

Emmanuel

Eucharistic Spirituality

May/June 2016



Website and Digital Edition

On our website, emmanuelpublishing.org, you will find current short scriptural, theological, and cultural reflections, all from a eucharistic perspective. Information as to subscribing to our digital edition can also be found at emmanuelpublishing.org.

If you are a current subscriber to the print edition of *Emmanuel*, you can request free access to the digital edition. Please send your name, address and account number (as it appears on your mailing label) to emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com. We will then send you instructions on how to obtain your digital edition. Thank you for subscribing to *Emmanuel*.

EMMANUEL MAGAZINE (ISSN 0013-6719) is published bimonthly with 6 issues a year, by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. Phone (440) 449-2103. E-mail: emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com. Periodicals postage paid at Cleveland, Ohio and at additional mailing offices. SUBSCRIPTIONS (print subscription includes access to digital edition): individual (U.S.) \$35.00 one year/ \$65.00 two years; Canadian and foreign \$40.00 one year/ \$75.00 two years, U.S. currency; single issues \$8.00 plus postage. EDITOR: 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland OH 44143. POSTMASTER: send address change to Emmanuel Magazine, 5384 Wilson Mills Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44143-3092. ©2016

©2016 BY THE CONGREGATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

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



EDITOR
ART DIRECTOR MANAGER
LAYOUT
CIRCULATION MANAGER
BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
PHOTOGRAPHY

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

BOARD

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

COVERS

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Communion of Saints, painting in process, Mother Mary Thomas, PCPA. Acrylic on canvas, 30ft x 16ft.

Photograph of Mother Mary Thomas courtesy of Sharon Deitrick, President of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration Foundation of Cleveland, Ohio (page 144).

emmanuel@blessedsacrament.com

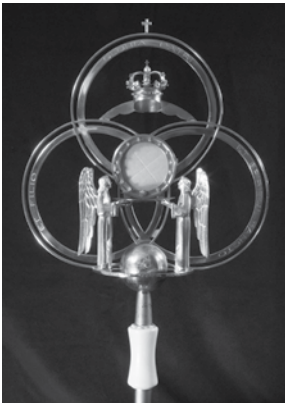
Emmanuel Magazine is published by the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament. The Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is a Roman Catholic religious group of men whose mission is to assist the church in its efforts to form Christian communities whose center of life is the Eucharist. "Our ideal," as it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



Emmanuel Magazine

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 122 Number 3



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Mother Mary Thomas — A Eucharistic Artist

by John Christman, SSS 144

Known, Consecrated, and Sent Out as
Prophets to Love Like Christ

by Roger J. Landry 148

EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Louis Bouyer on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSSR 158

EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Teresa of Avila — Teacher of Prayer

by Victor M. Parachin 168

Visual Nourishment for the Soul: Images
of the Eucharist in Film

by Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS 174

For the Universal Prayers in the
Jubilee Year of Mercy

by Mary Grace Melcher, OCD 181

EUCHARIST & CULTURE

Art, Music, Film, Poetry, and Books 208

COLUMNS

From the Editor 142

Pastoral Liturgy 185

Breaking the Word 189

Eucharistic Witness 212



FROM THE EDITOR

I was recently given a copy of Pope Francis' *The Name of God Is Mercy*. In the book, a conversation with Vatican reporter Andrea Tornielli, the Holy Father sets forth, in the simplicity and directness we have come to expect of him, a vision of an all-merciful God.

I read the following in the concluding chapter, "Living the Holy Year of Mercy":

We have received freely, we give freely. We are called to serve Christ the Crucified through every marginalized person. We touch the flesh of Christ in he who is outcast, hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, ill, unemployed, persecuted, in search of refuge. That is where we find our God; that is where we touch the Lord. Jesus himself told us, explaining the protocol for which we will all be judged, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). (98-99).

This passage speaks to the critical nexus between *belief* and *action*, namely, that what we have come to experience and to believe deeply of God impels us to act in the name of God with regard to the world and others.

"We have received freely" is an expression of belief; "we give freely," an expression of action. From the two emerges one's *spirituality*, a *distinctive way of being spiritual and of living in the power of God's Spirit*.

From the moment on the night of March 13, 2013, when he stepped out onto the balcony of Saint Peter's, Pope Francis has been revealing much of himself and of his personal spirituality. His first act, after acknowledging those gathered in the square below, was to bow his head and ask for their blessing and prayers as he undertook the office

of Successor of Peter and Bishop of Rome.

The Holy Father's spirituality is many-faceted. It is at heart Ignatian, owing to his years of formation and leadership in the Society of Jesus. He values discernment and collaboration in seeking the will of God. His worldview is one of engagement and mutuality, reflecting a willingness to listen to and learn from others, even from those who might think differently than he does or who do not identify themselves as believers. As shepherd and teacher of the universal church, Francis has fearlessly called us to go to the margins, to the periphery, to find Christ and the challenge of gospel living and justice there. He is modest and self-effacing, admitting in the now-famous interview with Jesuit editor Antonio Spadaro in response to the question, "Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?": "I do not know what might be the most fitting description. [Pause] I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner." Francis' warm smile and ease of gesture reflect a man who is at once compassionate, joyful, and at peace with himself.

It is a useful (and very necessary) thing for each of us to ponder every so often — perhaps at an annual retreat or during spiritual direction — what I truly believe and how this translates into action in my life. What is my underlying experience of God? Who is Jesus for me? Where do prayer and introspection factor into my life and work? How do I understand my relationship to others, in the church and beyond? What, and whom, do I feel passionately about? How does the Eucharist shape my life, my faith, my ministry? *What is my spirituality?*

In this Issue

Prayer and spirituality ground this issue of *Emmanuel*, which includes lighter reading for the transition to summer. John Christman, SSS, introduces us to Cleveland contemplative nun Mother Mary Thomas, whose zeal for the Eucharist is expressed both in prayer and in the murals she creates. Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS, offers a series of reflections and questions on the eucharistic undertones of some popular films, and Victor M. Parachin has written an overview of Teresa of Avila, whose 500th anniversary of birth was last year.

Roger J. Landry, a priest serving in the Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, shares a homiletic reflection on the consecrated life.



Anthony Schueller, SSS
Editor



EUCCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Mother Mary Thomas – A Eucharistic Artist

by John Christman, SSS

“The Eucharist had just completely taken over my life!”

Blessed
Sacrament Father
John Christman is
the art director
of Emmanuel
Magazine and the
parochial vicar
of Saint Paschal
Baylor Church in
Highland Heights,
Ohio.

SUCH IS THE FOND RECOLLECTION OF AN 82-YEAR-OLD SISTER REMINISCING about the unique beginnings of her vocation. Before she ever dreamed of becoming Mother Mary Thomas of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration, she was simply a young professional illustrator and artist visiting Rome with an interest in art and Christian history. Unbeknownst to her, she was about to have an experience of God’s presence that would completely change the direction of her life.

While attending an Easter Vigil celebration in the Eternal City, she found herself in line to receive the Eucharist. Inexplicably, however, she had

a sense of unworthiness of receiving the Blessed Sacrament. So she stepped out of line. But then something marvelous happened in that moment. As she recounts, “Then all of a sudden, I felt a force behind me to get back into it, and I did. And I went to Holy Communion, and my whole life changed that minute.”

“I mean, the Eucharist was just so real. . . . It was just a complete changeover.” In fact, the experience was so deep and profound that within a week she decided to join a religious order and dedicate her life to God. And it was all because of the Eucharist.

Fifty-seven years later, living in the Poor Clare monastery on Cleveland’s East Side, the intensity of that encounter hasn’t faded from her memory nor has her great love for the Eucharist. In fact, one can see the joy and delight radiate from her face as she speaks about the Eucharist. She speaks enthusiastically of Jesus in the Eucharist as being like a spouse. Indeed, she has nurtured a relationship with Jesus over the course of a lifetime of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. As she says, “He means everything.”

“You know all our life . . . we would like to spread the faith. We would like to spread love for the Eucharist. When you think you receive Jesus himself, it’s Christ himself! He’s within you. It means everything. . . . They often talk about mystical marriage. . . . I would say it’s that. Consequently, all that you do is for him.”

Art Enriched by Faith

This mystical dimension that Mother Mary Thomas speaks of comes across profoundly in the other great love of her life: painting. Her unique calling to serve the church as a contemplative nun in a religious order dedicated to perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament did nothing to dampen her fervor for painting. Instead, her art was enriched by her faith and given greater focus and direction.

She dedicated her life to painting, filling churches and religious spaces with Christian imagery that draws people deeper into their relationship with God. She has painted subjects that span the Bible, from creation and Eden to Christ’s crucifixion. And each image is charged with energy. Dynamic, cubist-influenced compositions with bright colors and bold lines flourish in her art. And all of this comes together brilliantly in her magnum opus entitled *Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Communion of Saints*.



Ten years ago, Mother Mary Thomas was commissioned to paint a giant mural (30'x16') for Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Drawing from her extensive experience as an artist as well as her training with the great Mexican mural artist David Alfaro Siqueiros, she passionately embraced this project.

Sensitive to the cultural setting of the parish and the values of the people who worshiped there, she depicted Mary and Jesus as African Americans and surrounded them by American saints and significant influences such as Saint Katherine Drexel and Sister Thea Bowman. Thus, the painting itself gives a rich sense of the significance of the incarnation, that Christ truly united himself to all people and can be depicted in every different race and cultural setting.

Readers of *Emmanuel* will also take special note of the strong eucharistic influence, as Mother Mary Thomas depicts not only Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Eucharist but also eucharistic saints like Saint Peter Julian Eymard, who can be seen peering over Mary's shoulder to gaze upon the Eucharist he dedicated his life to proclaiming.

Sadly, in 2013, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish closed, and so Mother Mary Thomas was left with a 30 foot unfinished painting without a permanent place to display it. Heartbroken, not only for the many years of work she had put into the painting but also for the people of the parish who had lost their church, Mother Mary Thomas found it difficult to continue.

Thankfully, through the persistent encouragement of friends and supporters, instead of quitting Mother Mary Thomas took up her brushes and broadened her vision. She creatively redesigned the entire lower half of the composition to include an even greater cross-section of the church, from the inclusion of Pope Francis in the bottom left to everyday people like a migrant worker and a gospel singer.


In fact, Mother Mary Thomas was adamant that everyone should be included in this mystical communion of all people gathered around the Eucharist. As she says, "I just wanted to get everybody in there. Us, you know, ourselves. So, I wouldn't want to just have canonized saints. I really want people from all walks of life."

As such, the mural draws strongly from the theological heritage of

Saint Paul, who emphasized that all Christians are united in the body of Christ, a theological point that Saint Augustine enriched with a eucharistic dimension in his famous Sermon 272. In fact, Augustine himself joins this “communion” as he gazes in awe at the eucharistic body of Christ from the lower left side of the painting.

To date, Mother Mary Thomas has finished the acrylic under-painting of this grand mural and is about to begin painting the oil layer. She paints out of love and gratitude, and with the hope that her painting will one day find a home where it will inspire faith and love in Jesus.

Unquestionably, whether praying or painting, Mother Mary Thomas has made the Eucharist a way of life. Nourished by God’s love in the Eucharist, she wishes to give all she has as a gift of thanksgiving to Jesus. She has done this through her many years of prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and she has done this through her numerous paintings celebrating the love of God.

And with the wisdom and insight attained only through a lifetime of contemplation, she even ponders the final gift she can give to Jesus out of love. As she said so profoundly: “When you love someone very much, you want to give as much joy to them as possible. To exercise that love in offering to him all that you are and all that you have . . . and I often think, being an older person . . . I would at least as my last act . . . whatever suffering I would have to endure . . . I wish my death would be a real joy to him.” 

In Christ’s Peace Deceased Members

Rev. Thomas H. Mohr
Diocese of Davenport

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



EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

Known, Consecrated, and Sent Out as Prophets to Love Like Christ

by Roger J. Landry

The consecrated life is a way of seeking God and striving to imitate the perfect love of Christ. It invites all the baptized to do similarly according to their call and state of life.

A priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, Father Roger J. Landry works for the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. His homilies and articles are found at catholicpreaching.com. This homily was given during a Mass at Saint Jean Baptiste Church, New York City, on January 31, marking the close of the Year of Consecrated Life.

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE PRIESTS AND BROTHERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE Blessed Sacrament for welcoming us for this Mass to thank God for the gift of the consecrated life and especially for the grace of the Year of Consecrated Life. Their hospitality is an expression of their being faithful sons of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, and this exquisite church is a fruit of their faith and of the way that for over a century their life and service have inspired the people of New York with them to build and maintain something truly beautiful, to the honor of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament and the glory of God.

At the beginning of this 430-day Year of Consecrated Life, Pope Francis said that it was a grace-filled occasion for the whole church and, in particular, for consecrated men and women to look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion, and embrace the future with hope.

As this Holy Year draws to its conclusion, we have even greater reason to thank God for its blessings and to ask him to continue to fill with passion for the present and hope for the future all who have said yes to the call to dedicate themselves to him as contemplative monks and cloistered nuns, as religious brothers and sisters in education, health care, and charity, as members of secular institutes living out their consecration in the middle of the world, as members of societies of apostolic life, as missionaries spreading the faith, as consecrated virgins, hermits, widows and widowers, and in many new expressions by which they make the life, virtues, and values of Jesus more visible and draw the church and the world from the superficial to the sacred, from the ephemeral to the eternal.

Consecrated Life and the Mass

We conclude this year most fittingly within the context of the Eucharist, the source and summit, root and center of the consecrated life, where their consecration is renewed in the consecration of Christ on the altar, the Bridegroom who in the upper room consecrated himself to the Father so that we might be consecrated in the truth (Jn 17:19). The Mass is where the consecrated help lead the entire church in a prayer of thanksgiving, *eucharistia*, for everything God is and does, where we renew our passion through entering into Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, where we receive hope for the future as we encounter God-with-us and prepare for the "blessed hope" of his second coming, which is what consecrated men and women proclaim by their total eschatological orientation toward Christ's kingdom both now and not yet.

The Year of Consecrated Life and the Jubilee of Mercy

It is also very fitting that we conclude the Year of Consecrated Life in a sacred overlap with the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy, because the consecrated life is a manifestation of God's merciful love for the world. Every consecrated vocation is born in the mystery of God's mercy, not only for the one called but also for those who will receive God's mercy through their prayer and works of charity. God, in his mercy, continues to call people in every age to pray, like Benedict, Bruno, Clare, Scholastica, and Thérèse, for the needs of the church and the world. In his mercy, God continues to summon men and women to care as Good Samaritans for the poor, the sick, and the dying, like John of God, Camillus, Jeanne Jugan, Vincent de Paul, and Teresa of Calcutta. In his mercy, God never ceases to draw Christians like John Bosco, Elizabeth Ann Seton, Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Marguerite Bourgeoys, and Angela Merici to educate the young not just in the three Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic but also the most important R of all, religion. God never stops showing people like Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Bonaventure, Ignatius, and Peter Julian Eymard how prayerfully to relate to him and his gifts and how to pass on to others the way into his mind and heart. And God continues to call zealous men and women like Francis Xavier and Frances Xavier Cabrini, Katherine Drexel, and the North American martyrs to leave home and family and bring God's saving mercy to those who, without their efforts, might never come to know Christ and live in his merciful love.

In the 1930s, Jesus famously told the young Polish consecrated woman, Faustina Kowalska, that he was "mercy incarnate," but in a very real way God's great mercy is enfleshed in every consecrated



person who witnesses to the powerful truth that God's mercy endures forever and shows the whole church and the world by example how to do the same.

Jeremiah's Vocation and Those of Consecrated Men and Women

As we thank God for the gift of the consecrated life, the readings the church provides us in this liturgy help us to see several of its essential aspects.

In the first reading, in the unfolding of the vocation of young Jeremiah, we are led to reflect on the prehistory and the purpose of the calling to the consecrated life. God tells Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." God mentions three things: he *knew* Jeremiah before he had even been conceived in his mother's womb; second, within the womb, before he had a name, God *consecrated* him to his service; and third, God *appointed* him a *prophet to the nations*.

In the life of every consecrated vocation, we find these elements:

- First, God knows the person intimately. In his eternal omniscience, God knows everything about us and knows us even better than we know ourselves. God knows the talents we will be given as well as our frailties; he sees our fidelities and infidelities. He knows everything, and we can humbly say that despite it all, calls us to be his, so that through our foolishness we will shame the worldly wise, through our weaknesses we will shame the strong, and through our nothingness we will bring to humility those who think they are something.
- Second, God consecrates us, he literally cuts us off — *sacer* — from the profane so that we can be with him — *con*. God sets us apart to belong to him, so that we might not only be the sheep of his flock who hear his voice and follow him, but to some degree exercise his shepherdly care for all, especially those who are lost, mangled, or abandoned.
- Third, once we become conscious of our vocation to be with him, once we transfer the ownership of our life into his trustworthy hands, God sends us out, gives us a mission, commissions us in one way or another to represent him, his truth, goodness, beauty, and mercy to others. God makes us prophets.

When we first become aware of such a calling, most of us are overwhelmed, as Jeremiah was. The first reading excises verses 6-17 of the first chapter of Jeremiah's recollections, but in those missing verses, we see how Jeremiah protests his calling: "Ah, Lord God! I know not how to speak; I am too young." The Lord calms him down and says, "Have no fear, because I am with you." Then God stretches out his hand to touch Jeremiah's mouth and declares, "See I place my words in your mouth," and says that he is sending him out to build up and to plant on the one hand and to root up and to tear down on the other, to strengthen what needs to grow, and to tear down idols.

Consecrated men and women seek God's face, they seek God, and they rejoice to the extent that they have found him and been found by him.

Similarly, many consecrated men and women and priests initially give God lots of reasons why we are unworthy of his calling, why so many others are better speakers or teachers, or are more courageous and compassionate, or far more fitting for the priestly or consecrated life and its tasks. But God similarly calms us down, tells us not to be afraid because he will be with us, puts himself and his words within us, and helps us, just as he helped Jeremiah, to fulfill the mission for which he has formed, consecrated, and appointed us.

The Challenges and Contradictions of Consecrated Life

But even with God's assistance, the consecrated life is never easy. Despite Jeremiah's tender years, he already foresaw that he would suffer in the service of the Lord. He would experience opposition. He would be thrown in the pit. He would be threatened with death. But God assured him, "Be not crushed" because of the opposition, "as though I would leave you crushed before them." God promised: "They will fight against you but not prevail, for I am with you to deliver you!" Jeremiah's faith in God's words would be tested on many occasions, but God proved himself faithful.

Similarly in our vocations, we will often experience opposition — sometimes fierce opposition — even from family members and friends, in following the call and in remaining faithful to it. But God will never leave us crushed before others. He will be with us always to deliver us, perhaps not in the way we think or on our timetable, but he will be there.



Many of us have already experienced that it has been precisely in our most difficult moments that we have most grown in faith and, after a time, have come to discover what we prayed in the psalm, that God is our rock of refuge, stronghold, fortress, hope, and trust. As we look back on the history of our vocation, we can reiterate what we sang, "On you I depend from birth; from my mother's womb you are my strength," and exclaim, "My mouth shall declare your justice, day by day your salvation, O God, you have taught me from my youth and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds."

But it is nevertheless important for us to ask: why would God allow Jeremiah, the other prophets, the apostles, and the vast white robed army of martyrs to suffer so much? Why would he let evildoers seem to prevail over God's chosen ones? The reason is to strengthen one's consecration, vocation, and the completion of one's mission. It is precisely through opposition that often we will be able to fulfill our mission most.

Christ promised his followers that some would be seized, persecuted, and dragged before civil and religious authorities, that some would be betrayed by family and friends, that some would be hated by all because of his name, but that this would "lead to your giving testimony" (Lk 21:13). He even promised that some would be put to death, but this, too, would lead to offering the supreme testimony, the witness of martyrdom, that God is so real, so loving, that we consider it totally worth it to live and die for him who lived and died first for us, that the sufferings of this world are nothing compared to the glories to be revealed (Rom 8:18), and that we will stake our lives on this truth.

Through suffering opposition, we will experience an even greater conformity to the supreme Consecrated One, Christ himself, who received homicidal opposition in his hometown, from among his relatives and friends and fellow residents. "No prophet is accepted in his native place." The reason is because envy will set in. Some will think they know us because they know our background and our ever-conspicuous limitations, just as they thought they knew Jesus because they perhaps had some of the items he and Joseph made in their shop. How could Jesus, one of their own, turn out to be the long-awaited Messiah?

We will encounter opposition for some of the same reasons Jesus described as the source of his own: because others do not have faith

like the widow of Zarephath during the time of Elijah to entrust her and her son's future during a famine to God through the words of his prophet; because they do not have faith like Naaman the Syrian to bathe seven times in the dirty Jordan to be cured of leprosy. This lack of faith leads to a lack of acceptance of God's prophets, of the divine calling and mission God has given us.

Jesus nevertheless tells us at the end of this Year of Consecrated Life what God said to Jeremiah: "But you, gird your loins, stand up and tell them all that I command you!" He sends us out because even though in some places we will not find faith, in many others we will. And unlike in the Gospel when Jesus passed through the midst of those who were trying to murder him, he won't pass through our midst when we need him but will be precisely at our side.

The Contradiction of the Poor, Chaste, and Obedient Christ

One area in which many of us will experience the suffering of the lack of acceptance from those who do not have faith is in the proclamation of the poor, chaste, and obedient Christ through the evangelical counsels. The prophetic witness of the counsels shows the world what true wealth, love, and freedom are; but in a world enslaved by materialism, hedonism, and radically autonomous individualism, the abiding reenactment of Christ's own choices for the kingdom and the primacy of God and eternal life will never be popular or easy. It will always engender some opposition.

The consecrated life "is not something isolated and marginal, but a reality that affects the whole church."

Just as the Book of Wisdom prophesied that people would beset the Just One (Wis 2:12-14), so some will continue to beset the Just One in us, because merely to see him in us will be the censure of the thoughts of their spiritually worldly hearts. But it is precisely by the way in which we become living icons of Christ's poverty as our pearl of great price, of his chastity as the way to love God and others, of his obedience even to death on the cross as the way to full and genuine freedom, that we will be able, like Jeremiah, to uproot and to tear down the idols that prevent so many from turning to the Lord and learning to love him completely, without counting the cost.



Some will mock and tease the prophetic witness to Christ and to the values of his kingdom, but *vale la pena*, the suffering is worth it, because this “sign of contradiction” in union with the one who is the Sign of Contradiction will be the means by which many will come to know that God is real and that, were the whole realm of nature ours, it would be an offering far too small, because the love of God is so amazing that it demands our life, our souls, our all.

The Striving of the Consecrated Life

The last thing the readings describe is what the greatest gift of the consecrated life is and how we are called to seize it. Paul tells us to “strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.” This is a beautiful description of what those in consecrated life do: they strive with enthusiasm, dedication, and fervor for the greatest gift of all, namely, God himself. The motto of the consecrated life is “Faciem tuam, Domine, requiram,” “I seek your face, O Lord!” (Ps 27). Pope Benedict XVI said that the essence of the consecrated life is *quaerere Deum*, seeking God. Consecrated men and women seek God’s face, they seek God, and they rejoice to the extent that they have found him and been found by him.

Consecrated men and woman seek not the glorification of their own names, but the hallowing of God’s. They seek not to build up their own grain bins, but that Christ’s kingdom come. They seek not to do their own will, but to become living commentaries on the words, “Thy will be done.” In striving eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts, they grow in the “theological virtues,” the virtues that lead to God, what Paul identifies as the three things that endure: faith, hope, and love. This seeking is what leads them toward the *perfectae caritatis prosecutionem*, “the pursuit of perfect charity,” the perfection of love.

Paul is pretty plain in telling the Christians in Corinth that if one does not grow in charity, if one does not have love, in the final analysis, one “. . . gains nothing.” If one speaks in human and angelic tongues, but does not have love, one is just making noise despite the glossolalia and the citations of the word of God; if one understands all the truths of the catechism, if one has faith the size of a mustard seed to move mountains into the sea, if unlike the rich young man one gives away everything to the poor, and if one hands one’s body over to the torturers, but does not do so with love for God and others, one’s life will remain fundamentally empty. As the great mystic and doctor of

the church, John of the Cross, said, "In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possession and human successes but on how well we have loved." The measure of our life is the measure of our cooperation with God's love and mercy.

Consecrated Life as a School of the Perfection of Charity

The consecrated life is a school of love. It forms us to grow in all of the virtues Paul describes as expressions of love. Just as each of these attributes was able to be predicated of Jesus Christ, so they are able to be said of anyone who perseveres in allowing the love of God to be the defining reality of his or her existence.

The prophetic witness of the counsels shows the world what true wealth, love, and freedom are.

Consecrated life is a school forming us in patience because it will try our patience. It is a seminary of kindness, urging us to treat others with the love of God even on our bad days. It is a college of humility, preventing us from becoming inflated. It is an academy of courtesy instead of rudeness. It is a school of selflessness rather than self-seeking. It provides the setting to work on our temper, to learn to forgive instead of brooding, to rejoice with the truth rather than wrongdoing, to grow in faith, hope, endurance, and charity. It is a place where we are able to be formed to grow to "mature personhood," to the "full stature of Christ" (Eph 4:13). It is a university in which to hear the word of God and allow it to resonate in us so that we begin to *show* what the word of God looks like in our own conduct and lives.

This school of charity, which is a vocational-school with a lifelong co-op, leads to the ever urgent service of charity that shows the real face of the church. When Pope Francis first announced that he was calling a Year of Consecrated Life, back in November 2013 in a meeting with the superiors general of institutes of religious men, he commented that the charity we see in consecrated men and women is like smelling salts for a comatose, indifferent world. He said: "The witness that can really attract is that associated with attitudes that are uncommon: generosity, detachment, sacrifice, self-forgetfulness in order to care for others. This is the witness, the 'martyrdom' of religious life. It 'sounds an alarm' for people. Religious [are] witnesses of a different way of doing things, of acting, of living! [They show that it] is possible



to live differently in this world.”

Revealing the Inner Nature of the Christian Vocation

This is precisely why the Year of Consecrated Life, in particular, and the consecrated life, in general, have been so important for the church, because it wakes us up to what really matters, to the total commitment that all of the baptized are supposed to give to God, each within his or her particular vocation and state of life.

Saint John Paul II emphasized this 20 years ago when he gave us his beautiful apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata*. He said that the consecrated life “is not something isolated and marginal, but a reality that affects the whole church.” Rather, “the consecrated life is at the very heart of the church as a decisive element for her mission, since it manifests *the inner nature of the Christian calling and the striving of the whole church as a bride towards union with her one Spouse.*” The consecrated life reveals both the essence of the Christian vocation in this world and toward the next. It shows us that through baptism we have all been consecrated to the Lord and points to how we are supposed to live out that belonging, by “striving eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts,” “striving . . . towards union” with Christ in this world and forever at the eternal wedding banquet.

The consecrated life is a school, and consecrated men and women open up that school for all of Christ’s disciples, so that we may learn from them how to love Christ as he deserves and how to love others with the same willing sacrifice and passion he does.

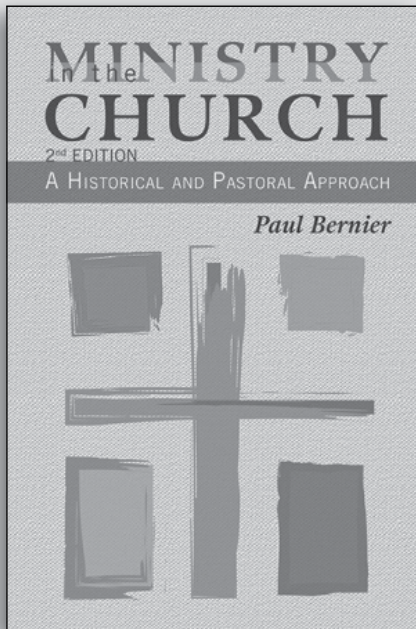
The Spiritual Fruit of Consecrated Life

We thank God for the grace of this year and for calling so many to share the way of the consecrated life so that they may become “for the people of our time, dispensers of mercy, heralds of [his] return, living signs of the resurrection and its treasures of virginity, poverty, and obedience” (*Vita Consecrata*, 111). At the same time, we ask God to bring the good work he has begun in the consecrated men and women of our day to completion, so that they may obtain the “greatest spiritual gifts” that they seek with all their hearts. And we also ask him to fill them with contagious joy.

Pope Francis is fond of saying, “Where there are consecrated men and

women, there is joy!" Where there are consecrated men and women, we find the fulfillment of Jesus' words, "I have told you this that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11). Joy is the characteristic mark of those who live conscious that Jesus Christ has entered our world, walks by our side, is risen from the dead, triumphant over evil, and wants to give us the greatest gift ever, himself.

Joy is the only fitting response to welcome Jesus here, not as those in the synagogue at Nazareth did, but as a young virgin not far from that same synagogue welcomed him after the archangel Gabriel greeted her with the words, "Rejoice!" Joy is the only fitting response to our receiving within the One who consecrated himself so that we might be consecrated in the truth. May joy be the lasting fruit of this holy year and lead many to come to our merciful God so that the joy of heaven may be theirs on earth and forevermore!




"In terms of scope regarding the history and theology of ministry, this volume is indeed a fine work."

—ANTHONY D'ARCO, *NFPC This Week*

Illustrating the fluidity and form of Christian ministry, this revision of a classic approaches ministry as "the service God requires of all the baptized"—not only of the ordained or church professional. Bernier's text is ideal for students of ministry or ecclesiology, as well a valuable resource for adult education and faith formation, and for pastoral ministers and others seeking to broaden their understanding of ministry in the twenty-first century.

978-1-62698-153-9 336pp pbk \$45

From your bookseller or direct

 www.orbisbooks.com



ORBIS BOOKS

Maryknoll, NY 10545

1-800-258-5838



EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

Louis Bouyer on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR

Louis Bouyer served first as a Lutheran minister and then, following his conversion to Catholicism, as a priest, theologian, and author. His writings underscore the link between Scripture, liturgy, and spirituality. Bouyer's thought played a vital role in shaping Vatican II's program of liturgical reform.

Father Dennis J. Billy teaches at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Considered one of the premier Catholic theologians of the twentieth century, Louis Bouyer (1913-2004) was born in Paris and studied at the Sorbonne and the Protestant faculties at Strasbourg and Paris. Raised a Protestant, he began his service as a Lutheran minister in 1936 and converted to Catholicism in 1939 by way of his study of Eastern Orthodoxy. He was ordained a Catholic priest of the French Oratory in 1944, earned his doctorate at the Catholic Institute of Paris in 1946, and was a professor there until 1963.

Bouyer eventually became one of the leading figures in the French movement of *Nouvelle Théologie* (or *Ressourcement*), which emphasized a return to the sources as a way of deepening our insights into the Catholic faith. He looked to the Scriptures as the primary resource for Catholic renewal by interpreting them in the light of the living tradition of the church, especially through the eyes of the early church fathers.

Bouyer's interests spanned a wide range of topics: Scripture, the history of spirituality, systematics, Mariology, ecumenism, literature, biography — to name but a few. He was a *peritus* at the Second Vatican Council, a co-founder of the theological journal *Communio*, one of the original members of the International Theological Commission, and would have been made a cardinal by Pope Paul VI, but for his own humble and self-effacing refusal of the honor. His ideas on the liturgy inspired many of the reforms of Vatican II, although he cautioned that they be implemented gradually over time and with great restraint.

A prolific author, his most noted works include: *The Paschal Mystery*.

Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy Week (1951), *Life and Liturgy* (1955), *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (1956), *Newman: His Life and Spirituality* (1958), *Introduction to Spirituality* (1961), *The Word, Church, and Sacraments in Protestantism and Catholicism* (1961), *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers* (1982), *The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (1982), *The Church of God* (1982), and *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer* (1989). His teaching on the Eucharist touches the very heart of his spiritual outlook.¹

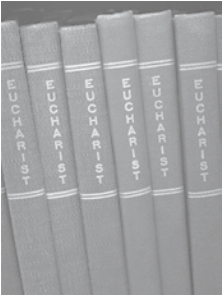
Bouyer's Spiritual Outlook

An examination of Bouyer's thought shows that he sees an intimate connection between theology, spirituality, and liturgy.² In his mind, there is one Christian spirituality, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which down through the centuries has had numerous manifestations in the life of the church. "All Christian worship," moreover, "is but a continuous celebration of Easter: the sun, rising and setting daily, leaves in its wake an uninterrupted series of Eucharists."³ He recognizes the uniqueness of gospel spirituality and recoils from those attempts to proliferate Christian spirituality into a variety of competing subsets. "Catholic spirituality," for him, is "simply Christian spirituality in its fullness."⁴ It represents "a spiritual life in which our own most interior, most personal life opens out and develops, only in development of that personal relationship which God wishes to establish with us in speaking to us in Christ."⁵

Bouyer draws a radical distinction between God and his creation. Man is not a divine spark sharing the very essence of the divinity, but a creature made in God's image and likeness. God, moreover, is not some *thing*, but an actual someone, a *person* whose Triune being radiates the very mystery of love itself.⁶ "God is love," the First Letter of John reminds us (1Jn 4:8).⁷

Bouyer takes this basic scriptural insight and places it at the very heart of Christianity spirituality. God's immanent self-relations as well as his external relations with his creation flow from this love and return to it. God's love, moreover, is self-diffusive and pours itself out freely in the creative, redemptive, and sanctifying actions of the Trinity, associated respectively with the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁸ Christ reveals to us the Trinitarian communion of love and through the church extends this love to all humanity.⁹

The life of the Trinity, for Bouyer, is mediated to us today through the life of the church, especially through its celebration of the sacraments,



the visible signs of Christ's redemptive and sanctifying grace. These Trinitarian, ecclesial, and sacramental dimensions permeate his entire theological outlook and touch the very core of the Christian faith. Christ, in other words, mediates to us the life and love of the Trinity by continuing to live out his incarnation and paschal mystery through the church and its celebration of the sacramental mysteries.

As our sole mediator and high priest before God the Father, Christ intercedes with him on our behalf and channels God's love to us through the church in its proclamation of the word and its celebration of the sacramental mysteries. In this respect, the church lies at the very heart of salvation history and is the primary means through which Christ accomplishes his redemptive will for humanity.¹⁰

Salvation history, for Bouyer, is a gradual unfolding of this mystery of love to God's chosen people which reaches its fullness in the person of Jesus Christ, who bids his followers to pick up their cross daily and follow him. The cross lies at the heart of Christian spirituality. A Christian embraces the cross not as an end in itself, but because it can be united to Christ's own suffering and contribute in some small way to the world's redemption. Christ, in other words, lives out his paschal mystery in the lives of his followers.¹¹

This active participation is made possible by the gift of his Spirit, who unites the community of the faithful to the narrative of Christ's incarnate and paschal mysteries. Christ, the Word made flesh, continues to be born, live, suffer, die, and rise in the members of his body, the church. Just as there is only one Christian spirituality, there is for Bouyer only one body of Christ. Christ's presence in the church is real and substantive, and the Eucharist is its clearest and most manifest expression.¹²

Bouyer on the Eucharist

Bouyer's teaching on the Eucharist flows from his understanding of the relationship between word and sacrament. God has revealed himself gradually through time through his word and manifests himself fully in the person of Jesus Christ, the sacrament of God. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Christ continues his revelatory activity through the church and her sacraments. Word and sacrament, for Bouyer, are thus intimately related, and he criticizes the attitude, prominent among some Protestant denominations, that

reduces the sacraments to nothing but a visible manifestation of the word. To do so, he maintains, empties the word of its very content.¹³

The word, for Bouyer, is intrinsically oriented toward the manifestation of God's presence, which is precisely what the sacramental mysteries reveal. Word leads to sacrament, just as revelation leads to presence: "And the Word was made flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). These words from the Gospel of John display the intrinsic link between the revelatory nature of the word and its orientation toward presence.

This incarnational relationship sheds light on the connection between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At Mass, word and sacrament come together in a unique way; the living word reveals the real presence, the very presence of the risen Lord himself. The Eucharist is the continuing manifestation of Christ's personal presence to the community of believers.¹⁴

For Bouyer, there is one Christian spirituality, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which down through the centuries has had numerous manifestations in the life of the church.

The Eucharist, for Bouyer, is the focus of the church's sacramental life: "We go quite naturally from the mystery *proclaimed* by the word of the Gospel to the mystery *made present* by the words of consecration."¹⁵ What is more, ". . . we perceive the whole meaning of the proclaimed word only in the sacramental celebration."¹⁶ In the words of the apostle Paul: "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1 Cor 11:26).¹⁷ The meaning of the word reaches its fullness when we gather for Eucharist to break bread together and to share the cup. That fullness is the presence of Christ himself who is present in the person of the priest, in the sacramental presence, and in the believing community.¹⁸

For Bouyer, the body of Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament and in the community of the faithful are intimately related: "The body of Christ which is the church is called so because in it we are all united in one single body by the fact of being all nourished by the body of Christ which once died on the cross and today nourishes the life of the mystery in us."¹⁹



The Eucharist plunges us into the paschal mystery of Christ who, as high priest and sacrificial victim, makes an offering of himself on our behalf and empowers us through the gift of his Spirit to offer our prayers to the Father, give him our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and enter into intimate communion with him.²⁰ In a particular way, the “consecrating word” is “the soul of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Word made flesh” and “recreates in us the new self, just as the original word of creation drew us out of nothingness.”²¹ As a result, we become one body with Christ: “It is impossible to take the ‘body’ of Christ in two senses rigorously distinct from one line to the other.”²² In this respect, “this ‘body’ of Christ which is the church and which we all form together exists only in and by effective participation of all in the one ‘body’ of Christ dead on the cross and risen to divine life.”²³

Observations

This brief exposition of Bouyer’s teaching on the Eucharist shows the central place it holds in his theology and overall spiritual outlook. It also clearly indicates why the Mass is the focal point of the church’s life, ministry, and worship, and must remain so. The following observations develop some of the implications of his view of the sacrament and their relevance for today’s Catholics.

1. To begin with, Bouyer points out that Christianity centers around two claims: “God has spoken to us,” and “He has given himself to us in his Word.”²⁴ The Eucharist, he maintains, is God’s way of speaking to the community of the faithful during its historical pilgrimage. It proclaims that God did not merely visit his people some 2,000 years ago, but that Jesus himself continues to be present to his people in the life of the church, especially in its sacramental worship. The Eucharist, in other words, is the concrete sign that Jesus’ words to his disciples remain true: “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20). Through it, God continues to speak and be present to his people. It is a visible sign of his abiding presence in the life of the church and a reminder that through the power of his Spirit “nothing is impossible with God” (Lk 1:37).
2. Bouyer’s emphasis on the close connection between word and sacrament has important implications for the Eucharist. The revelatory nature of God’s word leads to the visible presence of that word in time and space. That is to say that it tends by its

very nature toward God's presence in the midst of his people and finds its deepest meaning by resting in that presence. This was true for the Jews, as seen in the centrality of the Ark of the Covenant in their life and worship, and it is what Christians see in Jesus, who is "Emmanuel, God with us" (Mt 1:23). For Catholics, it has special significance for Christ's presence in his body, the church, and in the Eucharist. Christianity, we might say, is a religion of word and sacrament. Catholicism represents the fullness of the Christian message, since it reveres each of these aspects of God's revealing presence by keeping them distinct yet insisting upon their intrinsic relation.²⁵

The Eucharist is God's way of speaking to the community of the faithful during its historical pilgrimage. It is the concrete sign that Jesus' words to his disciples remain true: "I am with you always, until the end of the age."

3. Bouyer is also quick to point out that the union between the Eucharist, the church, and the crucified and risen Lord is not a matter of fusion, but of close, intimate union. Although more than a union of wills, it falls short of an actual physical unity, for the relationship between the human and divine always remains intact. He identifies the Pauline imagery describing the church as the "bride of Christ" (Eph 5:22-23; 2 Cor 11:2) as an apt metaphor for describing this relationship: "Certainly, the Bridegroom and bride are no longer more than one flesh. Yet the bride, far from being annihilated in the Bridegroom, can find, can realize her full personality as bride only in her union with the Bridegroom."²⁶ In this relationship, the Eucharist plays a fundamental, constitutive role, for it mediates the life of the crucified and risen Lord to the believing community and is the covenantal bond that both constitutes their spousal relationship and makes it a vibrant, living reality.²⁷
4. Bouyer also points out that, because the Eucharist lies at the heart of the church's life and mission, all the other sacraments are in some way oriented to it. That is to say, they "... introduce us and adapt us, or else they extend it to our whole existence."²⁸ This insight echoes the same sentiment expressed by the fathers of the Second Vatican Council that the Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life,"²⁹ an insight that, if not unique to Bouyer, was certainly close to his heart and is a



consistent theme throughout much of his writing. As a major theological voice in his day, Bouyer played an important role in shaping the program of renewal initiated by Vatican II, especially with respect to the reform of the liturgy. His painstaking work on the sources of the eucharistic celebration helped the council fathers to recover lost emphases and focus their work on a reform of the liturgy that was, at one and the same time, both faithful to the tradition and relevant to the lives of the faithful.

5. Bouyer's teaching on the Eucharist has clear implications for the ministry of the priesthood. While all Christians are called to embody the one and the same priestly spirituality, they are called to do so in different ways. The ministerial priesthood stands out in its dedicated service to the work of the church. "Every Christian priest should consecrate his entire life to the union of Christ and the church in all his members."³⁰ The priest, in other words, is married to the church and gives his life to her as an *alter Christus* (another Christ). This shines through most clearly in the church's liturgical celebrations when he leads the people in prayer and mediates God's redemptive action to them on Christ's behalf. Bouyer is skeptical of the tendencies such as the worker-priest movement that seek to bridge the gap between priests and laity by encouraging priests to enter fulltime into the secular working force. In his mind, one thing alone distinguishes priestly spirituality from its lay counterpart: "the performing of priestly work *instead of* all other kinds of human work."³¹
6. Bouyer maintains that "the bread and wine . . . 'sanctified' in the Eucharist are the nourishment of eternal life."³² By eating the body and blood of the crucified Lord, we become sharers in his humanity, which divinizes our own and enables us both to worship the Father with him and to share in the very reality of his being the Son. The Eucharist thus nourishes our filial relationship with the Father. As the "Sacrament of the New Creation," it nourishes the "new self" given to us at baptism and empowers us to live in holiness and experience a foretaste of the life to come. This "new self" is distinct but not isolated from the other members of the community of the faithful. It is a living member of Christ's body, the church, who derives her very life and being from the crucified and risen Lord himself.

In this respect, Paul's words to the Galatians holds true for every Christian: ". . . I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

7. Finally, Bouyer's Protestant background and interest in the theology of Eastern Orthodoxy gives a marked ecumenical flavor to much of his writing, one that enables him to sense both the strengths and weaknesses of the various Christian traditions and enables him to retrieve those elements of the Catholic faith that, for various reasons, have either been downplayed or overlooked. He notes, for example, that while the Jewish people highlight the power of God's revelatory word, and while the Protestants find the fullness of this revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, Catholics emphasize Christ's continuing presence and revelatory activity in the church. As the bride of Christ, the church is so closely united to Christ that it acts in conformity with him, especially in its celebration of the sacraments, and most especially at Mass, when the messianic banquet, the sacrifice of Calvary, and the presence of the risen Lord become present in a single liturgical action that continues his redemptive mission through time.

The church, in Bouyer's mind, is one with the body of the glorified Lord, and the Eucharist is the covenantal bond uniting them.

Although these observations do not do justice to the depth of Bouyer's teaching on the Eucharist, they underscore its main contours and highlight the impact it had on the forces of renewal within the Catholic Church before, during, and after the Second Vatican Council. They also reflect his desire to steer a *via media* between a "false traditionalism" and a "rash modernism" in the search for reform, particularly with regard to the liturgy.³³ If today his insights seem ordinary and commonplace, it is because they have gradually moved into the mainstream of Catholic belief and practice.

Conclusion

Louis Bouyer was one of the leading Catholic voices of renewal of the twentieth century. Once described as "the least conformist of theologians and among the most traditional,"³⁴ he was noted for his orthodox yet unconventional approach to many of the issues facing



the church of his day. His Protestant background gave him a special sensitivity to the way the Catholic Church was perceived by other faith traditions and deep insights into the various neglected aspects of its own rich tradition. His involvement in the *Nouvelle Théologie* led him to tap into new areas of research that brought fresh insights into theological thinking of his day and provided an impetus for many of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

At the council, he worked to insure that the church's theological *ressourcement* would be inspired by Scripture, rooted in the church's liturgical worship, and steeped in a vibrant and living gospel spirituality. His insistence on the unity of Christian spirituality led him to affirm the oneness of Christ's body in its risen, eucharistic, and mystical states. The church, in his mind, was one with the body of the glorified Lord, and the Eucharist was the covenantal bond uniting them. The centrality of the Eucharist in the spirituality, theology, and worship of the church was a central theme in his writing. Bouyer's deep love for the Eucharist stemmed from his own personal journey to the Catholic faith and a deepened understanding that the divine word tends by its very nature to the dynamic, living reality of God's presence in our midst.

The Eucharist, Bouyer asserts, is the mainstay of Catholic worship, belief, life, and practice. It is the sacrament of church unity, the source of its faith, and the strength behind its convictions and actions in the world. It is a constant reminder that Christ is always present in his church and that he continues to live out his paschal mystery in the lives of the community of the faithful. The Eucharist, for Bouyer, constitutes the church and is constituted by it. It is an act of Christ rendering worship to the Father in the Spirit and through the living members of his body, the church. The Eucharist has one foot in time and another in eternity, and gives to each who partakes of it a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.



Notes

¹ Michael Heintz, "Introduction," in Louis Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, trans. Mary Perkins Ryan (New York: Desclee, 1961; reprint, Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 2013), 2-3. See also http://ldysinger.stjohnsem.edu/@books/Bouyer_In-Sp/00a_start.htm (accessed April 15, 2014). The dates after Bouyer's works refer to the appearance of the first English edition.

² Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956; fourth impression, 1978), 257-271.

³ Louis Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery: Meditations on the Last Three Days of Holy*

Week, trans. Sister Mary Benoit (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1950), xiii.

⁴ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 29.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 20, 187.

⁷ All scripture quotations come from the *New American Bible*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁸ See Louis Bouyer, *The Church of God: Body of Christ and Temple of the Spirit*, trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982), 235-273.

⁹ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 29.

¹⁰ Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 235.

¹¹ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 54-57.

¹² Ibid., 148-149.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Louis Bouyer, *The Word, Church, and Sacraments in Protestantism and Catholicism*, trans. A.V. Littledale (New York: Desclee, 1961; reprint, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 84-88.

¹⁵ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 141. See also Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy*, 70-85.

¹⁶ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 141.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid. 142-143.

¹⁹ Ibid., 143. See also Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 294-305.

²⁰ Ibid., 146. See also Bouyer, *The Paschal Mystery*, 218-228.

²¹ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 147.

²² Ibid. 148.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 23. See also Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 175.

²⁵ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 139-141.

²⁶ Ibid., 148. See also Louis Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 163-164.

²⁷ See Bouyer, *The Church of God*, 294-305.

²⁸ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 149.

²⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), 11.

³⁰ Bouyer, *Introduction to the Spiritual Life*, 161.

³¹ Ibid., 162.

³² Ibid., 147.

³³ Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy Liturgical Piety*, 70.

³⁴ Attributed to Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger. See <http://www.theanglocatholic.com/2010/03/introducing-father-louis-bouyer/> (accessed April 15, 2014).



EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Teresa of Avila — Teacher of Prayer

by Victor M. Parachin

Teresa of Avila was a person of decisive action who initiated much needed reforms of the Carmelite order and risked everything for love of God. She was also a mystic, possessed of a burning desire to be united with the God she knew and served faithfully.

Victor Parachin is a minister, journalist, and author of a dozen books on practical Christian spirituality.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS COME FROM THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CARMELITE TERESA of Avila, whom the Catholic Church also honors under the name Teresa of Jesus: “We cannot know whether we love God, although there may be strong reasons for thinking so, but there can be no doubt about whether we love our neighbor or not.” These sentiments are emblematic of Teresa’s life and legacy as a woman of extraordinary faith, courage, and practical charity and goodness.

As she was about to establish a fifth religious community, this one in Toledo, Spain, Teresa was questioned how she could possibly do it when all she had was a mere five ducats (approximately ten dollars). With confidence she answered, “Teresa and this money are nothing! But God, Teresa, and these ducats suffice.” With that minimum focus on material things and maximum trust in the divine, Teresa of Avila would emerge as the towering figure of sixteenth-century Catholic Spain. She was a mystic, poet, religious reformer, feminist, founder of convents, author of four books, and a spiritual master in meditation and prayer.

Teresa’s Life

Teresa was born on March 28, 1515, into an upper class, privileged family. Her parents, Alonso and Beatriz, were both devout in their faith. Though it was customary and even considered proper for an individual of Alonso’s wealth to own slaves, he refused to do so. Furthermore, Teresa reported that when a slave girl belonging to Alonso’s brother was present, Alonso treated her like one of his own children. “He used to say that it caused him intolerable distress that she was not free,”

Teresa wrote. Her mother, who nurtured the Christian faith in Teresa, died when Teresa was 14. In shock and grief-stricken, Teresa's faith was tested, so she turned to the Virgin Mary seeking motherly comfort and support.

Alonso arranged for Teresa to be educated at a local convent. There her spiritual interests were heightened and, by 20, she decided to become a nun. Her father opposed this decision, but she ran off to join a Carmelite convent in Avila in 1535. She took first vows a year later, but withheld a deeper, more permanent commitment for two decades. During this time, she struggled with various illnesses, some of which made her an invalid for months at a time.

This difficult period of her life was also permeated with several powerful spiritual experiences and visions which moved her deeply. In her autobiography, entitled *Life of Saint Teresa by Herself*, she describes one such experience of Christ: "One day, when I was at prayer, the Lord was pleased to reveal to me nothing but his hands, the beauty of which was so great as to be indescribable. . . . A few days later, I also saw that divine face, which seemed to leave me completely absorbed. . . . At last, I realized his majesty was leading me."

These spiritual experiences led Teresa to the conviction that she had been careless, timid, and hesitant about her own spiritual growth. She resolved to give herself fully to a life of devotion and prayer.

Reformer

For Teresa, this meant adhering to the original and more strict Carmelite rule. The convent where she had been for several years was deficient in spiritual discipline. Teresa felt called to establish a new reformed order which would in time come to be called the Discalced (or shoeless) Carmelites. With considerable persistence and patience, Teresa was finally granted permission to proceed in this direction, establishing her first new convent in Avila in 1562.

She and her sisters adopted a life dedicated to poverty, chastity, obedience, prayer, fasting, solitude, and manual labor. Furthermore, she did not want the order to be sustained by endowments from wealthy patrons, but primarily by their own labor and alms-gathering. Along with a rigorous schedule of silence and prayer, the order maintained a vegetarian diet.

Almost immediately, Teresa encountered opposition and hostility from



various groups. Spanish ecclesiastical authorities, already fanatically suspicious over anything which appeared Protestant, debated and disputed her private spiritual visions. Municipal officials of Avila brought a lawsuit to prevent her from establishing a convent in the city, fearing that a convent without an endowment would become dependent on civic finances.

In spite of opposition which seemed to plague her throughout her life, Teresa forged on, eventually establishing nearly 20 convents and monasteries. The criticisms and hostilities which came her way may have been the inspiration for her famous poem *God Alone Is Enough*:

Let nothing upset you,
let nothing startle you.
All things pass;
God does not change.
Patience wins
all it seeks.
Whoever has God
lacks nothing:
God alone is enough.

Though Teresa's order adopted a strict asceticism, she also encouraged her sisters to act kindly and lovingly toward others, especially to other sisters, so that they would not become spiritually rigid and emotionally harsh. In *The Way of Perfection*, she offered this advice: "Try, then, sisters, to be as pleasant as you can, without offending God, and to get on as well as you can with those you have to deal with, so that they may like talking to you and want to follow your way of life and conversation, and not be frightened and put off by virtue."

Powerful religious experiences led Teresa to resolve to give herself fully to a life of devotion and prayer.

"This is very important for nuns: the holier they are, the more sociable they should be with their sisters. Although you may be very sorry if all your sisters' conversation is not just as you would like it to be, never keep aloof from them if you wish to help them and to have their love. We must try hard to be pleasant, and to humor the people we deal with and make them like us, especially our sisters."

Teresa has been described, both positively and negatively, as a feminist. Her writings do make clear that even in conservative Spain she resisted views of women as the inferior sex. She admired women, their dedication, and their contribution to the church.

In *The Way of Perfection*, Teresa wrote this spirited defense of women: “When you walked on this earth, Lord, you did not despise women; rather, you always helped them and showed great compassion toward them. And you found as much love and more faith in them than you did in men. . . .”

“Is it not enough, Lord, that the world has intimidated us, so that we may not do anything worthwhile for you in public or dare to speak some truths that we lament over in secret, without your also failing to hear our petition? I do not believe, Lord, that this could be true of your goodness and justice, for you are a just judge and not like those of the world. Since the world’s judges are sons of Adam and all of them men, there is no virtue in women that they do not hold suspect. . . . When I see what the times are like, I feel it is not right to repel spirits which are virtuous and brave, even though they be the spirits of women.”

“Trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.”

Spiritual Guide

Teresa of Avila not only established convents, but also remained an important source of inspiration for others, in particular the members of her order. The prayer poem *Christ Has No Body*, attributed to Teresa but not found in her writings, is believed to have been written in a letter sent to encourage her Carmelite sisters and reminding them of their important role in the world:

Christ has no body but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world,
yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,



no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

It is said that one day Teresa overheard someone exclaim, "If only I had lived at the time of Jesus. . . . If only I had seen Jesus. . . . If only I had talked with Jesus. . . !" To this, she responded, "But do we not have in the Eucharist the living, true, and real Jesus present before us? Why look for more?"

Teresa of Avila died on October 4, 1582. She was 67 years of age. In the years and centuries after her death, her life continues to impress, inform, and inspire. She was canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. In 1970, Pope Paul VI named her the first female Doctor of the Church.

On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of her birth in 2015, Pope Francis sent a message to the superior general of the Discalced Carmelites, in which he said: "Saint Teresa is above all a teacher of prayer."

Wisdom from Teresa of Avila

"Settle yourself in solitude, and you will come upon him in yourself."

"May you be content knowing you are a child of God."

"I cannot understand how humility exists, or can exist, without love; or love without humility."

"Our Lord does not care so much for the importance of our works as for the love with which they are done."

"Do not think of the faults of others but of what is good in them and faulty in yourself."

"The closer one approaches to God, the simpler one becomes."

"Trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be."

"There is no such thing as bad weather. All weather is good because it is God's."

“We need no wings to go in search of God, but have only to find a place where we can be alone — and to look upon him present within us.”

“In the presence of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, we ought to be like the blessed in heaven before the divine essence.”

“Nothing is small if God accepts it.”

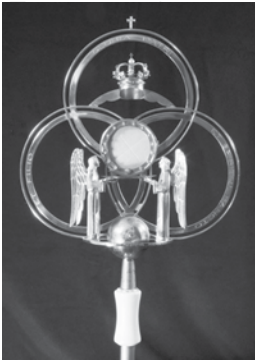
“God is full of compassion and never fails those who are afflicted and despised if they trust in him alone.”

“Let nothing disturb you, nothing frighten you. All things are passing. God never changes. Patient endurance attains all things. Whoever possesses God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.”

“God gives when he wills, as he wills, and to whom he wills.”

“Know even when you are in the kitchen, our Lord moves amid the pots and pans.”





EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

Visual Nourishment for the Soul: Images of the Eucharist in Film

by Lou Ella Hickman, IWBS

Does your prayer seem to need nourishment? A film or a scene from one may be the inspiration that can help. But don't just watch any movie or settle for any scene because the operative word is nourishment!

Lou Ella Hickman, a member of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament, lives in Houston, Texas. She is the author of *she: robed and wordless* (Press 53, 2015), a series of poetic reflections on biblical women who encountered mystery, grace, forgiveness, life, and death in their relationship with God.

MANY FILMS HAVE FOOD AS A THEME, EITHER AS A MEAL WITHIN THE FILM OR AS a backdrop for the movie itself. Seen with the eyes of faith, these images can feed your spirituality, especially your ongoing relationship with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Should you decide to include this idea as part of your prayer time, I have also listed several practical techniques which may be helpful, and have included the pronoun “us;” should you wish to use this litany for a prayer group as well as for personal prayer.

Helpful hints: 1. If you view the movie at home, use subtitles or closed captioning, since important dialogue can be missed. 2. After watching the movie or the scene, pause for a few minutes for reflection. As you watch or reflect, jot down a few notes to use during your prayer time. 3. Watch the movie or the scene again in the future. Did you see new details? Reflect on how the original viewing helped you grow in prayer. 4. Share your experience with your spiritual director to gain additional insight.

The Thanksgiving Visitor (1967)

Consider focusing on the scene of the Thanksgiving meal where Buddy accuses Odd Henderson of stealing a cameo.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, allow me (us) to experience the holiness of ordinary meals.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to heal broken families as they gather for holiday meals.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to bring about a heightened awareness that justice is “right

relationship.”

Oliver (1968)

Consider the scene where Oliver says, “Please, sir, I want some more” and the opening song “Food, Glorious Food.”

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to support ending childhood hunger.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) nourish those who are spiritually hungry.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) be more aware of my (our) own spiritual hunger.

Babette’s Feast (1987)

Consider the scenes where Babette’s neighbors reveal how rigid and intolerant they are and then note how sharing in a feast generously provided helps them to become more loving.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to heal division among the churches.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to heal liturgical divisions in our parishes and eucharistic assemblies.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) show others that you are the Banquet of Life.

Dances with Wolves (1990)

Consider Pope Francis’ notion of a “culture of encounter” in the scene where Lieutenant John Dunbar offers hospitality to the Native Americans and shares coffee and sugar with them.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) realize that when I (we) encounter others in genuine hospitality, I (we) nourish them with your presence.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) become more aware of opportunities to show hospitality and to respond to others with graciousness.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) respond to your invitation of encounter as I (we) sit in your presence.

Sister Act (1992)

Consider the scene where Sister Clarence is introduced to the religious community. The sisters are seated at table for a meal, and she is asked to say grace, which she stammers through. We, like Sister Clarence,



stammer at times in our efforts to express our love as well as what we experience in prayer and who we truly are.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to encourage parents as they teach their children how to pray.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, strengthen me (us) when I am discouraged in prayer.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, inspire those who mentor or guide others in the spiritual life and in the practice of prayer.

Jurassic Park (1993)

Consider the meal scene where the characters discuss the idea of stewardship and respect for all creation. You might watch this film and scene in conjunction with reading Pope Francis' *Laudato Si: On the Care of Our Common Home*.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, many of your friends, the saints, saw your presence in all of creation. Help me (us) find ways to be (a) better steward(s) of your gift of life on our planet.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, strengthen all whose livelihood is bound up with the earth: farmers, fishermen, ranchers, gardeners, beekeepers, and those who tend orchards.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, inspire leaders of all nations to enact laws that will protect the poor in their efforts to cultivate food and to live dignified lives.

The Shawshank Redemption (1994)

Consider the scene early in the film where the prisoners are eating and Andy Dufresne asks, "What was his name?"

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) be more aware of and acknowledge those who are "invisible" in our society (store clerks, those who clean our streets and public restrooms, hotel staff, police officers, firefighters, etc.).
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, you know how often people, and especially children, are ridiculed or bullied for their names. Help me (us) find ways to show respect for people's ethnicity and culture in terms of their names.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, your name is all-powerful over the forces of evil. Grant me (us) the grace to remember when I (we) become discouraged with world events that you

would have me (us) trust in you.

As Good As It Gets (1997)

Carol Connelly is a waitress who serves Melvin Udall food in a coffee shop on a regular basis. She is the only waitress who can deal with Melvin's extremely difficult personality. At the conclusion of the movie, Melvin and Carol walk to a bakery to get "warm rolls."

"There are people in the world who are so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread" (Gandhi).

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to encourage those who struggle to put food on the table for their families.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to support those who provide food and emergency assistance to the poor and the hungry.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) to grow in my role as your servant, especially to those who find life difficult and are troublesome.

Paradise Road (1997)

Consider the scene where the women prisoners are taken to a room with a table laden with food. They are given a choice: they will have hot showers, silk sheets, nice clothes, and all the food they can eat; in return, however, they must supply the Japanese soldiers with sexual favors.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, may I (we) discern what may look like you but may not be you at all. Help me (us) choose wisely so that my (our) place at the table may be one of integrity.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament may I (we) experience your feast of unconditional love and find ways to help others to do the same.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to support those who rescue women and children caught in human trafficking.

Star Trek: Nemesis (2002)

There is an early scene in which two crew members marry. The question of what it means to be a human being is repeatedly asked throughout the film. Data, a humanoid, answers that question when



he chooses to give his life for the rest of the crew.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, your incarnation made a wedding of heaven with earth. Grant me (us) the grace to see your divinity in the human, especially in the least, the difficult, and the unattractive, remembering that you reveal your presence under simple signs of bread and wine.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, your eucharistic sacrifice is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. Help me (us) savor the gift of yourself in every Eucharist.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the first sign you performed during your ministry was at the wedding feast of Cana. Help me (us) find ways to encourage those who are preparing for the sacrament of matrimony, as well as those who are married, to be a sign of your love for the church.

Kung Fu Panda (2008)

Consider how food leads to insight (wisdom) and action. Although this movie is animated and, therefore, considered “for children,” it nonetheless reveals a deep understanding of the power of food. One of my graduate theology professors commented once, “Christianity is the only religion where people grow up to be children.”

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, you are wisdom incarnate. Grant me (us) the grace to learn from you how to live well.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, grant me (us) the grace to feast on you in a way that leads me (us) to prayerful action.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) discover wisdom in suffering.

Letters to Juliet (2010)

Contrast Sophie Hall’s encounters with food to those of Victor, her fiancé. How do the other characters deal with meals and/or food? How is Victor single-hearted in his approach to the culinary arts?

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, grant me (us) the grace to grow in self-awareness so I (we) may grow in singleness of heart.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) listen to the deepest desire of my (our) heart(s), for that is where you will be found.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, challenge me (us) when I (we) become overly focused on a way of living that doesn’t bring

me (us) closer to you.

The King's Speech (2010)

Consider the scene where the Duchess of York sits down to have tea with Lionel Logue's wife, Myrtle. The scene is a simplified version of English high tea, which calls for the finest linen, china, and flatware.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I (we) have a need for beauty. You, who are beauty itself, open my (our) eyes to see beauty where it can least be found.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, your eucharistic sacrifice is a feast to which all are invited. Help me (us) find ways to share you with all I (we) meet.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, you are a royal and gracious host. Help me (us) model that graciousness in my (our) meals, whether at home or elsewhere.

Of Gods and Men (2010)

Food cultivation is woven throughout the movie's storyline as well as the simple meals that are the hallmark of Trappist monks. As the plot progresses, the monks struggle in their communal discernment of whether to stay or to leave. Scenes of the liturgy of the hours and the Eucharist are also present. Nourished by both the work of their hands and by their prayer, they choose to stay. Like the food they have planted and cared for, the monks become the seed of faith for others in their dying. In this movie, we get a glimpse of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. The film also shows the importance of discernment. You might consider finding a spiritual director if you do not already have one.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) learn how to discern your will in all things.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) die daily so that I (we) may learn the art of living well.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) grow in solidarity with all who are persecuted for their faith.

The Help (2011)

Consider Pope Francis' "culture of encounter" in two scenes: the first, when Minny Jackson and Celia Foote sit down to eat at the same table, and the second, when Celia cooks her own meal for Minny with a great sense of gratitude and hospitality. If you watch the entire film,



note how these scenes contrast with the way other women eat.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to express gratitude to those who work and live on the margins of society.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) find ways to empower others, especially the marginalized and the overlooked.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, food built a bridge between Minny and Celia. You are the food that heals the broken places in our hearts. Grant me (us) the grace of a great sense of gratitude.

Saint Vincent (2014)

Consider holiness as seen through the eyes of a child. Also consider how individual lives will be different after the meal at the end of the movie. What could the meal represent?

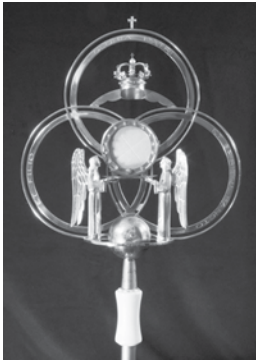
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) see you with the eyes of a child so that I (we) may find ways to help those who struggle with faith in your presence in the Eucharist.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, grant me (us) the grace of docility, the virtue of being teachable.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) ease the burdens of those who are carrying great burdens in their lives.

McFarland, USA (2015)

Trace the development of the characters through the following scenes: when the White family enters a local café and struggles to order food, when Jim White goes to the home of a Hispanic family and eats with them, and when Cheryl White is helping make tamales in what I would call “the holies of holies” in a home, the kitchen. This last scene reminded me of my first Christmas as a Catholic. On Christmas Eve, I joined my godmother’s family in making tamales in her kitchen.

- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) assist others to find their true home in you.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) enable others to discover and appreciate their gifts and talents.
- Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, help me (us) nourish others with the food of friendship and encouragement.





EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

For the Universal Prayers in the Jubilee Year of Mercy

by Mary Grace Melcher, OCD

Sixth Sunday of Easter — May 1

That God's mercy may renew us and enable us to keep his word, so that our souls may always be his holy city and his dwelling place

That in the strength of this Eucharist, we may not allow our hearts to be troubled or afraid, but attentive to our inner Master

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, we ask you to restore your church as the holy city Jerusalem, and to hear our prayers, building us up in your peace. We make our prayer in Jesus' name.

Ascension of the Lord — May 5 or May 8

That by God's mercy our hearts may be sprinkled clean of sin and we may hold unwaveringly to our confession of faith

That through this eucharistic encounter, we may have confidence of entry into God's inner sanctuary and absolute trust in Jesus, our great High Priest

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, on this feast we celebrate the wonderful reunion between you and your beloved Son in your heavenly kingdom. May he present all our needs before the throne of your divine mercy. We ask your blessing in Jesus' name.

Pentecost — May 15

That by God's mercy, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, may remain with us always, reminding us of the teachings of Jesus and helping us to

Sister Mary Grace Melcher is a cloistered nun of the Carmel of Terre Haute, Indiana, and the author of *Intercessions for Mass* (Liturgical Press, 2013), a collection of bidding prayers for Sundays, solemnities, and weekdays. The following intercessions and a concluding prayer on the themes of mercy and the Eucharist are written for each Sunday during the Jubilee of Mercy.



keep his word

That our encounter with Jesus in this Eucharist may bring us a deep share in the grace of the Spirit of adoption, renewing our identity as children of God

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, may the Spirit come to rest upon us, and make our prayers acceptable in the sight of your divine majesty. We ask this through Jesus our Lord.

Most Holy Trinity — May 22

That through the working of God's mercy, we may stand fast in the midst of our afflictions, allowing them to produce in our hearts the treasures of endurance and hope

That we may come into deep union with our eucharistic Lord, the wisdom and power of the Father, and rejoice in the consolation of the Holy Spirit

Concluding Prayer

Holy and merciful God, you have revealed to us the secret of your Trinitarian life. We bring all our petitions into the inner circle of your divine love through the mediation of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ — May 29

That in our hunger and need, we may be sustained by the loving providence of our Savior, who teaches us, heals us, and sustains us in his bountiful mercy

That on this festival of the Holy Eucharist, we may receive the true living body and blood of our Redeemer with burning faith and grateful remembrance

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, by our intimacy with Jesus in this Holy Eucharist, we are drawn more deeply into your divine love. May you be pleased to answer all our needs in Jesus' name.

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — June 5

That the outreach of Jesus' mercy may revive what is fading and disappearing from the fabric of family care and love in our lives today

That we who are called by God's grace to receive his body and blood in this Holy Eucharist may invite others to return to this banquet of divine life

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, your prophets are proved true by showing forth your power to raise up what has died in our lives. Revitalize us today by fulfilling our hope in you. We ask everything in the name of Jesus our Lord.

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time — June 12

For all of us who have become painfully aware of our sins, that the Lord may bless us with the repentance that invites the outpouring of his mercy

That we who receive Jesus in this Holy Eucharist may acknowledge how much we have been forgiven, giving him every gesture of humble tenderness as our response

Concluding Prayer

Merciful Father, Your Son has loved us and has given himself for us. Through him, may your mercy be upon us now, for the answering of our prayers. We ask for everything in Jesus' name.

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time — June 19

That by God's mercy, there may be a fountain of sorrow opened before the sight of him whom we have pierced, which will purify us from sin and uncleanness

For all of us receiving this Holy Eucharist, that by its grace we may have the courage to take up our cross and be willing to lose our life for the sake of Jesus

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, we willingly acknowledge Jesus as your Christ. May he obtain for us all that we ask in his name.



Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — June 26

That we who by God’s mercy have been given the gift of spiritual freedom may use this freedom to serve one another through love

For all of us who encounter in this Eucharist the One whom we must follow without looking back, that this divine contact may give us the courage to become true disciples

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father, your Son has thrown over each one of us the cloak of discipleship. May we follow him with determination, and may he obtain from you all that we ask in his name.



Emmanuel Subscriber Service

- change your address
- inquire about gift subscriptions
- inquire about the status or payment of your subscription
- inquire about missing issues

NEW SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

U.S. Rates 2 yr. - \$65.00 1 yr. - \$35.00

Canadian and Foreign Rates (U.S. currency)

2 yr. - \$75.00 1 yr. - \$40.00

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ - _____

TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Send us an address label from a recent issue together with your new address, or fill in the information below. Please give us 6 to 8 weeks advance notice.

Old Address

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

New Address

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____



PASTORAL LITURGY

Mass in the “Field Hospital”

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

The notion of a “field hospital” features prominently in the way Pope Francis understands and presents the life and mission of the church in the world today. Are there implications for our celebration of the Eucharist?

POPE FRANCIS HAS MADE A GREAT EXAMPLE OUT OF THE “FIELD HOSPITAL” image that he evoked early on in his papacy. He certainly is a pope who works to bring the church out to the margins. Perhaps the most notable instances of this were his washing the feet of young people, including some non-Christians, during the Sacred Triduum, and in his travels where he routinely serves meals in homeless shelters and jails and celebrates the Eucharist in these and other public settings.

I would like to suggest that these powerful images of pastoral engagement may give us an insight as to how we can bring the Mass out into the world literally, not always restricting these liturgies to our parish buildings. Furthermore, they may inspire us to search out new and creative ways to take the Mass to the margins and to deal with the shortage of ordained priests in the process, bringing together people and communities who would not normally interact with each other.

Particular Questions

Let’s admit, first of all, that church rules or guidelines in some instances and places get in the way of our pastoral sense. Exceptions are made when convenient. One of these situations has been “You can’t do a Mass outside of a church building.” When there is an outdoor Mass at a papal event, or a diocesan gathering with Mass in a stadium or arena, or a nursing home Mass, others take notice, especially when they wish to have a wedding Mass or ceremony other than in a parish church.

While I agree there must be parameters and limits as to where and how one celebrates the Eucharist, I think we should examine the

Father John Thomas J. Lane is the pastor of Saint Paschal Baylon Church, Highland Heights, Ohio, and a liturgical consultant and presenter. You may contact him with a comment or a question at jtlaness@gmail.com. He is the author of *Guide for Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, published by Liturgical Training Publications and the Archdiocese of Chicago in 2015.

pastoral context and advantages before stating an absolute, “No.” It may be helpful to note that Masses are regularly taped in television studios, offered for the pastoral care of the elderly and the infirm in nursing homes and in other makeshift spaces. These are even taped days in advance to anticipate a subsequent liturgical event, e.g., a Christmas Mass or an Easter Mass.

This brings us to a second point, that of the “home Mass.”

Home Masses were popular after the Second Vatican Council, at a time when there were greater numbers of priests who could celebrate liturgies away from the formal setting of the church building with a parish committee or organization or for certain occasions, for example, a wedding anniversary. These were beloved due to the intimacy of the setting and the opportunity for increased participation on the part of those present. This is often lacking in larger churches for many and cited as a reason why they do not regularly attend Mass.

The setting sets a tone, the music and preaching as well; in smaller settings, there is a sense that the liturgical experience is more directed to the occasion and the people gathered than in a generic, at times impersonal setting. The less formal “home Mass” model perdures in many nursing home settings; yet other ones have been forbidden. There are some suggestions, however, that we could consider:

Perhaps a home Mass or a Mass in a nursing home could be the setting for a regular weekday Mass. A local parish near me came up with a creative solution to the shortage of priests: combine the parish Mass and have it at the local Catholic high school with its school Mass. The school no longer had a priest chaplain, and there was no replacement to be found.

While there were logistics that took several meetings to work out, having the regular Tuesday parish Mass at the high school created a wonderful synergy between the high school and the parishioners, many of them seniors. Each benefitted from a broader sense of community and came to appreciate sharing a new common table. The retired folks also enjoyed witnessing the young ones participating in and learning about the Mass. Many of the students at this particular high school are not Catholic; the new liturgical experience has spawned evangelization efforts and fostered discussion about the Catholic faith in the high school.

Rather than creating more work for the already strapped ordained, coming up with creative solutions involving institutions in our parishes — a hospital, a nursing home, or a community center — can provide a simple way for us to bring the Mass to the “field hospital,” not adding more Masses but combining communities in special settings where our regular parish community supports a community of people that feels or is physically on the margins of daily life and ministry.

This column only scratches the surface of the idea. However, as we grow in this Year of Mercy, recognizing the ways Jesus was always on the margins ministering and “breaking bread,” it is an opportunity for us to revisit our parish weekday Mass schedule, adopt it to a new reality, and help revive the practice of weekday Masses in places where the people gather. Creative examples have existed for years, such as Mass at the shopping mall in the Philippines. Perhaps our pastoral staffs and councils, liturgy commissions, and other leaders would welcome a dialogue about how we can bring “Mass to the margins.”

Calendar Highlights for May and June

- In most places in the United States, the solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated on Sunday, May 8, which is also Mother’s Day. Look to the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 55 for the special prayers for this liturgy.
- Pentecost is Sunday, May 15. Review opportunities within the parish for this celebration as well as the possibility of gathering with other Christian churches to celebrate an ecumenical event on a Sunday afternoon in the community.
- On Monday, May 16, we return to Ordinary Time and the Seventh Week of this liturgical season.
- The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ is Sunday, May 29. We purposely use *this* title here for the solemnity rather than the traditional one. As pastoral theologians and liturgists and worshiping communities, it is important to recognize that the blood of Christ continues to be shed in the world today by martyrs for the faith and by a suffering humanity.

The church combined two feast days into one solemnity so that

the fullness of the eucharistic mystery could be celebrated. Many parishes still do not offer the chalice to the laity during Mass. We pray that this will change to reflect the eucharistic mystery more completely. Review opportunities for a eucharistic procession in *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass*, with assistance from your “community at prayer” (adoration) ministry to have time for prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and the rite of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

- Memorial Day (United States) is Monday, May 30. Check out options in the *Book of Blessings* (BB), Chapter 57.
- Friday, June 3, is the solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Father’s Day is Sunday, June 19 (Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time). See the special blessing in BB, Chapter 56.

Looking Ahead to Next Year

- Sunday, May 7, 2017, is the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday). This is an opportunity for preaching about vocations in your parish. Plan now to invite someone to speak about the importance of vocations.
- Sunday, May 14, 2017, is Mother’s Day (Fifth Sunday of Easter)
- Sunday, June 4, 2017, is Pentecost; Sunday, June 18, is the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ; Friday, June 23, is the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Nativity of John the Baptist takes precedence over the Sacred Heart of Mary on Saturday, June 24.



Sixth Sunday of Easter May 1, 2016

Joy of the Gospel

Breaking the Word

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

In Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas meet in council with the other apostles and presbyters to make a major decision concerning whether or not Gentiles had first to convert to Judaism in order to embrace Christianity. A message conveying the decision of the council is sent through Paul, Silas, Barnabas, and Judas to the church, beginning at Antioch, declaring that the Gentiles need not become Jews and thereby be subject to the Mosaic law; there were a few restrictions imposed, however.

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John describes the new, heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, built upon the foundation of the apostles with the Lamb of God radiating the glory of God for all to see.

John 14:23-29

In the midst of his farewell discourse at the Last Supper, Jesus instructs his apostles that the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will be sent in his name by the Father as the source of truth. Peace is the fruit of the resurrection of Christ, and this peace is the source of hope and joy for all who believe.

Sharing the Word

Can you imagine the joy the Gentile community in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia felt when they received the apostolic letter from Jerusalem? "It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities" (Acts 15:28). Paul's mission to the nations had not been in vain, but rather it was confirmed as an authentic work of the Holy Spirit. The salvation wrought by Jesus

Christ was and is meant for everyone.

The Gospel is not a burden imposed upon anyone (see Mt 11:28-30), but rather it is Good News, and as such it is meant to be lived in joy. This evangelical joy is the fruit of the resurrection and the fulfillment of the peace Christ promised to his disciples in his farewell discourse: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid" (Jn 14:27).

The Christian life is not burdensome, but joyful. The entire paschal mystery that we have experienced liturgically this Easter season is the source of our joy and our hope as we await the new Jerusalem. The promised Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will help sustain our gospel joy; hence Jesus says to his disciples that the Holy Spirit "will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you" (Jn 14:26). We oftentimes need such holy reminders of God's powerful action and divine mercy in our lives.

In the Eucharist, we celebrate the entire paschal mystery and we invoke the Holy Spirit not only to sanctify the bread and wine but also to make us "become one body, one spirit in Christ" (Eucharistic Prayer III). As we prepare for Pentecost, let us invoke anew the Holy Spirit, asking him to remind us of the merciful love of God manifested in the Eucharist and to give us evangelical joy.

Praying the Word

Eternal Father,
renew in us your life-giving Spirit
so that we might joyfully proclaim
that Christ has died, Christ is risen,
and Christ will come again in glory,
for he lives and reigns with you forever and ever.
Amen.

Ascension of the Lord May 5, 2016 (or May 8, 2016)

Witnesses of These Things

Breaking the Word

Acts 1:1-11

As Luke transitions to Acts, we again encounter the curious addressee (Theophilus, “lover of God”), to whom Luke had previously addressed his gospel text. This passage describes for us in greater detail Jesus’ ascension and the bewilderment of the disciples who were gazing into the heavens. Within this passage is the reminder of the promised Holy Spirit who will empower the disciples to bear witness to Jesus (see Acts 1:8).

Ephesians 1:17-23

While no description of Jesus’ ascension is offered, as it is in the first reading, Paul nevertheless mentions that the Father raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in glory (cf. Eph 1:20). The genre of this passage, within the wider context of the epistle itself, is that of a thanksgiving prayer offered by Paul to God on behalf of the Ephesians for their steadfast faith in Christ and charity toward their neighbors (see Eph 1:15-16).

Luke 24:46-53

The final chapter of Luke’s Gospel relates the stories of the empty tomb, the road to Emmaus, and Jesus’ appearance to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. In this pericope, a brief glimpse is offered of the ascension, a fuller picture having been given in Acts. The Gospel ends where it began in Jerusalem.

Sharing the Word

We often preach and hear that Christians are missioned to be witnesses. But to what exactly are we called to bear witness?

At his ascension, Jesus tells his disciples, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24:46-48). As Christians, we bear witness to the paschal mystery — the life, passion, death, and resurrection — of Jesus Christ. The preaching of repentance for the forgiveness of sins is the highest form of witnessing a Christian can offer the world, but it is far from easy.

Our early Christian forbears who initially received the commission to bear witness to the paschal mystery were fearful of the task that lay before them, but with the prayerful support of the Virgin Mary (see Acts 1:14) and the eventual outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they were emboldened to preach repentance and live a life reflective of God's infinite mercy. The seemingly impossible task of being "witnesses of these things" was made possible because of God's merciful love reflected in the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God we encounter each time we gather in the Lord's name at the altar of the Eucharist enables us to bear witness to Jesus in the world. Being effective witnesses means living as joy-filled disciples who offer thankful praise to God for the gift of redemption and eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Praying the Word

Lord Jesus,
as you ascended to the Father's right hand in glory,
you missioned your disciples to bear you faithful witness.
Empower us through your life-giving Spirit
to be missionary-disciples of the Eucharist
in all that we say and do,
for you live and reign forever and ever.
Amen.

Pentecost Sunday May 15, 2016

The Promised Gift of the Holy Spirit

Breaking the Word

Acts 2:1-11

Luke describes for his readers the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the newly reconstituted Twelve, as all were together in Jerusalem. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, each is emboldened to preach to the diverse assembly of people gathered together in the holy city for the Jewish Feast of Weeks, which commemorated the arranging of the covenant some 50 days after the Passover — hence, the name Pentecost (see Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2nd ed., Ijamsville, MD: Word Among Us Press, 1988, 414-5).

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Paul speaks of the variety of gifts that the Spirit bestows on Christians, noting that such diversity of gifts is meant “for the common good” of the church (1 Cor 12:7). There is a certain unity amidst the diversity of the spiritual gifts one finds within the Christian community. Paul compares this unified diversity to that of a body, which is made up of many parts and yet forms one body.

John 20:19-23

In contrast with the chronology of Luke, the evangelist John describes the coming of the Holy Spirit as taking place “on the evening of that day, the first day of the week,” or Easter Sunday (see Jn 20:19, 22). The gift of the Holy Spirit is preceded by the gift of peace (Jn 20:19) and the reminder of the Lord’s passion (20). After breathing the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, the risen Christ empowers them to forgive sins (23).

Sharing the Word

Today, as we celebrate Pentecost, we give thanks and praise for the gift of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Most Holy Trinity. Jesus

promised that, following his resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon us. At our baptism, we were washed clean of sin and evil, and at our confirmation, we were sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows us! But do we know the Holy Spirit?

From today's Gospel, we see the power of the Spirit as healer or comforter. Christ breathed upon the apostles and made them, and their successors, ministers of reconciliation. "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained" (Jn 20:22-23). This ministry of reconciliation, of healing and forgiving sins, continues today in the sacraments of penance and the anointing of the sick. Bishops and priests have received the gift of the Spirit to impart sacramental absolution after we confess our sins, and to bestow Christ's healing power upon us as we are anointed with holy oil when we are sick or infirm. The Holy Spirit is among us for the forgiveness of sins and our spiritual and physical healing.

In addition to being our healer, the Holy Spirit also unites us in one family, as one people of faith. We notice this especially in our first reading, which tells us of the very first experience of the Spirit's power to break down barriers and prejudices of every kind. The apostles preached in languages that were not their own native tongue. They were freed from fear and anxiety, and brought the people together as the new community of salvation in and through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit heals us of our sins and infirmities — both of body and soul. He unites us as one people of faith in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. And, finally, the Holy Spirit sends us forth to proclaim that we are saved through Christ and made heirs to the kingdom. Knowing this about the Father's great gift of the Holy Spirit, we clearly have much to give thanks for as we celebrate the Eucharist this Pentecost Sunday.

Praying the Word

God, the Father of Mercies,
through the death and resurrection of your Son,
you have reconciled the whole world to yourself
and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins.
By that same Spirit, sanctify us
that we might forever sing of your merciful love
celebrated in the Eucharist of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who is Lord forever and ever.
Amen.

(Adapted from the Formula of Absolution, Rite of Penance)

Most Holy Trinity May 22, 2016

Praise the Holy Trinity

Breaking the Word

Proverbs 8:22-31

The author speaks of wisdom personified and describes wisdom's action in the creation of the cosmos. This passage is from a larger treatise on wisdom and it forms a sort of preface to the proverbial sayings attributed to Solomon for which this book of the Old Testament is best known.

Romans 5:1-5

These opening verses of the fifth chapter of Paul's Letter to the Romans speak of the three virtues of faith, hope, and love, which give joy to believers in knowledge of the peace and reconciliation wrought by Christ Jesus. The love of God is manifested in the outpouring of his Holy Spirit and the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ.

John 16:12-15

Our gospel passage comes from Jesus' Last Supper discourses and is peculiar to John's Gospel. Jesus speaks of the promised Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of Truth" (Jn 16:13), who will come to believers.

Sharing the Word

I don't often watch television game shows, but if I had to pick one to watch, *Jeopardy!* would be the one. The format is unique: the host gives the answer while contestants must try and give the correct question. I enjoy the challenge it presents. It works different brain muscles than I am used to exercising.

Without being irreverent, allow me to suggest that *Jeopardy!* is a model for our readings for this feast. Just as the contestants on *Jeopardy!* have to use different intellectual skills than everyday reasoning, this feast asks us to use a different spiritual skillset to

recognize the central mystery of our Christian faith: the Most Holy Trinity.

Rather than giving a theological treatise on the Trinity, the liturgy presents us with a revelatory reflection on the marvelous working of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From the dawn of creation through the incarnation, the paschal mystery, and to our life today in the church, the Holy Trinity is always at work creating, redeeming, and sanctifying. And just as lovers cannot explain why they love their beloved, but only articulate the effects of their affection, so we cannot adequately offer an explanation for the God who is love. In the words of the late preacher Walter J. Burghardt, SJ: "If that were all God told us — God is Three in One — we would only be mystified. But, three magnificent monosyllables lend meaning to mystery: 'God is Love' (1 Jn 4:8). God, this Trinity of persons, not only loves; God *is* Love. Only of God dare we say that. Why? Because the Trinity is the model without beginning for every love" (*The Living Pulpit*, April-June 1999, 8).

Praying the Word

Glory to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever.
Amen.

Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Corpus Christi May 29, 2016

Sacrament of Divine Friendship

Breaking the Word

Genesis 14:18-20

The sacred author recounts the story of Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem, who offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. Abram receives his solemn benediction, likely in recognition of his “victory over Chedorlaomer and the kings who were allied with him” (Gn 14:17). Christians have understood the sacrifice of bread and wine offered by Melchizedek as foreshadowing the Eucharist.

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Paul recalls the tradition of the institution of the Eucharist. His rendering of the institution narrative closely resembles that which is found in the Gospel of Luke (see 22:19-20). He adds the teaching, not found in the Gospels, that whenever the Christian community gathers to eat and drink the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood, his death is proclaimed until his glorious return (see 1 Cor 11:26).

Luke 9:11b-17

The Gospel is Luke’s version of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves of bread and two fish supplied by the Twelve. Note that the eucharistic verbs — take, bless, break, and give — are found in Jesus’ actions with the loaves and fish (see Lk 22:19). The disciples are tasked with distributing the food to the crowd, fulfilling Jesus’ instructions to “give them some food yourselves” (Lk 9:13).

Sharing the Word

In his theological treatise, Thomas Aquinas refers to the Eucharist as the sacrament of supreme charity because “this belongs to Christ’s love, out of which for our salvation he assumed a true body

of our nature. And because it is the special feature of friendship to live together with friends" (ST III, Q. 75 a.1). The risen Christ is truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharist. Indeed, the Eucharist is a gift of faith that we profess and acknowledge today in a special way.

Divine friendship is what we discover in today's readings. The first reading from Genesis describes a moment following the victory of Abram (Abraham) over his enemies. The priest and king of Salem (Jerusalem) is on his way to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine and, en route, he offers a solemn blessing upon Abram. He recognized the many blessings God had given Abram and blessed God with thankful praise. There can be no doubt that God and Abram were intimate friends. Melchizedek recognized this friendship to be a divine blessing in Abram's life. The bread and wine Melchizedek offered prefigures the bread and wine offered at every Mass and received by us as Christ's body and blood, the sign of our covenant with God.

In the Gospel, Jesus has compassion on the sick, whom he cures, and the hungry, whom he feeds. Only a friend, in the truest sense of that word, can have such compassion on the one befriended. We see how divine friendship is expressed through Jesus' tender-mercy and compassion in the miraculous feeding of the five thousand.

This divine friendship does not end with the cross but continues in every Eucharist. As we eat and drink the sacrament of Christ's body and blood in Communion, we are called to intimacy with our Lord Jesus. "What he did at supper seated, / Christ ordained to be repeated, / his memorial ne'er to cease: and his rule for guidance taking, / bread and wine we hallow, making / thus our sacrifice of peace" (*Lauda Sion*). The peace that the risen Christ offers is that of divine friendship, which is renewed at every Mass.

Praying the Word

Almighty and ever living God,
as often as we eat and drink
the sacrament of Christ's body and blood
we proclaim his death until he comes again.
May your church always have
worthy priests and faith-filled people
so that the eucharistic sacrifice may be offered
in praise and thanks to you.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time June 5, 2016

Praise the Lord Who Saves

Breaking the Word

1 Kings 17:17-24

Today's reading takes place in the home of the widow of Zarephath in Sidon. It was here that Elijah asked the widow for some food and drink during a severe drought, and the "the jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, as the Lord had foretold through Elijah" (1 Kgs 17:16). Now the mistress's son become ill and dies, and Elijah is blamed for the calamity. Elijah beseeches God, who restores the child to life.

Galatians 1:11-14a, 15ac, 16a, 17, 19

The Lectionary offers us a highly redacted text for today's second reading. Paul describes his calling as being from Christ and therefore not based on human authority. He also recounts his time as a persecutor of the church of God and his conversion experience. After the conversion, Paul consults with Cephas (Peter) and James in Jerusalem.

Luke 7:11-17

Just as God restored the dead boy to life through the ministry of Elijah, so Jesus restores the dead son of the widow of Nain to life. Jesus demonstrates his authority over death.

Sharing the Word

Of all the miracles Jesus performed during his life, it can be argued that nothing demonstrates divine power better than resuscitating the dead to life. Healing the sick, expelling unclean spirits, curing leprosy, changing water-into-wine, etc., all pale in comparison to the miracle of life itself.

Picture the scene from the Gospel: the boy was dead and is

being carried to his final resting place. His mother, relatives, and others were mourning inconsolably as they accompany his lifeless body to the grave. The widow depended on her only son, and he was now dead. That is it, there is nothing left, until Jesus comes along and halts the procession. He brings life from death. What can be more awesome than overcoming humanity's ancient foe, death?

Elijah did not resuscitate the mistress's son on his own authority. He invoked the power and mercy of God to do so: "O Lord, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child" (1 Kgs 17:21). In contrast to Elijah, Jesus acted on his own divine authority: "Young man, I tell you, arise!" (Lk 7:14). Those who witnessed this miracle proclaimed him to be a great prophet, but the Lucan context in which this episode occurs seeks to portray Jesus as Son of God who saves his people with divine power. Knowledge of salvation comes from the forgiveness of sins (see Lk 1:77), and death has been declared the ultimate penalty for sin (cf. Rom 6:23). Resultantly, when the disciples of John the Baptist come to Jesus asking him if he is the one who is to come, Jesus answers by speaking of his preaching the good news to the poor and he points to all of his miracles, including the dead being raised, as proof (cf. Lk 4:16-21).

Elijah demonstrated that God's mercy is ultimately life-giving. In Jesus Christ, God indeed has visited his people and set them free from sin and death (see Lk 1:68).

Praying the Word

Good and gracious God,
you restore the dead to new life
through your Son, Jesus Christ.
May your Spirit shower his grace upon us
in our time of pain and suffering.
We make our prayer
through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time June 12, 2016

Mercy is the Authentic Sign of Discipleship

Breaking the Word

2 Samuel 12:7-10, 13

Samuel tells David of God's displeasure with him because of his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah (see 2 Sm 11:1-27). Unfortunately, missing from today's reading is the wonderful parable Samuel used to illustrate David's gravity of sin.

Galatians 2:16, 19-21

In a powerful testimony to divine mercy, Paul confesses his faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, who personally loved Paul and gave himself up for his salvation. As a result, Paul lives no longer for himself but for God alone, through faith in the Son of God.

Luke 7:36 – 8:3

Jesus dines in the home of Simon the Pharisee and is ministered to by a "sinful woman," whose presence is disparaged by Simon. In the parable within the story, Jesus illustrates that the effect of mercy is love. Luke mentions that Jesus had many disciples, including some Galilean women.

Sharing the Word

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ? This question was, and still is today, an important one to consider. For early Christians, the question of discipleship, and what it meant in the Gentile context of the latter half of the first century, was a pressing matter. It addresses the heart of Christian identity. In the Gospel, the evangelist uses a simple story of a Pharisee's neglected hospitality and a sinful woman's lavish gestures to illustrate the gospel call to merciful love. Mercy, then, is the model of authentic Christian discipleship.

Simon the Pharisee failed to offer the proper gestures of

welcome to Jesus, such as washing his feet (see Lk 7:44). Clearly, Simon was interested in what Jesus had to say and was curious about him, but he was not a true disciple. The sinful woman who not only bathed Jesus' feet with her tears, but also anointed them with ointment, was a true disciple for she demonstrated her love for Jesus through simple gestures of mercy. The woman showed regard for neither expense — hence, the expensive alabaster vial of ointment — nor for invading a private dinner party, and thereby faced ridicule by the host and other guests. It was worth risking everything in order to express her love and gratitude.

Christians are called to imitate this woman in her actions of faith and love, without counting the cost. Jesus forgives our sins, and he expects us to do great things, to be merciful. "So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love" (Lk 7:47). The woman's actions are a response to the presence of Jesus, and not simply a means to an end. Christian love and the works of mercy that flow from that love are meant to be unconditional.

Praying the Word

God of infinite mercy and love,
we recognize our need for the Holy Spirit
to empower us to serve one another in Jesus' name.
May all that we say and do
reflect our gratitude
for the mercy you have shown us.
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time June 19, 2016

Belonging to Christ

Breaking the Word

Zechariah 12:10-11; 13:1

The prophet's oracle concerning the day of redemption details great suffering that must occur before the "destruction of all nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zec 12:9). Truth will arise and purge sin away.

Galatians 3:26-29

Paul writes about the unity of God's people rooted in our common baptism and faith in Christ Jesus. Division does not have a place in the Christian community.

Luke 9:18-24

Our Gospel for this Sunday contains Jesus' first prediction of his passion. After a moment of prayer with his disciples, Jesus asks them how they and others identify him. Peter replies that Jesus is "the Christ of God" (Lk 9:20), to which Jesus then states that the Son of Man must undergo his passion and be raised.

Sharing the Word

Reluctantly, I am on social media. Sending status updates and tweets are not things that I generally enjoy doing, but it comes with the ministry of a modern-day priest, I suppose. Facebook describes the people with whom I connect as "friends," while Twitter calls them "followers." It is easy to see how some social media users can acquire a big head if they have a large number of "friends" and "followers"! Of course, what we call someone in our relationship is important. In real life, a friend is on a different relational level than an acquaintance, spouse, relative, or colleague. Nomenclature is key for right relationships, and it certainly is fundamental for us in our relationship with Christ.

Throughout the Galilean ministry of Jesus, Luke points out that people were curious about him, wanting to know who he was. The people of Jesus' hometown wondered, "Isn't this the son of Joseph?" (Lk 4:22), and they took offense at him. Demons claim to know Jesus (see Lk 4:34, 41), but he rebukes them and silences them. The Pharisees and scribes, too, were inquisitive about Jesus, and one of them, Simon, even dined with Jesus, presumably to get to know him better (see Lk 7:36-50). Even the disciples of John the Baptist seek Jesus' true identity (see Lk 7:18-19). So, who is Jesus, especially who is he for his disciples?

Through the confession of faith by Peter, we come to name Jesus "the Christ of God," the Messiah, whom Zechariah and the prophets spoke of centuries before. Jesus is the one who forgives sins, heals the sick, raises the dead, and preaches the Good News (see Lk 7:22-23). Flowing from Peter's initial declaration, and his successors' subsequent profession of faith as expressed in the Magisterium, we believe Jesus to be the co-eternal Son of the Father, our Lord and Savior, brother, true friend, and lover. We are his disciples who wondrously bear his name. "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's children, heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:29) God made millennia ago.

Praying the Word

Good and gracious God,
through baptism, we renounce sin and Satan
and affirm our faith in you
who are Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
and in your one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.
In Christ Jesus, your Son and our Savior,
we are in communion with you
through the power of your Spirit,
who unites us as one
in the holy name of Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time June 26, 2016

Focusing on the Kingdom of God

Breaking the Word

1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21

God tells Elijah to appoint Elisha to be his successor in the prophetic ministry. Elijah mentors his young protégé, and they set off to speak in the Lord's name.

Galatians 5:1, 13-18

True freedom is rooted in Christ Jesus. The freedom we enjoy through our life in the Spirit is the freedom to love and to show mercy; it is not a freedom to do whatever one wants or desires.

Luke 9:51-62

Having predicted his passion and death in Jerusalem, Jesus nevertheless resolutely sets out for the city and calls others to leave everything behind and follow him.

Sharing the Word

Whether you're driving your car or riding your bike, one common danger that we all face is the pothole! That small crack in the street that appears in the autumn, grows through the cold of winter, and develops into a crater by spring, waiting to swallow and damage your vehicle. As drivers, we have to focus on the road ahead in order to avoid potholes. Otherwise we'll end up spending a lot of money and time for car repairs.

Keeping our focus on the road ahead, on our final destination, and not on something or someone else, is what our readings are all about. What we focus on, we give power to! If we take our eyes off the road, we'll end up in a pothole or something worse. The same is true in our relationship with God. Jesus tells us, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom

of God” (Lk 9:62). What is left behind is sin and evil; what lies ahead is God’s mercy and love and the kingdom of God.

That’s what we heard about in the first reading. Elijah commissioned Elisha to succeed him, but Elisha was distracted — he took his eyes off the road, so to speak — and he ended up playing catch up to Elijah rather than following him right away. We see the same scenario in the Gospel. People want to follow Jesus, but they are distracted: the disciples have travel problems going directly through Samaria; a would-be disciple is looking for creature comforts while on the road; another wants to bury the dead; and still another has some family issues he needs to deal with first. Their focus was not on Christ and his kingdom, but on something or someone else, and they ended up hitting a proverbial pothole.

What was Elisha’s distraction? What put the would-be disciples in a pothole on the road to Jerusalem? Fear! Fear is what initially kept Elisha from following after Elijah. Fear of loving their enemies is what prevented the Samaritans from welcoming Jesus on his journey. Fear is what kept the would-be disciples of Jesus from following him without counting the cost of discipleship.

We face this same distraction of fear. Fear of being unpopular prevents many of us from faithfully living and handing on the truths of the Gospel. Isn’t it easier to fit into society rather than be counter-cultural? Wouldn’t we rather assimilate into the culture around us rather than appear to be different as Catholics? Some people are afraid of being labeled bigots if we declare our belief in traditional marriage. Ultimately, fear of the truth will send us into a spiritual pothole or, worse, it will keep us from the kingdom.

The Good News is that Christ set us free from fear. As a result, we are free to “serve one another through love” (Gal 5:13), as we are reminded in the second reading. Jesus empowers us with his love in the Eucharist to not be afraid, because “perfect love drives away fear” (1 Jn 4:18). God’s love for us and our love for one another will help us avoid life’s potholes.

Praying the Word

Fear keeps us from loving and serving you,
almighty and eternal God,
while perfect love drives away fear.
Perfect our love for you and our neighbor
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

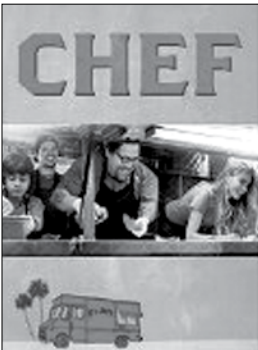




EUCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •
Poetry • Books

Film Review



CHEF
Jon Favreau
United States, 2014

John Christman,
SSS

Jon Favreau is well aware of the deeper meaning of cooking and sharing a meal. Before directing popular films like the humorous and beloved modern holiday classic *Elf* or the huge international hit *Iron Man*, Favreau had a modest television show on the Independent Film Channel. The television program was entitled *Dinner for Five* and consisted of Favreau and an ever-changing cast of four people working in the film industry sitting down for a meal together and simply having a conversation. The premise was simple, but it was based upon such a fundamental and meaningful experience: when people sit down together to share a good meal and conversation, it can be an enjoyable and transformative experience.

Sharing food and life once again takes center stage in Favreau's latest film entitled *Chef*, which he wrote, directed, and stars in. This time, Favreau dons his apron and takes up his knives as the gifted but creatively stifled chef Carl Casper. Despite his great talent and a good heart, Casper struggles to find the recipe for happiness. To discover the missing ingredients, he recognizes that his life needs some radical transformation. Interestingly, the journey to discover what's most meaningful in life coincides with a cross-country trip in a food truck with his son. As they slice choice meats and serve up savory Cuban sandwiches, they discover a lot more about each other than their favorite foods and spices.

What's impressive about this film is how it sheds light on the meaning of the act of cooking. Great films about cooking often do this. *Babette's Feast* (Gabriel Axel, Denmark, 1987) excels in portraying the act of cooking as an artistic feat done in a spirit of thanksgiving. *Eat Drink Man Woman* (Ang Lee, Taiwan, 1994) beautifully portrays the act of cooking as a deep expression of love. *Chef* portrays the act of cooking as a creative act that can be shared and can build and nurture relationships.

Cooking and sharing meals are so important in many different cultures around the world. For a Catholic culture, the thoughts that it stirs about meals are significant, especially if our eucharistic celebrations are to be meaningful meal encounters following Jesus' example of meal sharing in the Gospels. *Chef* emphasizes that a meal isn't something we simply receive. It's something we make.

Moreover, it focuses not so much on the food, but on the preparation. It's about making and sharing. The characters in the film build communion as they cook together. They discover one another on a deeper level through their shared act of cooking, and thus the possibilities of reconciliation and happiness are opened to them.

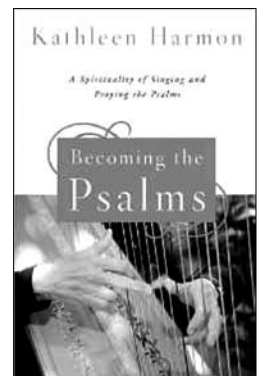
A wise Benedictine abbot once conjectured in a conversation we were having about the Eucharist, "How will people ever understand the meaning of Eucharist if they don't sit down and share a meal together?" After seeing Favreau's film, we might additionally ask, "How will people ever understand the meaning of Eucharist if they don't cook together?"

Book Review

The psalms are very familiar to the Christian and Jewish communities as a prayer-filled form that leads to personal reflection and prayer on a private level and are at the heart of liturgical communal prayer. The psalms reflect centuries of the faith history of the Israelite community set in a poetic format. Whether prayed or sung, the psalms are a living testament to the Israelites as well as to the Christian communities that treasure and pray them.

Although a familiar form of prayer, Sister Kathleen Harmon makes them come alive in the twenty-first century. She develops her work in four parts: "The Psalms, The Story of Salvation"; "The Psalms Shape Faith"; "The Psalms Challenge Faith"; and "Becoming the Psalms, Living the Spirituality."

In Part One, Harmon clarifies what it means to be a saved community by selectively choosing psalms that help us recognize our own stories centuries after the original writings. We are drawn into the meaning and purpose of the psalms selected and how they fit our lives today. Praying the psalms, "whether alone or in the church gathered for liturgy, we enter into the story of salvation unfolding. . . ." And the story becomes our own.



BECOMING THE
PSALMS:
A SPIRITUALITY OF
SINGING
AND PRAYING THE
PSALMS

Kathleen Harmon,
SNDdeN

Collegetown,
Minnesota:

Liturgical Press,
2015

104 pp., \$12.95

A summary of Israel's salvation history is used in Part Two to cast a new theological understanding of a faith that leads eventually to their covenant relationship with God. Their praying of the psalms helps to shape their faith, just as our faith is deepened through praying of the psalms as a church. Harmon, using Walter Brueggemann's study of the psalms, clarifies who the "You" that is addressed in the psalms is and who the "I" that makes the audacious address is. She ends this section with a chapter addressing the psalms as the prayer of Jesus.

Part Three raises three challenges that we confront as we pray the psalms. The first is the difficulty we face praying words that come from a historical context far different than our own. The second challenge is about what we are to do and believe when we pray to God, who is to listen but the response is most often silence. In such moments, we learn that we cannot control God. The third challenge is about praying psalms that we are not comfortable with because they sometimes force us to look at the negative aspects that are present within us. The psalms are not about polite conversation.

The final part is, in a sense, a summary, but one that reflects on living the psalms in our lives. Harmon identifies three central characteristics of spirituality related to the psalms. The first is that we are incapable of bringing ourselves to salvation. Second, we learn that God pursues us relentlessly and that God is always faithful. Third, we discover that God's gift of self to us is what salvation is all about.

Harmon's own words provide the essence of what it means to pray the psalms. "When we pray and sing the psalms, then — whether alone or with others, whether in private prayer or gathered for liturgical prayer — we are praying and singing ourselves into being: being one with God, being one with the community of the faithful, and being one with all of humankind."

Maureen McCarthy, OSU, DMin
Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
Pepper Pike, Ohio

Poetry

To Be Great Is to Be Good

Obviously, we have
a skewed and inadequate
notion of goodness. Otherwise,
this would be a “no-brainer.”

We think that goodness
is frankly pathetic. Only
the weak are good.
They can't afford
anything else. It is their
consolation prize. So much
for goodness. The idea

that goodness
is strength and health
is completely foreign
to us. We cannot
conceive it. Or, perhaps,

we will not
conceive it. Pity us,

Lord, this particular
perversity. Save us
from ourselves in this
(and every) respect.

And give us the intelligence
finally to respond.
Amen.

Jared Barkan



EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS

Deacon Joe Bourgeois, SSS

I am honored to have been the first religious brother to be ordained a permanent deacon in the United States. Through my vocation, I have ministered to many who were weak, broken, or in need, due to health issues, unemployment, homelessness, and other challenges life brings.

One experience that had an enormous impact on my life and vocation took place at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City. I was ministering to a 35-year-old woman who was dying following a tainted blood transfusion. Pat was a professional clown with the Barnum & Bailey Circus. She reached out, performed at nursing homes and hospitals on her days off. The circus actually had a chaplain. Though she was Baptist, she saw something special when she would attend Mass. She wanted to receive the Eucharist, but knew she could not.

Over time, Pat and I became friends. One day, I asked if she wanted to become a Catholic and she said yes. I instructed her, baptized her, and she made her First Communion. Two weeks later, Pat died. At her wake, her father gave me a picture of Emmet Kelly, the epitome of clowns. Under the picture, Pat had written: "You share with me your sadness. I will share with you my joy." Her father told me that she hoped that I would continue bringing joy to others who were broken.

My next assignment took me to a new parish our order served in Houston. To my surprise, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus was looking for clowns. Out of 2,000 applications, they accepted 20. I was one of them and graduated as Yappy the Clown. Inspired by the memory of Pat, I soon began a clown ministry, both at the parish and at Saint Joseph's Hospital. Our clowns brought joy and laughter to so many. We were also a part of the Braes Ministry for the needy and homeless in the area.

I have been at Saint Paschal Baylon in suburban Cleveland for 16 years. A parishioner and I began a clown ministry. Our members take the time to listen to and care for others, even if it is simply sharing a smile. We also began the Helping Hands Ministry to feed, clothe, and minister to area homeless.

As a eucharistic community, we share their brokenness and help make them whole. We don't see dirty or ripped clothing; we look beyond the superficial to find Christ in each one we serve. We see their sorrow, share a smile, and feed and clothe them. And then we see their joy. We reach out to them with eucharistic faith and compassion.





“I meditated on the Blessed Virgin’s love for me since childhood. I blessed Our Lady of Laus, and the day I took her for my Mother, my dear mother died. And since then, so many graces! At her feet in the chapel of Saint-Robert, I asked her that I might one day become a priest. She alone led me by the hand to the priesthood, and then to the Blessed Sacrament.”

Saint Peter Julian Eymard March 17, 1865



Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament and the Communion of Saints
-Mother Mary Thomas, PCPA