of your dear aunt. I read your letter here and am writing to respond specifically; and as you know that I am direct, I will do it with directness.

“I am willing to be your spiritual director, but now that your sisters are married, you have the right to set your own direction as openly as you think . . . in the sight of God and in your own heart.

“My thought is clear. It is that you should refuse any mission, any work, that takes away your freedom. Keep your independence as you keep your heart; keep it for God to whom it belongs and whose possession it will be. You are where God wants you. Consequently, you will find good to be done, with the grace which precedes, accompanies, and follows it. So, you are not wasting your time. On the contrary, it is well used. Act in such a way that it may always be so.

“May the law of God’s love ever be the rule and motive for your love of neighbor, in keeping with your duties and priorities.

“May the spirit of devotion make you rise above the demands of daily duties. Nourish your heart by frequent outpouring to God, your spirit by the daily practice of meditation, your will by virtuous self-denial.

“No sadness, distress, or worry about the future. Your future is God, and God loves you.” 





## PASTORAL LITURGY

# Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass, Part IV

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

*The Catholic Church cherishes the relationship between the Eucharistic celebration and worship of the Eucharist outside of Mass.*

IN OUR REVIEW OF *HOLY COMMUNION AND WORSHIP OF THE EUCHARISTIC OUTSIDE Mass* (HCWEOM), we are now in Chapter 3: "Form of Worship of the Holy Eucharist." Exposition of the Holy Eucharist is 20 paragraphs of instruction. (Please note that when I quote from the document, the words are exactly as written in the text; the lack of capitalization reflects the grammatical style of the document).

The introduction to this section repeats the strong relationship of the "eucharistic sacrifice" to "private and public devotion toward the eucharist" (see paragraph 79). A "harmony" must be maintained between liturgy and devotions; we are reminded that devotions lead from the sacred liturgy and help us return to the sacred liturgy. Paragraphs 82 and 83 demonstrate the clear unity of the "cult of the blessed sacrament in relationship to the Mass."

I like to point out that this is "prayer before Christ the Lord sacramentally," or perhaps better stated, "prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament." Depending on the design of the chapel, one may not be "before," as paragraph 81 mentions. The point is that we are praying with the risen Lord, with the Lord's real presence present to us. Paragraph 81 reminds us that such prayer should lead to good deeds, that the fruit of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament will "imbue the world" with the spirit of Christ and be a "witness of Christ in the midst of human society."

My preaching teacher in the seminary, Father Richard Fragomeni, loved to say that every hour we commit to prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament should lead to an hour of service to the body of Christ in the world. In a sense, our private prayer draws us deeper

Blessed Sacrament  
Father John Thomas Lane is the pastor of his home parish, Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. He has degrees in education, music, theology, and liturgy, and speaks and writes on liturgical theology and ministry. He is the author of *Daily Prayer 2019* and *Guide to Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* (2015), both published by LTP. Contact him at [jtlanesss@gmail.com](mailto:jtlanesss@gmail.com).



into the richness of the body of Christ and leads us to be active, living examples of Christ's care in the world.

It also should be noted that many folks use the term "adoration." These paragraphs make an important distinction about rubrics for "exposition," that is, when a vessel such as a monstrance, luna, ciborium, etc., is placed upon an altar after the Mass. One can pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament "exposed" or behind the tabernacle doors. Personal prayer is not "regulated"; the liturgical/ritual prayer of exposition is. Exposition demands specific care and rubrics, as does any liturgical act.

People often use the term "adoration" generically and apply it to various forms of prayer. More accurately, "adoration" is one of the many styles of prayer recommended in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. (See [blessedsacrament.com](http://blessedsacrament.com) and *Eymardian Spirituality*, that is, the prayer style that Saint Peter Julian Eymard recommended for his hour of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament or in *LTP's Guide to Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass* by this author.)

Specific rubrics are addressed in paragraphs 84-90. These are important to note since some people have never adapted to the new points implemented in 1976, when only Catholic Book Publishing published the text. Only a single genuflection is made (84) to reverence the Blessed Sacrament, in the tabernacle or during exposition. Four to six candles are recommended for exposition, or two, with incense mentioned in 85. HCWEOM makes a distinction on the type of exposition — with a monstrance or ciborium, hence the number of candles used.

Many parishes find it difficult to have extended periods of exposition. When exposition is not continuous, paragraph 88 helps us understand and implement when we should or should not expose the Blessed Sacrament: not more than twice a day.

Periods of exposition, like all other liturgical rites since Vatican II, require an *ordo* of song, readings from the word of God, periods of silence, and prayers (see 89 and the order listed beginning at 93). One cannot expose the sacrament simply for the purpose of benediction. Secondly, it is recommended that two members (for religious communities) are present (90). And in the absence of a cleric, lay members who have a special role in the community (e.g., acolyte, Communion minister) may expose and later repose the Blessed Sacrament (91). A lay member

of the community may not bless with the monstrance or ciborium, because this goes against God's will, and we regulate any such prayer, but simply places the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. Paragraph 92 offers guidance of the issue of vesture.

Finally, to make the important theological connection between the Mass and exposition, paragraph 94 mandates that a host is consecrated during the Mass and placed in a monstrance upon the altar during the Communion Rite: "The Mass ends with the prayer after communion, and the concluding rites are omitted" (94).

### Reminders for July and August

During this fiftieth anniversary of the *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar* (GNLY), it might be helpful to review the section on feasts and memorials, either obligatory or optional. The universal calendar for the Roman Rite is well known; country, diocesan, and parish calendars are not as well known, but are very important to acknowledging the importance of saints in the life of the Church on a local level.

These last two years I have been highlighting the new "proper of saints" that was updated since the 1999 *Lectionary*. Our recent popes updated the calendar to broaden the influence of these saints. Each diocese and the "ordo" for a region list those saints "particular" to a region. The table in GNLY 59 reminds us that even a parish, a particular church, has a very important date that should be celebrated. With your pastoral council and liturgy commission, decide the dates that your parish will celebrate, specifically the saint of your church and the dedication of your church. Festivals can also help mark the importance of the liturgical days.

Some other important dates now in our calendar with the updated *Lectionary Supplement for the USA*:

- **Monday, July 1 — Saint Junipero Serra; Canada Day (Canada).**
- **Thursday, July 4 — Independence Day (United States).** Special readings and texts in the *Roman Missal*.
- **Friday, July 5 — Saint Elizabeth of Portugal (United States).**
- **Tuesday, July 9 — Saint Augustine Zhao Rong and**

**Companions.**

- **Sunday, July 14.** Mention the North American virgin Saint Kateri Tekakwitha in the Eucharistic Prayer.
- **Saturday, July 20 — Saint Apollinaris.**
- **Monday, July 22 — Saint Mary Magdalene,** now elevated to a feast in the Church.
- **Wednesday, July 24 — Saint Sharbel Makhluf.**
- **Friday, July 26 — Saints Ann and Joachim.** Ann is the patron of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament Province in the United States. Contact Emmanuel Publishing for special items to celebrate.
- **Friday, August 2 — Saint Peter Julian Eymard,** Founder and Apostle of the Eucharist.
- **Friday, August 9 — Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.**
- **Monday, August 12 — Saint Jane Frances de Chantal.**
- **Thursday, August 15 — The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary,** a holy day of obligation. Highlight that we celebrate the great mysteries of our faith and Mary's special place in God's plan of redemption.



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## In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

Since its inception, *Emmanuel* has published a list of deceased members of the Priests' Eucharistic League, remembering those who have served the church generously and faithfully and have passed into the promised eternal life. Priests in the Eucharistic League whose names begin with N, O, P, and Q are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during July and August.



## BREAKING THE WORD

# Scriptural Reflections - Homiletics

by Paul Bernier, SSS

## July 7, 2019 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-3, 4-7, 16, 20; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20**

The old *Baltimore Catechism* still lives! In those days of yesteryear, when asked why God created us, students would dutifully respond, “God made me to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world, and to be happy with him forever in heaven.” The follow-up question asked what we must do to save our souls. The correct answer to that was that “we must worship God by faith, hope, and charity; that is, we must believe in him, hope in him, and love him with all our heart.”

From more than 50 years of hearing confessions, most Catholics seem fixated on that understanding of our faith. Religion today is often privatized to become a personal, private relationship with God. In public life religious convictions play little or no role. Even many committed Catholics see their faith mainly in terms of “saving their souls.” Their spiritual exercises are to keep them focused on Christ and to help them overcome their faults. Little emphasis is placed on sharing the Good News.

In today’s Gospel, however, we see Jesus sending the 70 (72?) out on mission. In a similar passage at the beginning of Chapter 9, he sent out the Twelve. This larger group is a pointed reminder by Luke that mission is not confined to an inner circle of disciples. It is intended for all those baptized into Christ Jesus.

Luke reminds us at Pentecost that people “from every nation under heaven” are gathered to hear the initial preaching of the Gospel (Acts 2:5). Jesus warns us that the missionary task might be difficult. The

Blessed Sacrament Father Paul J. Bernier served for many years as the editor of *Emmanuel*. He is a popular writer, preacher, and director of retreats. Among his many published works is *Ministry in the Church: A Historical and Pastoral Approach*, Second Edition, published by Orbis Books in 2015.

message may be rejected, but it is one of critical importance. The stakes are high. For those who accept, it is salvation. For those who reject it, a cause of condemnation (cf. vv. 13-16, left out in the reading).

A second emphasis is on the need for prayer. We are to beg God to send laborers, authentic workers who will get the job done. Those sent are to travel light and rely only on God. They are, in the words of Pope Francis, to be so immersed in their mission that they “smell like the sheep.” Nor should they glory in any success that is theirs, but rather that God has accepted them and that their names are “written in heaven.”

In a very real sense, baptism is an acceptance to join Jesus in his mission of redeeming the world. This is not restricted to those who go off into foreign lands to preach Christ. In our modern secularized world, there is an enormous amount of evangelization needed. The kingdom which is proclaimed is, in Luke’s understanding, more than a private acceptance of Jesus as Savior. It has a social dimension, as Jesus’ sermon on the plain made clear (6:17ff). This and the subsequent teaching on forgiveness imply that ours is also an ethic of love and concern for the poor. Christ’s kingdom is one of justice and peace.

Each Eucharist should be a reminder of the mission dimension of Christianity. We gather as Christ’s disciples to hear and be challenged by his word, strengthen ourselves at the table of his flesh, and are sent forth — commissioned — to go and put the Gospel into practice in our world.

July 14, 2019  
Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Deuteronomy 30:10-14; Psalm 69:14, 17, 30-31, 33-34, 36-37;  
Colossians 1:15-20; Luke 10:25-37**

There has been a tendency in the Church to reduce Christianity to proper doctrine. We are judged more by whether we know and adhere to the teachings of the *Catholic Catechism* than on whether we actually live the Gospel. Theologians may be removed, or even excommunicated for deviating from sound doctrine. Meanwhile, those who are proud, intolerant, or abusive of others often remain in positions of authority. Think of the ramifications of the sexual abuse

crisis in this regard.

Jesus has just finished praising God for having revealed the mysteries of the kingdom to children and hidden them from the proud (21-22). Today's story illustrates that point, as a proud lawyer shows that he totally misunderstands what the kingdom is all about. In Luke's version, Jesus has the lawyer answer his own question about salvation. Both the question and the answer are wrong. Questions asked only to disconcert and answers that bear no relation to practice are not kingdom exercises. Right answers do not imply that we love either God or neighbor.

Jesus did not tell this man to go to the head of the class. Rather, he told a parable. And when he asked the "scholar of the law" who proved himself to be neighbor to the man by the wayside, he was forced to admit that it was the man he despised. Jesus simply told him to "go and *do* likewise."

The second question of the lawyer was also off the mark. "Who is my neighbor" for him really meant, "Which ones do I (not) have to love?" It is a question Jesus didn't even bother answering. (Note that in the Gospels, Jesus rarely answers the questions people ask him; he answers the questions they should have asked.) His parable of the Samaritan shows that the right question was "How can I be a neighbor to others?" Note also that one point of the parable is that those hamstrung by legalism (for a priest or a Levite to even get near a dead body would have rendered them unfit to minister in the temple) can fail at charity while being doctrinally orthodox. Meanwhile, the theologically unsophisticated, whom we often look down on or despise, can put us to shame in that regard.

Jesus tells all of us to "go and do." The Gospel must be lived, not only believed. Knowing the whole catechism by heart may earn us a 4.0 average, but not the approbation of Jesus. We are challenged to become loving and life-giving people in our world. The priest and the Levite in the story — like many of us today — were in a dilemma, caught between two duties: temple responsibilities versus helping someone. The difficulty is always knowing how to apply the principles we learn. Jesus seems to imply, however, that it is the heart that needs to be educated. When it can be touched by the need and pain of others, it becomes Christ-like — the only way God is really honored and praised.

July 21, 2019  
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Genesis 18:1-10; Psalm 15:15:2-5; Colossians 1:24-28; Luke 10:38-42**

Jean Paul Sartre, in one of his optimistic moments, said that “hell is people.” He may have vastly overstated the case, but one of life’s constant irritants is the fragility of human relationships. Whether it be personality clashes, misunderstandings, family squabbles, or trouble in the workplace, people often get upset with one another. Hurt feelings and grudges sometimes spoil the best of relationships.

The Martha story should be easy to relate to. Interestingly, Luke sets the story in the section of his Gospel dealing with the qualities of discipleship. Thus, the last three Sundays have dealt with the imperative nature of the Christian call, the importance of mission, and the man skilled in Scripture who doesn’t really hear (or do!) God’s word. Today we have one about a person who is so taken up with the duties of hospitality that she neglects to hear God’s word — and resents one who does. Jesus told the Samaritan to “go and do;” he tells Martha to “sit down and relax, listen and learn.”

Hospitality was an important duty in Jesus’ day. Witness Abraham’s extravagance in the first reading. Martha, in welcoming Jesus into her home, is surely a model of those who receive Jesus and “the One who sent him” (Lk 9:48), thus making her one of the greatest in the kingdom. It is not Martha’s hospitality that is being faulted, only her preoccupation with herself (or her sister!), an anxiety which prevents her from fully attending to Jesus.

We should not put too much emphasis on Jesus’ reply about the “one thing” needed, as this sentence has five variations in the manuscripts. Mary is held up as a model of one who is beginning where all discipleship must begin: by listening to Jesus’ word. Martha may well have already interiorized Christ’s word. She surely must have already admired Jesus, or she would never have invited him to her home.

Martha is the heroine in this story. Other gospel passages make it clear that she was very close to Jesus. Today’s story shows, however, how easy it is to let personal preoccupations spoil even our service of



Christ. In today's world we can become so busy with many things that we never stop to smell the flowers. As a consequence, we can turn in on ourselves, and magnify the hurts and slights we receive. Self-pity makes us shift the focus from the One who can take us out of ourselves. Unless we begin by hearing God's word, service can degenerate into busyness that loses its purpose.

This particular gospel passage has been misused down the centuries as praising the superiority of the contemplative life over the active life. That is not why it was introduced into the Gospel. For all we know, Mary might well have been a bit selfish in letting Martha do all the work. But, as mentioned above, Martha is the heroine of this story. It is she who welcomed Jesus into her home, and provided the needed hospitality. She may have been having a bad hair day, but the basic lesson is that we should not let personal feelings spoil our service of the Lord.

July 28, 2019  
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 138:1-3, 6-8; Colossians 2:12-14; Luke 11:1-13**

If liturgical prayer is especially praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of his life, private prayer tends to be more of petition. The basic problem here is that our petitions are not always granted, causing many to give up on God and feel that prayer is useless. Or we can take refuge in magic chain prayers and novenas in an effort to get God to give us what we want.

The Gospel today is so rich that almost any sentence can provide material for a homily. We might do well to note how Luke differs from the more familiar Matthean version. For one thing, the context is not Jesus' teaching (Matthew situates it in the sermon on the mount), but Jesus' prayer. His example is what caused the disciples to ask how they might learn to pray as he did.

The petitions of the prayer make sense only when the total context of our prayer is an appreciation of God as *Abba*. There is no patriarchy here. The parables after the prayer further extend our understanding

of the spirit in which we should pray. The man who seeks to borrow bread is not asking for himself, to satisfy his own needs, but for a visitor. Even an unresponsive neighbor would understand that type of request.

Likewise, the second saying is a commentary on how we should view *Abba*. We are invited to see God not as a parent hovering over his helpless children, but from our own (adult) ability to give life to others. If we can easily sacrifice for those we love, how much more willing is God to do the same. The insistence is that God is even more caring, benevolent, than any earthly parent; he is one to whom we can turn with loving confidence.

The New Testament moves away from the idea of any bargaining with God. Instead, we are invited to experience an extraordinary closeness and familiarity with God. Prayer is not twisting God's arm to give us what he is not really minded to give. God knows our needs. God cares. Prayer is rooted in the kindness and generosity of a God whose will is always for our good. When we learn to embrace that, we will be able to pray as disciples, even as Jesus himself did.

Let us comment on only one petition: for daily bread. Why do we ask *daily* for *daily* bread? In such a short prayer, it seems like a wasted word! The problem is that the word modifying bread is unknown in any Greek literature we know of. In the New Testament it is found only in relation to the Our Father. Even the Greek fathers of the Church could not agree on what it really meant.

The most probable solution is that this word was invented to describe that special bread that characterizes us as Christians. Today we would say *Eucharistic* bread. But the word Eucharist came into use only at the end of the first century. Obviously, the neologism *epiousiov* was confusing enough that it was never used anywhere outside the New Testament. That should not prevent us from appreciating that this petition is for the bread of life that comes to us from the heart of Christ.

August 4, 2019  
Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23; Psalm 90:3-6, 12-14, 17; Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11; Luke 12:13-21**

In today's first lesson, we meet a disgruntled sage lamenting the vanity of life; in the gospel reading, we see a self-satisfied farmer and businessman blessed with wealth. Perhaps the sage in the first reading has a better perspective. At least he realizes that everything will come to an end.

Jesus was in the middle of encouraging his disciples to remain faithful even when they are under difficulties or persecution when he is interrupted by one in the crowd who wants Jesus to settle a financial dispute between siblings. Jesus, however, refuses to enter into the family squabble and instead uses the situation as an opportunity to teach about the seduction of wealth. Jesus warns his questioner about two things: to be on guard against greed, and to realize that life does not consist in what one possesses. It is futile to amass possessions against the future when that future could be cut off at any time!

Jesus today is asked to be a referee, and he refuses. He had to! How could he decide whose greed was right? Rather than act as judge, Jesus proposes a parable. Incidentally, we should not make a caricature of the farmer in today's parable. He is not said to be breaking any of the commandments; nor is he accused of being unjust. He is not portrayed as wicked — that is, he has not gained his wealth illegally or by taking advantage of others. Further, he is not portrayed as particularly greedy. Indeed, he seems to be somewhat surprised by his good fortune as he makes what appears to be reasonable plans to reap the abundance of the harvest. What is wrong, we might ask, about building larger barns to store away some of today's bounty for a potentially leaner tomorrow? Nothing, really. He is perhaps worse than all this. He is a fool, says the Gospel.

Why so? The relentless use of the first-person pronouns "I" and "my" betray a preoccupation with self. There is no thought to using his abundance to help others, no expression of gratitude for his good fortune, no recognition of God at all. The farmer has fallen prey to worshipping the most popular of gods: wealth. This leads to, and is

most likely caused by, a second mistake. He is not foolish because he makes provision for the future; he is foolish because he believes that by his wealth he can secure his future: "I shall say to myself, 'Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!'"

Anyone who does not live life with constant reference to God is caught up with futility and or meaninglessness. His values are not transcendent, but rooted in passing things. The craving to hoard not only puts things in the place of God, but is an act of total disregard for the needs of others. The real issue here is whether our trust is put only on our own inventiveness and planning, or on trust in God, and living by the values Jesus taught us.

The real issue that we should focus on today is bourgeois Christianity, a Christianity which is as materialistic as any of its pagan neighbors. Today we can ask what influence our belief in Christ has on our value system, and whether we live in any different way than our secularized neighbors. Our texts today do not give us specific answers. They do provide us with powerful reminders to have our values straight — and based on those given us by Christ.

## August 11, 2019 Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Wisdom 18:6-9; Psalm 33:12, 18-22; Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19; Luke 12:32-48**

Periodically, we have to ask ourselves to what extent our faith actually controls our life. Is it only a veneer, or does it give us such a total trust and confidence in God so that we are not constantly filled with anxiety for things the world considers important: wealth, fame, power, sex, etc.? Our temptation today is to strive more for material things than for the kingdom.

The gospel passage (long version) makes three points: that we should be generous in giving alms; that we should always be ready for the coming of Christ; and that we should always act with Christian responsibility. The first point actually concludes the passage about our not being preoccupied about life's necessities. This concludes with

Jesus' well-known words about being free from worry: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or your body, what you will wear." Remember those words? — how Jesus points to the ravens, and the lilies and the grass and says, "If all of these are under God's providential care, so are you. — so stop striving, cease your vain, anxious seeking. Seek God's kingdom instead, and the rest will come." He then concludes with the initial verses from today's Gospel.

The context for the whole Gospel is the assurance that God has given us the kingdom. Because we have been freely gifted, we should be able to freely give. We must live in response to God's grace — something the rich fool in last week's Gospel should have done. Furthermore, all Christian life is meant to be lived in expectation of Christ's return. Our actions with wealth are not trivial matters. They are part of a disciple's readiness and watchfulness.

Finally, we are all called to be faithful stewards of God's household. Waiting for Christ to return means working for the coming of the kingdom of God. It means combating poverty; ending the hatreds that divide us; establishing peace among individuals, within families, in society; curbing the pride that causes us to become confrontational with God and with each other; building social structures that respect the dignity of individual humans.

Peter asks Jesus whether this commandment is meant only for the apostles, or for all believers. While it might seem to belong primarily to those in authority, it obviously belongs to all those who have any position of responsibility. Parents, teachers, leaders in the workplace or government all have a special responsibility to further the kingdom. However, it would seem that baptism/confirmation/Eucharist give all Christians a particular responsibility to live their faith as servants of Christ. None are called to live a passive, privatized Christian life, but one of actively engaging in continuing the work of Jesus.

If we truly believe that the divine reign has begun with the coming of Jesus, and the present is oriented to the completion of that reign and Christ's return, then we have reasons to bring God into any discussion about the key values in our lives, and what it means to call ourselves Christian. The Master's invitation to his servants to sit at table happens to us each time we join in the Eucharist. This is an anticipation of the eschatological banquet promised in Isaiah (25:6). We must be aware of the reality going on in our midst by God.

August 18, 2019  
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10; Psalm 40:3-4, 18; Hebrews 12:1-4; Luke 12:49-53**

There persists a feeling among many Christians that life should be easy for those devoted to Christ. For those with faith and commitment, life's journey should be peaceful and untroubled. People, furthermore, should respect our sincerity and welcome the message of salvation that we bring. Is this reality?

The statements that Jesus came to bring fire and division, that he would experience a distressful baptism, contrast with our image of Jesus as the Prince of Peace! Yet we have the example of a Jeremiah in the first reading, who was thrown into a cistern for his predicting that God would allow Jerusalem to be destroyed. And we have Jesus himself warning us that our picture of him may not be accurate. This gospel passage is perhaps one of the hardest sayings to be found in the Bible.

Popular perception in the world concerning Jesus is that he was a man of love who came to bring peace, that his message was one of peace. That's sort of the popular idea about Jesus. Even the Jews had the expectation that when the Messiah came, peace would come with him. But Jesus absolutely shattered that expectation. "Do you think that I have come to establish peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." That's a very precise statement. That shatters Jewish expectation and our notion of a "gentle Jesus."

Two images govern this pericope: baptism and fire. The baptism is a reference to the sufferings of Christ, sufferings that he is anxious to be over. Fire stands for judgment, purification, and the Holy Spirit. The judgment implied here, the flame which refines, is one we must make either for or against Christ. The warning is that this choice must (and will) make a difference, even within families. Turning to one person (Christ) implies turning away from another. Peace (in the sense of the status quo) is now disrupted. The very presence of Jesus precipitates a crisis in terms of how people relate to him. Not all will see him as a source of salvation. Neither will they welcome those who do.

We have a stark reminder today that Christianity was not (and is not) based on existing family or human relationships, but on Christ's baptism. This implies the possibility of divisive struggles at the earthly level, and Jesus warns us about these today. This harks back to the warning given us when Jesus was presented in the temple and Simeon predicted that he was destined for the rise and fall of many (2:34). The consolation we have is that we need not see opposition and difficulties as signs of defeat or rejection. Somehow, conflict is incorporated into the divine plan, and can be a source of purification, an occasion of making a clear choice for Christ. Only this results in peace. Not an instant peace, or peace at any price, but the peace of knowing that we have not compromised ourselves or been unfaithful.

The anguish of Jesus, as he approaches the time of his testing and trial, is evident. He longs for this time to be over, and his mission completed. Jesus has seen enough already to know that he has preached the Good News, but many people have rejected his message. His own life foreshadows not only his passion, but that of many Christians as well. Jesus did say, however, that if we wished to follow him, we should expect to be faced with the cross.

## August 25, 2019 Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Isaiah 66:18-21; Psalm 117:1-2; Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13; Luke 13:22-30**

Salvation is pictured in different ways by different people. Some imagine that the only ones to be saved are those who belong to their own particular group. Thus, they have a hell with a much larger population than heaven. We Catholics used to feel that heaven was difficult enough to attain that we imagined a purgatory that was rather full. Some fathers of the Church felt that everyone would eventually be saved. It all boils down to how we understand God's plan for humanity and how we are to be saved.

Unlike the optimism of the first reading, the Gospel seems rather stark in this regard. The question of who will be saved can be asked either out of concern or from the smug assumption that we are among them. Most of us have wondered about that question as we look at

the billions of pagans compared with the few committed Christians. Jesus did not answer the question directly. Instead, he directed the question away from abstract theological speculation and toward specific application for each person in the crowd. The man had asked, "Will the saved be few?" Jesus turned it around to ask us, "Will the saved be *you*?"

Jesus directs us all to a greater awareness of the demands of the kingdom. Luke has here summarized Jesus' teaching on the matter. The invitation to enter is open to all, but the way is narrow and demands more than casual interest. And, in fact, the door will not remain open forever. It will certainly not be open to those whose only claim to entrance is that they "ate and drank" with Jesus — a clear allusion to our Eucharists. Mere association with Jesus counts for nothing unless accompanied with fruits worthy of Christ. Sinners, "evil-doers," show they have no real solidarity with Christ, and will have no part of the kingdom. They will not take their seats with Abraham and all who have been faithful to the demands of their calling.

It is interesting to compare this text with similar gospel passages about human destiny. The story of the rich man and Lazarus implies that the rich man is condemned because he did not look after Lazarus. Similarly, in Matthew 25, people are redeemed or condemned insofar as they tended to the needs of the vulnerable, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned, etc. The poor become the measure of the judgment we will receive.

Perhaps the best response to today's readings is a deep humility: humility at having been called by God, of realizing our own personal unworthiness, of knowing to what extent the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to follow Christ completely.

The fact that Jesus has walked the road ahead of us should give us the courage to follow his way. The question about how many will be saved is a fruitless one. The question we should ask is *whether we will be among them*. Week by week, the Eucharist that we celebrate should enable us to sharpen our awareness of what it means to be a disciple, and grace us to be so.







## EUCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •  
Poetry • Books

At the parish where I currently serve, we have between 80 and 90 funerals a year. So, celebrating a funeral is a weekly routine. As I sit down with families to prepare the funeral, I take it as an opportunity to minister to them in their mourning and grief. I find so often, especially with people who pass away in their late eighties or early nineties, that their family tends to get stuck in the events of the last years of their loved one's life. Perhaps they had dementia. Perhaps they needed fulltime nursing care. Often, they are not the person they remember.

As a way to break them out of this and help them process things, I take them back to the beginning. I ask them questions about their loved one, starting with where they were born. Then I slowly have them tell the story of their loved one's life. Often laughter and tears surface as they tell stories they haven't told in a very long time. Their loved one is no longer the diminished, dying relative of recent years, but the vital, unique person that made such a difference in their lives. Remembering rejuvenates them. Remembering brings the most meaningful memories to the present, and their loved one feels close again.

Sometimes the connection between remembering and Eucharist becomes all the clearer when I discover that cooking and sharing meals was one of the primary ways they expressed love and shared life. In my parish I'm delighted to often hear stories of Italian grandmothers who drew everyone to the table. Family, friends, and neighbors alike were welcomed to the table with sumptuous, always abundant meals. These grandmothers knew everyone's favorite food: fresh bakery, homemade pasta and sauce, maybe even some homemade wine. Relationships and memories were created and sustained around their family tables.

In these instances, I try to make the connection between remembering and Eucharist more tangible in my homily. I often say that remembering is so important. In fact, remembering is a very important part of being a Christian. At every celebration of the Mass, the priest takes bread and wine and repeats Jesus' words from Scripture, "Do this in memory of me." And when we do this, we make Jesus present. We bring him

## Art Review



John Christman,  
SSS  
MARK'S SENSES  
#2  
2010, Oil on  
Canvas  
(Collection  
Paul Bechtold  
Library, Catholic  
Theological Union,  
Chicago Illinois)

John Christman,  
SSS

back to mind. We *remember* him.

I think it can be somewhat similar for the family and friends of the deceased. In continuing to share stories about their loved one, in continuing to say their name, and in continuing to share meals and life as they did, they help keep their loved one present as well.

The painting on the cover of *Emmanuel* this month is a painting inspired by the Gospel of Mark's account of the feeding of the four thousand (8:1-10). It could easily evoke similar scenes in Luke's Gospel as well. These are very Eucharistic scenes. They not only show the great generosity of Christ, but teach us how we are to be of Eucharistic service to others, especially those most in need.

Pope Francis offered a beautiful reflection upon this in a Corpus Christi homily in 2016. He said of Luke's account of the feeding of the multitude, especially Jesus' instruction, "Give them something to eat yourselves" (Lk 9:13): "Clearly this miracle was not intended merely to satisfy hunger for a day, but rather it signals what Christ wants to accomplish for the salvation of all mankind, giving his own flesh and blood (cf. Jn 6:48-58). And yet this needs always to happen through those two small actions: *offering* the few loaves and fish which we have; *receiving* the bread broken by the hands of Jesus and giving it to all."<sup>1</sup>

The theologian Nathan Mitchell takes this even further. He interprets Jesus' injunction, "Do this in memory of me" to mean "Free yourselves from bondage to rules that ignore human need. Break your bread gladly with any and all — leaving to God the task of distinguishing the worthy from the unworthy."<sup>2</sup> "Do this in memory of me" here becomes so much more. It is about building the kingdom of God in our midst. It is about sharing God's generosity as Jesus modeled for us. It is also about remembering. It is about uniting our stories to Christ. It is about building relationship through breaking bread with "any and all."<sup>3</sup>

And whether you learn this lesson from Scripture, from reading theology, or from your grandmother is less important than taking it to heart, and putting it into practice. But it probably tastes better when you learn it from your grandmother!

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco\\_20160526\\_omelia-corpus-domini.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160526_omelia-corpus-domini.html) accessed April 9, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Nathan Mitchell, *Eucharist as a Sacrament of Initiation* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 99.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

## Poetry

### The Host

God's glory conveyed in one syllable — *host* —  
opens our litany of praise.

He is the *hostia*, the victim who atones for our crimes,  
the sacrificial lamb, the blood over  
the lintel of our lives, the slain savior  
then, now, forever.

He is both the guest and the holy welcome,  
the *hospes* and the *hospitis*.

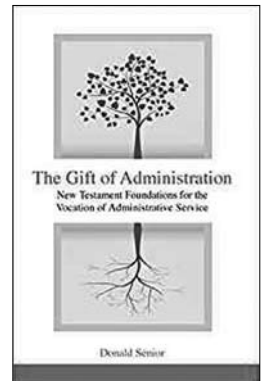
With our hands and our tongues  
we greet this visitor to sojourn in our souls,  
the flesh and the feast, the *hostel*,  
the God who empties himself  
into us.

This one syllable gift of love  
is bestowed on us  
no matter what we may be —  
*hostage or hospitalier*.

Philip C. Kolin

## Book Reviews

I received this very welcome Christmas gift to read and reflect upon during my break. I am a big fan of noted scripture scholar Passionist Father Donald Senior, and I admire his gift for writing. He was the president of the seminary I attended (Catholic Theological Union) and is still working "in retirement" as a scripture professor and the chancellor of CTU in Chicago. After stepping down as president, a position he held for 23 years, he wrote this book based on his experience in order to offer a theology for the vocation of governance and administration.



THE GIFT OF  
ADMINISTRATION:  
NEW TESTAMENT  
FOUNDATIONS  
FOR THE  
VOCATION OF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
SERVICE  
Donald Senior, CP  
Collegeville,  
Minnesota: Liturgical  
Press, 2015  
167 pp., \$19.95

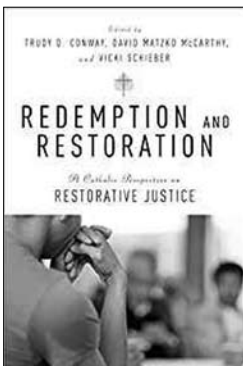
This book aims to support pastors, principals, business managers, or any other administrators for a Christian organization, including faculty and volunteers who serve in leadership. It is not a “how to” book. Instead, he shares his experience with others who have been chosen to work for Church organizations, as he himself was. It is also helpful in guiding administrators of other non-profits in helping them make peace with the responsibility of leadership.

The title is somewhat “tongue in cheek,” since many would never see the “gift” in being called to administrate! He does not explore this word enough, but instead places the emphasis on the notion of “vocation.” The book clearly is a reflection on the vocation to which many are called by God and a particular religious community or organization to serve in administrative work.

Administrating is challenging. Senior gives apt illustrations from Scripture, for example, the apostle Paul’s fundraising efforts for needy churches. He uses Scripture to show how Jesus and the early church built up the Christian community for the common good. Senior brings the Gospel to the workplace (102).

The book is divided equally among topics like institutional modeling, mission, and planning, the importance of finances and fundraising, “habits of the heart,” and “remembering whose we are.” It is a wonderful book to give or to receive as reading material for a retreat, to renew one’s commitment to the call of service in administration. It encourages a faith-based management style that builds one’s skills and gifts for the greater good and for better organizational development.

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



**REDEMPTION  
AND  
RESTORATION:  
A CATHOLIC  
PERSPECTIVE  
ON RESTORATIVE  
JUSTICE**

Trudy D. Conway,  
David Matzko  
McCarthy,  
and Vicki Scheiber  
Collegeville,  
Minnesota:  
Liturgical Press,  
2017  
306 pp., \$29.99

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The book is a real gem. At first sight, it looks long and heavy. Second sight offers a look at the whole criminal justice system in the United States. It is a book for anyone and everyone involved in the system: lawyers, judges, counselors, people working in prisons and those in prisons, along with police, victims, their families, and communities, etc.

One can read the whole book through, Chapters 1-14, or use it as

an encyclopedia looking at various sections on how to deal with all aspects of restorative justice. Each chapter has a theme, a review of the theme, a look into the next section, and a set of discussion questions.

The goal of the book is to offer a process of restorative justice that treats the victim and the perpetrator with dignity and respect, helps return the perpetrator to the community, and helps in the healing of the victim and the community.

The book challenges citizens of the United States to move from a punishing system to a forgiving process of restorative justice. For too long, the approach of our justice system has been “an eye for an eye.” Two chapters (6 and 7) explain restorative justice in the Hebrew Bible and in Jesus’ teaching and example in the New Testament.

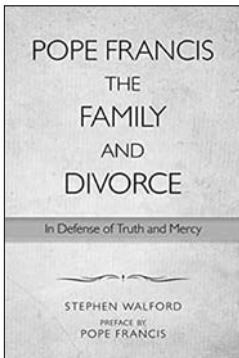
Chapter 3 offers a plethora of vital statistics to describe our present unjust system, in terms of numbers, race, and inequality of sentencing, along with the misuse and abuse of the economic system. Some examples: one in ten adults is incarcerated in a prison or local jail. In 2012, the government spent over \$274 billion on the criminal justice system. Eleven states spent more money on the criminal justice system than on education. The incarceration rate continues to rise while crime rates have fallen 39% since 1980. And many more.

One would think that just looking at these statistics we would realize that the system is more than broken.

Chapter 12 gives a 10-step process to move from a retributive practice of justice to a restorative practice. It also includes models of restorative justice.

Chapter 13 explains the role of faith communities and organizations in moving to restorative communities. Throughout the whole book, practical examples of ordinary individuals, groups, and communities practicing forgiveness and restoration are making a difference. It is a sad book about our criminal justice system, but also a hopeful one. It gives a practical process for change and multiple examples of individuals and groups who have already begun to build a more biblical and humane system.

Marie Vianney Bilgrien, SSND  
El Paso, Texas



**POPE FRANCIS,  
THE FAMILY, AND  
DIVORCE:  
IN DEFENSE OF  
TRUTH AND  
MERCY**  
Stephen Walford  
Mahwah, New  
Jersey: Paulist Press,  
2018  
232 pp., \$19.95

Stephen Walford, a British pianist and a teacher, took an interest in the pope's apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, after having read complaints about its alleged errors. Walford had written religious books before and felt motivated to undertake the process again. While developing this text in consultation with 14 priests, he thoroughly researched the field and produced a text that Pope Francis himself endorses.

Walford begins his treatise by reviewing the crisis in marriage today. While emphasizing the importance of indissolubility, he knows that marital situations are often complex. Divorce and adultery have both victims and culprits that come in many different varieties. Conversion requires different responses in different situations.

Before treating the controversial Chapter 8, the author systematically reviews each of the chapters, drawing on relevant quotations along the way to illustrate the warmth of familial love. He presents Chapter 8 separately due to the controversy it has attracted.

Walford accurately takes into account the subtleties of what mercy may require. While the media falsely give the impression that now those who are divorced and civilly remarried may simply receive Communion, the author correctly notes that Francis has altered the discipline for those in irregular situations, but only if there is a proper exploration and resolution of the issues in the internal forum of confession (61). Black and white solutions cannot incorporate the mercy that love requires.

Walford then reviews relevant scriptural passages, each of which supports his interpretation of *Amoris Laetitia*. While his position seems thoughtful, it could have been greatly enhanced by citations to respected scriptural commentaries.

The author next traverses familiar territory concerning the imputability of sinful actions and the mitigation of responsibility. He reports Aquinas' dictum that general rules, while essential, cannot adequately address every circumstance. He also cites a significant principle from Paul VI: while it is never permissible to do an evil act so that good can come of it, "sometimes it is lawful to tolerate a lesser moral evil in order to avoid a greater evil or in order to promote a greater good" (96). A statement from the CDF in 1989 affirmed this principle. Dilemmas can creep into life, and *Amoris Laetitia* is well grounded in taking a

compassionate position regarding them (100).

While the author does yeoman work in pulling together many documents and insights, his case could have been strengthened by reference to *Eucharist as a Celebration of Forgiveness*, the recent work of Francis Moloney, SDB, who explores the background and reasoning behind Saint Paul's dictum against receiving Communion "unworthily." The term does not refer to the lack of grace in an individual's soul, but to the lack of unity in a congregation that fails to treat lowly social members with dignity and respect.

After considering John Henry Newman's principles on the development of dogma, Walford ventures into making a blanket judgment about the truth of magisterial statements. He goes so far as to say that "errors are not possible in any magisterial teaching concerning faith and morals" (144). Surely that statement requires much qualification. This lack of nuance mars an otherwise splendid effort that considers many diverse approaches in explaining *Amoris Laetitia*.

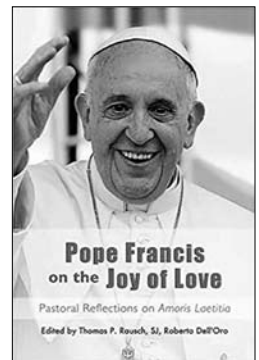
Nevertheless, Walford has produced a formidable text, with papal approval. Those who opine on the principles of *Amoris Laetitia* would do well to consult it, and consider seriously its arguments.

Gerald Bednar, PhD  
Vice-President/Vice-Rector  
Saint Mary Seminary  
Cleveland, Ohio

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The editors of this very useful anthology have selected nine experts to comment on various aspects of *Amoris Laetitia*, the controversial apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis. Questions for discussion assist readers and groups to understand the material at the close of each chapter.

After a chapter summarizing the contents of *Amoris Laetitia*, sociologist John Coleman, SJ, brings readers up to date on the latest statistics concerning marriage in America. Although the statistics will generally sadden those who value marriage, the author offers at least one slim ray of hope. The number of couples who agree that divorce is not the best solution to marital difficulties actually increased between 2002 and 2013. Nevertheless, Coleman notes that few Catholics pray together as a family, making it difficult to characterize the family as



**POPE FRANCIS  
ON THE JOY OF  
LOVE:  
PASTORAL  
REFLECTIONS  
ON AMORIS  
LAETITIA**  
Thomas P. Rausch,  
SJ, and Roberto  
Dell'Oro, ed.  
Mahwah, New  
Jersey: Paulist Press,  
2018  
200 pp., \$24.95

the domestic church (33).

After a chapter on the spiritual and sacramental dynamics of marriage, Michael Lawler and Todd Salzman offer a sexual anthropology in support of *Amoris Laetitia*. The pope has not changed doctrine; he has changed pastoral practice in view of a modern conception of the human person. The authors think it essential that older practices be revised in light of the discovery of the female ovum in the 1850s. Prior to that time, it was thought that the man's seed contained the complete human being, which would grow while it resided in the friendly confines of a woman's womb (63-64). Earlier judgments on sexual matters need to be revisited in light of common assumptions that have since been disproven.

The authors call attention to the fact that, while Francis professes the faith of the Church in rejecting cohabitation and same-sex unions, he also refrains from condemning them. This illustrates not doctrinal laxity, but the pope's determination to accompany such couples in a gentle way (70). The authors' presentation of the indissolubility of marriage is informed by historical and scriptural nuances that are too seldom considered by opponents (73-74). Although the authors make many good points, they venture beyond Church teaching when considering homosexual unions, while giving only one footnote to back up their claims.

In the next chapter, Roberto Dell'Oro explains the complexities of morality by easing moral decisions away from the mere application of law. Conscience should focus on a person's "growth in communion with the good" (83). It considers acts in the context of a specific person's life in all its complexity. It looks to the values that are perceived and interpreted in the concrete circumstances of life, and cultivates freedom in the process. Conscience can recognize, in Francis' words, "what for now is the most generous response which can be given to God . . . while yet not fully the objective ideal" (AL, 303).

After a chapter on the domestic church, including helpful hints on how to enhance the experience, Craig Cox offers a set of reflections on the canonical implications of *Amoris Laetitia*. He unfolds the pope's *motu proprio* *Mitis iudex*, as a response to canonical procedures that, while workable in rich countries, were so burdensome in poorer countries that they became practically impossible. He reviews the major reforms enacted for tribunals, and gives background for the problem of the



reception of Eucharist for those in irregular marriages. The author clearly would interpret law in a way that allows for the reception of Communion more readily than was allowable in past days. More than the law needs to be considered.

The author favors recasting annulment cases in more pastoral terms that avoid the off-putting categories that are imposed on a person's life. As it stands now, a "petitioner" must submit to a "trial" before a "tribunal" with "judges" and "witnesses," a process that culminates in a "legal sentence." The author suggests that a "decree of freedom to marry" would be more palatable than a declaration of nullity that seems to render a significantly painful episode in a person's life as a mere nothing (130).

After a beautiful and insightful chapter on marriage preparation by Maureen Day, James Keenan, SJ, gives a curiously one-sided report on the reception of *Amoris Laetitia*. It is no secret that the document has suffered a difficult reception. Four cardinals issued *dubia* that questioned its doctrinal purity. A group of laity offered a filial correction to the document. Websites have published at times wildly inflammatory denunciations of those who defend the pope. Nevertheless, Keenan ignores those interventions and reviews only the positive comments of those writing in *Theological Studies* and *Commonweal*.

Certainly the author is correct in highlighting the document's positive reception, especially noting the statements of the various national conferences of bishops along with prominent cardinals, such as Cardinals Schönborn and Kasper. The negative reactions do pale in comparison, but not to the point where they should be ignored. He suggests that people in the United States were caught by surprise because only a third of the dioceses participated in the consultation of the laity that preceded the synod on the family (161).

*Pope Francis and the Joy of Love* should contribute well to the continued reception and understanding of *Amoris Laetitia*. Its chapters and follow-up questions should aid all in appropriating the message of the pope.



Gerald Bednar, PhD.  
Vice-President/Vice-Rector  
Saint Mary Seminary  
Cleveland, Ohio



## *EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS*

Robert Dew

Lyndhurst, Ohio

A good friend of mine and fellow Knight of Columbus has just passed away. I had the honor of knowing Geno for about ten months. When he was in hospice, I went to see him quite often.

On several occasions and virtually every Friday, another good friend of his would show up for a visit. Ray always made a great and large arrival. Geno and he would shake hands, exchange noisy greetings, and from there began stories of legend and lore, long since engraved into their hearts and memories. I sat in silence and listened.

This went on for some time, but then things would go quiet. Ray would bring out his pyx, take the host, and hold the Eucharist up before Geno saying, "Geno, this is the body of Christ." Geno said quietly, "Amen," and opened his mouth. Ray placed the host on his tongue, and Geno consumed it. There was for a time, deep and sincere prayer.

I felt in those moments that the whole tone of the visit changed. The conversation shifted. Things went to a higher, spiritual realm.

I believe that is what Eucharist does; Jesus brings a presence that takes us to a higher realm of love. Godly love. The Sacrament of Charity.

And though I personally would have that love always, I often struggle to even touch it. But in that hospice room I saw it. I felt it. I watched and listened to these two elderly Catholic gentlemen speak of their lives, their wives, their friendships, and their God. It was all a mixed up in a wonderful, bittersweet soup. Tears ran down our cheeks, prayers rose to the heavens as we were being shaped in the way of our Eucharistic Lord.



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Paris 17 Dec 61

“Take away the Eucharist in the world, you take away it’s sun, you take away its life.”

Mon Pere,

Arrivy au mon d. S. S. —

Sous la protection de S. S. —

en l’honneur de S. Jean.

vous p. regard à l’instant

non — je p. —

seul — p. —

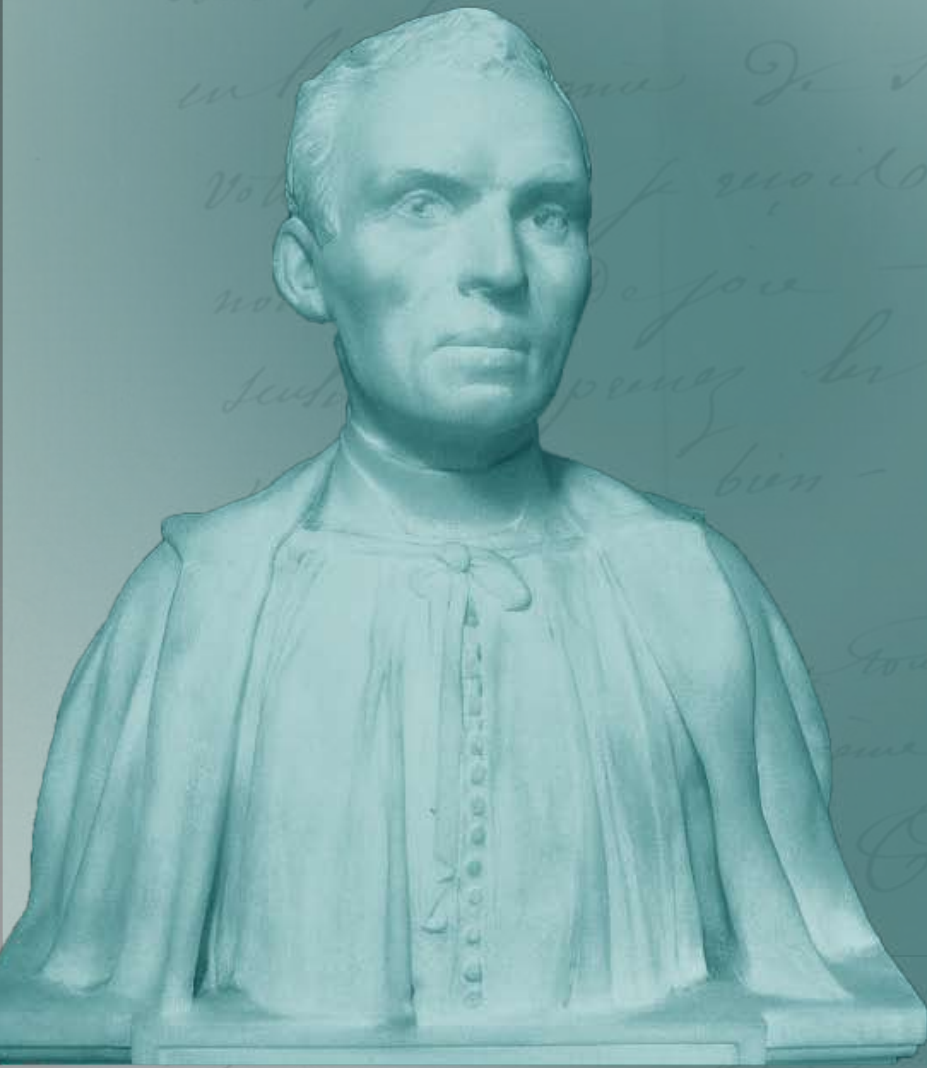
bien — sur les

Tout mon cœur

Eymard

Eymard  
S. S.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard



*“Jesus was broken; he is broken for us. And he asks us to give ourselves, to break ourselves, as it were, for others. This “breaking bread” became the icon, the sign for recognizing Christ and Christians. We think of Emmaus: they knew him “in the breaking of the bread” (Lk24:35). We recall the first community of Jerusalem: “They held steadfastly... to the breaking of the bread” (Acts 2:42). From the outset it is the Eucharist which becomes the centre and pattern of the life of the Church. But we think also of all the saints – famous or anonymous – who have “broken” themselves, their own life, in order to “give something to eat” to their brothers and sisters. How many mothers, how many fathers, together with the slices of bread they provide each day on the tables of their homes, have broken their hearts to let their children grow, and grow well! How many Christians, as responsible citizens, have broken their own lives to defend the dignity of all, especially the poorest, the marginalized and those discriminated! Where do they find the strength to do this? It is in the Eucharist: in the power of the Risen Lord’s love, who today too breaks bread for us and repeats:*

*“Do this in remembrance of me.”*

*-Pope Francis*

*May 26, 2016 - Homily for the Solemnity of the  
Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ*