

# *Emmanuel*

*Eucharistic Spirituality*

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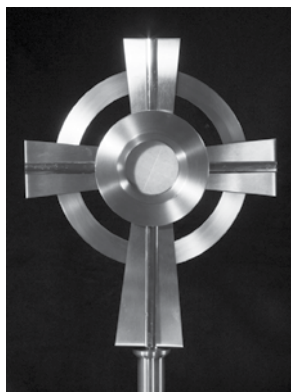
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# *Emmanuel Magazine*

Seeing all of reality in the light of the Eucharist

Volume 123 Number 2



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## FROM THE EDITOR

The church where I served for ten years as pastor in New York City regularly included *Tenebrae* in its Good Friday schedule. Early in the evening, as darkness fell, the pews filled with people who came to participate in this reflective service from the Church's monastic tradition.

*Tenebrae*, Latin for "shadows" or "darkness," consists of chanted psalms, prayers, readings, and lamentations accompanied by sacred music. After each selection, a candle is extinguished on the candelabrum in the sanctuary until only one remains lit. And for a period of time, this candle, too, is removed and hidden, and the church is plunged into total darkness. Finally, the candle is returned in silence to its place, to burn as a herald of the resurrection.

The experience is meant to recreate the emotional and spiritual impact of the passion and death of Christ on those who witnessed his arrest, trial, execution, and entombment. And it does.

One song that has in recent years become a standard part of the *Tenebrae* service is "Pietà / The Silence and the Sorrow," written by the Irish priest and composer Liam Lawton to memorialize the victims of a particularly horrific bombing during Ireland's "troubles." The melody and the words pierce the soul.

The refrain reads:

Who will come and share my sorrow,  
Hold my heart 'til wake tomorrow?  
Is there time that I could borrow?  
Oh, oh, the silence and the sorrow.

Hearing these words, I would close my eyes and picture Michelangelo's

*Pietà* in Saint Peter's Basilica. The image of Mary holding the lifeless body of her son, freed from the nails that bound his hands and feet to the wood of the cross, strengthened my conviction that Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of all was made possible both by the fidelity of the Father who sustained him at every step and by the love of his mother who surrendered him to God for the redeeming purpose for which he came into this world.

I thought, too, of the haunting words of the "Stabat Mater," said to have been written by the Franciscan friar Jacopone da Todi in the thirteenth century:

Is there one who would not weep,  
whelmed in miseries so deep,  
Christ's dear mother to behold?

Can the human heart refrain  
from partaking of her pain,  
in that mother's pain untold?

Lent and Holy Week before us, we are reminded of another inescapable truth: that Christ suffers today in the members of his mystical body, the church, indeed in all humanity created in the divine image. His wounds and brokenness are those of the innocent children of Aleppo and other places torn by sectarian strife and warfare. Christ dies in the victims of gun violence and drugs in our schools and our streets. And the Sorrowful Mother's pain is joined to that of every mother, father, and loved one who feels the unbearable anguish of loss.

When we lift the body and blood of Christ at the consecration of the bread and wine in memory of him who gave his life for the world's redemption and healing, let us pray for them too.

### **In This Issue**

You'll notice that this issue contains a few shorter articles. Some of you have told us that you prefer more concise writing.

We bring you the final installments of two articles: Maryknoller James H. Kroeger's reflection on Pope Francis' foundational insights on the priesthood and Sister Catherine Marie Caron's essay on the Gift of Self in the life of Saint Peter Julian Eymard. But there is much more for you to read and to ponder. Blessings on your journey!



Anthony Schueller, SSS





## EUCHARIST: LIVING & EVANGELIZING

# Pope Francis Explores the Priesthood: Ten Foundational Insights — Numbers 6-10

by James H. Kroeger, MM

*Pope Francis' thinking on the priesthood offers a clear and challenging vision for priestly life and ministry today.*

Father James H. Kroeger, MM, has served in Asia since 1970, ministering in parishes and in the formation of seminarians, catechists, and lay leaders. He currently teaches Christology, ecclesiology, missiology, and Asian theology at Loyola School of Theology, East Asian Pastoral Institute, and Mother of Life Catechetical Center in Manila, Philippines. His recent books include *Asia's Dynamic Local Churches*; *Becoming Missionary Disciples*; *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones*; *Walking in the Light of Faith*, and *The Gift of Mission*.

### 6. Be Committed to Quality Preaching

MANY CATHOLICS WERE SURPRISED WHEN POPE FRANCIS IN *EVANGELII GAUDIUM* devoted 25 sections to the homily and preaching (EG, 135-159). Francis made several straightforward — even blunt — statements about priests and preaching: “The homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to his people” (135). “The homily cannot be a form of entertainment. . . . It should be brief and avoid taking on the semblance of a speech or a lecture. . . . If the homily goes on too long, it will affect two characteristic elements of the liturgical celebration: its balance and its rhythm” (138). “Preparation for preaching is so important a task that a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection, and pastoral creativity should be devoted to it. . . . A preacher who does not prepare is not ‘spiritual’; he is dishonest and irresponsible with the gifts he has received” (145).

The homily “should not be used to correct errors . . . , it should not be employed to teach doctrine . . . , it should not be used to expound various theological opinions . . . , let us not use it to talk about the latest news” (147). “What is essential is that the preacher be certain that God loves him, that Jesus Christ has saved him, and that his love always has the last word” (151). “Preparation for preaching thus becomes an exercise in evangelical discernment” [linking profound faith to contemporary life] (154). “Another feature of a good homily is that it is positive. . . . Positive preaching always offers hope, points to the future, does not leave us trapped in negativity” (159).

Speaking to newly-ordained priests, Francis said: “May your homilies not be boring; may your homilies touch the hearts of the people

because they come from your heart, because what you are telling them is what you carry in your heart. It is in this way that the word of God is passed on, and thus your teaching will be a joy and support to Christ's faithful; the fragrance of your lives will be your testimony" (LL). One readily recalls here the episcopal motto of John Henry Cardinal Newman: *Cor ad cor loquitur* (Heart speaks to heart).

"A good priest can be recognized by the way his people are anointed; this is a clear proof. When our people are anointed with the oil of gladness, it is obvious: for example, when they leave Mass looking as if they have heard good news. Our people like to hear the Gospel preached with 'unction,' they like it when the Gospel we preach touches their daily lives . . . , when it brings light to moments of extreme darkness. . . . People thank us because they feel we have prayed over the realities of their everyday lives, their troubles, their joys, their burdens, and their hopes" (AA).

## **7. Carefully Monitor Any "Clerical Position or Power" You Possess**

Perhaps the most pointed address of Pope Francis to alert priests and bishops to some possible pitfalls in their ministry and life is found in his 2014 Christmas message to the Roman Curia (HH). The message was crafted as a kind of "examination of conscience," following the practice of the Desert Fathers who prepared "lists" as a preparation for the sacrament of reconciliation. Francis noted that healing comes about through an awareness of one's sickness and the personal and communal decision to patiently and perseveringly apply the appropriate remedies.

Francis mentioned some of the probable "diseases and temptations which weaken our service to the Lord," which can weaken our "vital, personal, authentic, and solid relationship with Christ." Mentioning several specific items provides clarity and can foster "a living relationship with God that nourishes and strengthens our communion with others."

The "disease list" of Pope Francis includes 15 items (HH): 1. "The disease of thinking we are 'immortal,' 'immune,' or downright 'indispensable'; . . . it is the disease of those who turn into lords and masters and think of themselves as above others and not at their service. It is an effect of the pathology of power, from a superiority complex." 2. "Another disease is the 'Martha complex,' excessive busyness. . . . Jesus called his disciples to 'rest a while.'" 3. "Then, too, there is the disease of mental and spiritual 'petrification'; it is found in those who have a heart of



stone . . . , those who lose ‘the sentiments of Jesus.’” 4. “The disease of excessive planning and of functionalism.” 5. “The disease of poor coordination [that arises] once the members lose communion among themselves.”

Pope Francis lists other possible diseases: 6. “Spiritual Alzheimer’s disease [which] consists of losing the memory of our personal ‘salvation history,’ our past history with the Lord, and our ‘first love.’ . . . We see it in those who have lost the memory of their encounter with the Lord.” 7. “The disease of rivalry and vainglory . . . [which includes] our titles of honor.” 8. “The disease of existential schizophrenia . . . the disease of those who live a double life.” 9. “The disease of gossiping, grumbling, and backbiting. . . . Brothers, let us be on our guard against the terrorism of gossip!” 10. “The disease of idolizing superiors . . . in the hope of gaining their favor.” Such Church leaders “are victims of careerism and opportunism. . . . They serve thinking only of what they can get and not of what they should give.”

*“What is essential is that the preacher be certain that God loves him, that Jesus Christ has saved him, and that his love always has the last word.”*

The five final diseases listed by Pope Francis: 11. “The disease of indifference to others. This is where each individual thinks only of himself and loses sincerity and warmth of human relationships.” 12. “The disease of a lugubrious face, those glum and dour persons who think that to be serious we have to put on a face of melancholy and severity and treat others . . . with rigor, brusqueness, and arrogance.” 13. “The disease of hoarding [when one] tries to fill an existential void in his heart by accumulating material goods, not out of need but only in order to feel secure.” 14. “The disease of closed circles, where belonging to a clique becomes more powerful than belonging to the body and, in some circumstances, to Christ himself.” 15. “The disease of worldly profit, of forms of self-exhibition [which begins when] an apostle turns his service into power and his power into a commodity in order to gain worldly profit or even greater power.”

“Brothers, these diseases and these temptations are naturally a danger. . . . We need to be clear that it is only the Holy Spirit who can heal all our infirmities. . . . Let us ask the Virgin Mary . . . to make us love the Church as Christ, her son and our Lord, loves her, to have the courage



to acknowledge that we are sinners in need of his mercy. . . . And please, do not forget to pray for me!" (HH).

As Francis gave a catalogue of 15 "curial diseases" (which can also infect priests) in his 2014 Christmas message, in his 2015 Christmas message he spoke about "curial antibiotics." He used an acrostic analysis of the twelve letters of the word *MISERICORDIA* to communicate the core of his positive message, imitating what Matteo Ricci did in his evangelizing initiatives in China. Francis concluded his reflection with the prayer attributed to Blessed Oscar Arnulfo Romero, noting that priests are to be "servants, not Messiahs" (PP).

## **8. Capitalize on the "Popular Piety" of the Faithful**

In his comprehensive apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis devotes several sections to "the evangelizing power of popular piety" (EG, 122-126). Some brief selections capture his thought.

"Popular piety enables us to see how the faith, once received, becomes embodied in a culture and is constantly passed on. Once looked down upon, popular piety came to be appreciated once more in the decades following the council. In the exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI gave a decisive impulse in this area. There, he stated that popular piety 'manifests a thirst for God which only the poor and the simple can know,' and that 'it makes people capable of generosity and sacrifice even to the point of heroism, when it is a question of bearing witness to belief.' Closer to our own time, Benedict XVI, speaking about Latin America, pointed out that popular piety is 'a precious treasure of the Catholic Church,' in which 'we see the soul of the Latin American peoples'" (EG, 123).

"The *Aparecida Document*, to which Francis contributed much, describes the riches which the Holy Spirit pours forth in popular piety by his gratuitous initiative. On that beloved continent where many Christians express their faith through popular piety, the bishops also refer to it as 'popular spirituality' or the 'people's mysticism.' It is truly 'a spirituality incarnated in the culture of the lowly.' . . . It is 'a legitimate way of living the faith, a way of feeling part of the Church, and a manner of being missionaries'; it brings with itself the grace of being a missionary, of coming out of oneself and setting out on pilgrimage" (EG, 124).



"Underlying popular piety, as a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing power which we must not underestimate; to do so would be to fail to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. Instead, we are called to promote and strengthen it, in order to deepen the never-ending process of inculturation. Expressions of popular piety have much to teach us; for those who are capable of reading them, they are a *locus theologicus* which demands our attention, especially at a time when we are looking to the new evangelization" (EG, 126).

Before he was elected pope, the then-Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio spoke in a 2012 lecture about the "theology of the people," which he holds in high esteem. He explained the inner sense of this "theology of the people," emphasizing that popular piety is the antithesis of widespread secularization. This theology is founded on common peoples' culture and devotion, including spirituality and a sense of justice; it manifests "the faith of our humble people."

For Cardinal Bergoglio, Latin America is largely characterized by poverty and Christianity; the latter is expressed by various and colorful forms of popular piety such as processions, vigils, and public prayer. He said: "When we approach our people with the gaze of the Good Shepherd, when we do not come to judge but to love, we can find out that this cultural way to express the Christian faith is still present among us, especially in our poor." He affirmed that "popular spirituality is the original way through which the Holy Spirit has led and continues to lead millions of our brothers."

Cardinal Bergoglio himself promoted various forms of popular piety in Buenos Aires. For example, he popularized the devotion to "Our Lady, Undoer of Knots." He propagated the suggestive image of *La Virgen Desatanudos*, a title originating in Augsburg, Germany [*Maria Knotenlöserin*]. He has also popularized the image of the "Sleeping Saint Joseph." Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila has affirmed that Pope Francis is very comfortable with popular religiosity because it is a means "to strengthen the faith"; in popular piety, "the Holy Spirit and the culture of the poor meet." Undoubtedly, popular piety is a rich foundation on which priests can build their pastoral ministry.

## **9. Be Genuinely Sensitive to Those on the "Fringes" and "Margins"**

From the very beginning of his ministry as the Bishop of Rome, Pope

Francis has asserted that a priest's authority is always linked to his service, especially to the care and protection of the poorest, the weakest, the least important, the most needy, those readily forgotten, the marginalized, and those on the fringes of society. In Argentina, Francis was known as the "slum bishop" for his regular contact with the poor; he believes that such service is the most concrete way of serving Jesus. As pope, he has gone to the jail for juveniles in Rome; he has traveled to the southern Italian island of Lampedusa to be in solidarity with the numerous migrants, many of whom have died in their effort to get to Europe.

*Popular piety, a fruit of the inculturated Gospel, is an active evangelizing tool which we must not underestimate.*

"As priests, we identify with people who are excluded, people the Lord saves. We remind ourselves that there are countless masses of people who are poor, uneducated, prisoners, who find themselves in such situations because others oppress them. But we, too, remember that each of us knows the extent to which we, too, are often blind. . . . Jesus comes to redeem us, to send us out, to transform us from being poor and blind, imprisoned and oppressed to become ministers of mercy and consolation" (QQ).

"As priests, we are witnesses to and ministers of the ever-increasing abundance of the Father's mercy; we have the rewarding and consoling task of incarnating mercy, as Jesus did, who 'went about doing good and healing' (Acts 10:38) in a thousand ways, so that it could touch everyone. We can help to inculturate mercy, so that each person can embrace it and experience it personally" (QQ).

Francis asserts that priests need a "priestly gaze" which enables them to "see people with the eyes of mercy. It has to be learned from seminary on, and it must enrich all our pastoral plans and projects. . . . We have to let ourselves be moved by people's situation, which at times is a mixture of their own doing, human weakness, sin, and insuperable conditionings. We have to be like Jesus, who was deeply moved at the sight of people and their problems. . . . He healed people, forgave their sins, eased their suffering, gave them rest, and made them feel the consoling breath of the Spirit" (VV).

Addressing bishops, priests, and religious in the Manila cathedral



in 2015, Francis emphasized the challenge to serve the poor and needy, “those living in the midst of a society burdened by poverty and corruption, tempted to give up.” The clergy face the “challenge of proclaiming the radicalism of the Gospel in a society which has grown comfortable with social exclusion, polarization, and scandalous inequality”; they must remember that “the poor are at the center of the Gospel, are at the heart of the Gospel; if we take away the poor from the Gospel, we cannot understand the whole message of Jesus Christ” (II). In short, for Pope Francis “all of us are asked to obey his [Jesus’] call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the ‘peripheries’ in need of the light of the Gospel” (EG, 20).

### **10. In Everything, Be a Genuine “Missionary Disciple”**

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis proposes a profound missionary renewal of the entire Church; certainly, the clergy are central to this renewal. Francis asserts that we need an “evangelizing Church that comes out of herself,” not a Church that is “self-referential” and “lives within herself, of herself, for herself.” “I dream of a ‘missionary option,’ that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation. . . . All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion” (EG, 27).

*Francis asserts that priests need a “priestly gaze” which enables them to “see people with the eyes of mercy.”*

“Missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity*. . . . We need to move ‘from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry’” (EG, 15). “I want to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has programmatic significance and important consequences. . . . Throughout the world, let us be ‘permanently in a state of mission’” (EG, 25).

A pivotal insight of Pope Francis is that “we are all missionary disciples” (EG, 119); through baptism, “all the members of the people of God have become missionary disciples” (EG, 120). All Christians are “agents of evangelization.” “The new evangelization calls for personal

involvement on the part of each of the baptized. . . . Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but, rather, that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (EG, 120). “May the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient, or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ” (EG, 10; cf. EN, 75).

*We must move “from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry.”*

Francis reminds us, “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (EG, 8; cf. Benedict XV). For Pope Francis, every Christian “ought to grow in awareness that he [or she] is continually in need of being evangelized” (EG, 164). In Chapter Two of *Evangelii Gaudium* (50-109), Francis focuses on the challenges facing the proclamation of the Gospel today. He asserts: “Challenges exist to be overcome! Let us be realists, but without losing our joy, our boldness, and our hope-filled commitment. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor” (EG, 109). Or again, “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization” (EG, 83).

## **Conclusion**

This modest presentation has sought to highlight ten pivotal characteristics emerging from Pope Francis’ profound vision of the priesthood. For the sake of clarity, the copious material of Francis has been thematically arranged under ten foundational insights that form an integrated whole. Another writer may have chosen a different style of presentation. However, what remains crucial is for readers to penetrate the insightful wisdom of Pope Francis; truly, this thematic arrangement is quite secondary to the original papal material.

The thought of Pope Francis on the priesthood emerges from his deep convictions. Early in his pontificate, Francis wrote: “Mission is at once a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people. When we stand before Jesus crucified. . . , we realize once more that he wants





to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people. He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging, we cannot understand our deepest identity” (EG, 268). Again in his message for World Mission Sunday 2015, Francis asserted: “Mission is a passion for Jesus and at the same time a passion for his people.” In his address to the 2016 Assembly of the Pontifical Missionary Societies, Francis spoke of “the passion for God and for the mission of the Church”; he left his audience (and us) with a clear challenge: “We must grow in evangelizing passion!” (XX).

### Pivotal Bibliographical Sources

The material by Pope Francis on the priesthood is extremely rich and plentiful. It is available to readers in a variety of internet and printed sources; often the very same document is found in various digital and printed forms. To facilitate the documentation of the quotes of Pope Francis in this presentation, a simple reference system is employed. Each of the cited documents containing specific “priesthood material” from Pope Francis is identified with double letters of the alphabet; an interested researcher could easily locate the specific document, no matter in what format or language it appears. All one needs to do is to check this bibliography to find the date and description of a specific document of the pope.

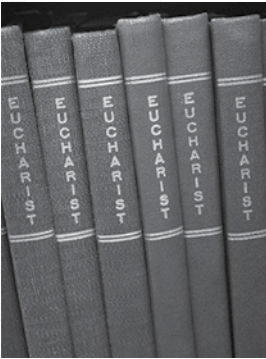
In the text of this presentation, only the double letters appear at the end of a given quote. Hopefully, this simple approach avoids an overly complicated and cumbersome manner of documentation, while providing the source of the specific quote from Pope Francis. The material appearing below is presented in chronological order, beginning in 2013 and extending to 2016.



- AA** March 28, 2013: Chrism Mass Homily in Saint Peter’s Basilica
- BB** April 21, 2013: Ordination Homily of ten priests in Saint Peter’s Basilica
- CC** November 24, 2013: Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*
- DD** 2013: Book by Jorge Bergoglio and Abraham Scoria: *On Heaven and Earth*
- EE** April 17, 2014: Chrism Mass Homily in Saint Peter’s Basilica
- FF** May 11, 2014: Ordination Homily of thirteen priests in Saint Peter’s Basilica
- GG** June 6, 2014: Morning Mass Homily in Casa Santa Marta
- HH** December 22, 2014: Address to the Roman Curia

*Pope Francis Explores the Priesthood: Ten Foundational Insights*

- II** January 16, 2015: Homily to the Clergy in the Manila Cathedral
- JJ** February 14, 2015: Address at Public Consistory for the Creation of New Cardinals
- KK** April 2, 2015: Chrism Mass Homily in Saint Peter's Basilica
- LL** April 26, 2015: Ordination Homily of nineteen new priests in Saint Peter's Basilica
- MM** May 2, 2015: Homily at North American College in Rome to celebrate "Pope's Day"
- NN** August 6, 2015: Homily on the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
- OO** November 20, 2015: Speech to Conference on "Priesthood" Documents of Vatican II
- PP** December 21, 2015: Address to the Roman Curia
- QQ** March 24, 2016: Chrism Mass Homily in Saint Peter's Basilica
- RR** April 17, 2016: Homily to Priests on World Day of Prayer for Vocations
- SS** May 29, 2016: Homily at Jubilee for Deacons
- TT** June 2, 2016: First Meditation at Jubilee for Priests
- UU** June 2, 2016: Second Meditation at Jubilee for Priests
- VV** June 2, 2016: Third Meditation at Jubilee for Priests
- WW** June 3, 2016: Homily at Mass for Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- XX** June 4, 2016: Address to Assembly of the Pontifical Missionary Societies



## EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# The Eucharistic Vision of Matthew's Gospel

by Anthony J. Marshall, SSS

*Matthew's Gospel casts Jesus' death and its memorial, the Eucharist, with a particular meaning.*

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### Introduction

ONE OF THE FASCINATING THINGS ABOUT READING EACH OF THE GOSPELS IS THE different portrait each evangelist paints of Jesus Christ. Two authors include a unique genealogy and fascinating infancy narrative (Matthew and Luke), another is short and succinct (Mark), and still another evangelist writes from what most scholars would describe as a high Christology (John). Why the different portraits of Jesus Christ?

Each of the evangelists wrote with a specific community in mind, just as a homilist preaches to a specific liturgical assembly. This means that, as the Second Vatican Council noted, "the sacred authors selected certain of the many traditions that had been handed on either orally or already in written form; others they summarized or explicated with an eye to the situation of the churches," to whom they wrote.<sup>1</sup> Each evangelist took the time to consider his audience (i.e., the specific church for whom the text was composed, such as Rome, Antioch in Syria, etc.) and used that particular situation as the lens through which the community could come to see the risen Christ.

### Matthew's Context and Eucharistic Theology

This liturgical year, Year A, the Church turns to the Gospel according to Matthew. Although his text appears first in the New Testament, most scholars speculate that the Gospel was finally composed around AD 85, nearly two decades after the Gospel according to Mark, which was written shortly before AD 70 and the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman Empire. Most likely, the community to whom Matthew's text was composed was a divided Jewish-Christian community

situated in Antioch, the capital of Syria.<sup>2</sup>

Because of their belief in Jesus Christ, the members of the Matthean community were no longer considered faithful Jews and were probably dismissed from the synagogue. This was a crisis point for this early community of disciples in need of reconciliation and healing. They also needed to discover their unique identity as Christians, followers of Jesus Christ. Note that in the Acts of the Apostles, Luke tells his readers that “it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians” (11:26). This context along, with the text of the Gospel itself, helps scholars to discern the theological lens through which the evangelist sought to view Christ, his life and ministry.

The late Blessed Sacrament Father and scripture scholar Eugene LaVerdiere, in his book *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, posits that Matthew’s Gospel uniquely sought to connect the Eucharist to the forgiveness of sins: “For Matthew, ‘the forgiveness of sins’ was a primary purpose of the Eucharist.”<sup>3</sup> This is seen most evidently when one compares the Last Supper scene in Matthew (26:26-30) with that of Mark (14:22-26) or Luke (22:14-20).

*Matthew’s community was a community of disciples profoundly in need of reconciliation and healing.*

At the Last Supper, Matthew says that Jesus “took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins’” (26:27-28). Both Mark and Luke, whose own institution narratives resemble that of Paul (see 1 Cor 11:23-26), do not connect the Eucharist — specifically the cup and the outpouring of Christ’s blood — with the forgiveness of sins. Matthew is unique in this regard. Jesus offered his life as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. “For Matthew, the Eucharist, like the passion, was a sacrificial event, symbolized above all by the cup, but quite different from other sacrifices. Jesus’ sacrifice was a personal act of mercy on behalf of many.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Eucharist and the Forgiveness of Sins**

In seeking to bring reconciliation to a divided Jewish-Christian community in Antioch, and thereby solidify their identity as uniquely Christian, Matthew emphasized Jesus’ sacrificial offering on behalf of the many “for the forgiveness of sins” in his eucharistic theology. In doctrinal reflection upon the Eucharist, the Church connects the



Eucharist to the forgiveness of sins: “For this reason, the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins.”<sup>5</sup> This leads to mission! As believers encounter divine mercy in the risen Christ, especially as they gather in worship, they are invited to share mercy with one another.

Matthew’s community, like Christians today, needed this important lesson. Pope Francis has often pointed to the Eucharist as medicinal in nature: “The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. These convictions have pastoral consequences that we are called to consider with prudence and boldness. Frequently, we act as arbiters of grace rather than its facilitators. But the Church is not a tollhouse; it is the house of the Father, where there is a place for everyone, with all their problems.”<sup>6</sup>

In this new liturgical year wherein Matthew’s Gospel is proclaimed with its emphasis on the Eucharist and its connection with the forgiveness of sins, believers would do well to prudently ponder the pastoral implications, as Pope Francis has invited, such a Matthean eucharistic theology has today. In no way does such reflection diminish the sacrament of penance and reconciliation! In point of fact, the profound eucharistic theology that Matthew’s Gospel imparts challenges Christians to once again focus on sin and evil — both personal and corporate — and consequently seek reconciliation in Christ with God and one’s neighbor. The confessional is a necessary step in this process of ongoing *metanoia* or conversion. So, too, is the reverent and worthy celebration of the Eucharist, offered on “behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28) and in memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who alone is the source of eternal salvation.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum*, (18 November 1965), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity*, (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 22.

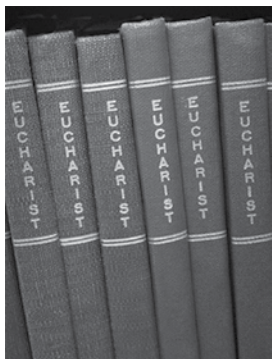
<sup>3</sup> Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996), 66.

<sup>4</sup> LaVerdiere, 76.

<sup>5</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1393; cf., *ibid.*, 1394.

<sup>6</sup> Francis, apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, (24 November 2013), 47.





## EUCCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# Josef A. Jungmann on the Eucharist

by Dennis J. Billy, CSsR

*Josef Jungmann was one of the chief architects of the liturgical renewal of Vatican II. His writing brings together in a new synthesis diverse emphases and approaches to the sacrament.*

JOSEF A. JUNGMAUN, SJ, (1889-1975) WAS ONE OF THE LEADING CATECHISTS and liturgists of the twentieth century. He was born in the South Tyrol region of Austria, studied at Brixen, Innsbruck, Munich, and Vienna, was ordained in 1913 and, after some years of pastoral experience, entered the Society of Jesus in 1917. He taught pastoral theology at the University of Innsbruck from 1925 until the Nazis closed it in 1939. He resumed his teaching duties when the university reopened in 1945 and remained there for the remainder of his academic career. In 1956, he was named professor emeritus of pastoral theology.

Jungmann was a *peritus* at the Second Vatican Council and a member of the committee responsible for composing *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 1963). In 1972, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Salzburg. A prolific author, he is associated with the kerygmatic movement of catechetics and probably most remembered for his magisterial two-volume work *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development* (1948). The Eucharist is a recurrent theme in his writings.<sup>1</sup>

Redemptorist Father Dennis J. Billy has authored or edited more than 30 books and 300 articles in a number of scholarly and popular journals and taught in Rome and at the archdiocesan seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is a regular contributor to *Emmanuel*.

### Jungmann's Spiritual Outlook

In his early years of parish ministry, Jungmann was struck by the stark contrast between the fear that permeated the minds of so many of his parishioners and the message of joy contained in the Gospel. His reflection on this discrepancy led to his work *The Good News and Our Proclamation of the Faith* (1915), which emphasized the *kerygma* in catechetical instruction and sought to replace such fear with the joy of life in Christ.



This focus on the *kerygma* led to a concentration on the liturgy, since it was through the Church's official worship that the values of the kingdom could best be communicated to the faithful. The liturgy, in his mind, was a sacrifice of thanksgiving and a celebration of joy in the redemption of humanity accomplished through Christ's paschal mystery. The kerygma lies at the very heart of the Church's worship, and the Good News is a message of hope rooted in faith in Christ and the revelation of God's merciful love manifested through his sacrificial offering.<sup>2</sup>

In his Foreword to *The Rite of the Roman Mass*, Jungmann explains how he decided to research the origins and developments of the Latin Rite shortly after the University of Innsbruck and the Jesuit college were closed by the Nazis after their invasion of Austria in 1939.<sup>3</sup> Freed from his teaching responsibilities, he thought a historical study of the Mass would be a worthy project to pursue: "I made up my mind to dedicate the time thus left free to me to an exposition of the Mass-liturgy. For that seemed to me to be the theme most useful to handle in a time of stress like this."<sup>4</sup>

He was very much aware of the work's limitations and asked his readers to be mild in their judgment of it: "Do not think I am deluding myself with the belief that, for all this diligence, the work does not suffer certain weaknesses. It is a child of war; children of war have a claim to a milder judgment. It was difficult, and in some instances — even after the war impossible — to procure the pertinent new literature from the foreign press. And manuscripts and *incunabula* for the whole period under consideration were for all practical purposes unavailable."<sup>5</sup>

Limited though it may be, Jungmann offers his scholarship in the service of the Church and claims that his work is more than a historical study: "This book is not meant to serve only for knowledge — but it is intended for life, for a fuller grasp of that mystery of which Pope Pius XII says in his encyclical *Mediator Dei*: 'The Mass is the chief act of divine worship; it should also be the source and center of Christian piety.'"<sup>6</sup>

Jungmann's dedication to scholarship was an essential part of his spiritual outlook. He considered his work potentially life-giving, since a sound knowledge of the past was necessary for the decisions being made in the present. He liked to quote Cardinal Newman: ". . . the history of the past ends in the present; and the present is our scene of trial; and to behave ourselves towards its various phenomena duly and religiously, we must understand them; and to understand them,

we must have recourse to those past events which lead to them. Thus, the present is a text and the past its interpretation.”<sup>7</sup>

The focus of his scholarship, the Mass, was equally important to his spiritual outlook: “In Holy Mass, the world beyond reaches down into our earthly world. In the power of this invasion, in the fire of this meeting of man with God, the iridescent form of earthly artistry is lost and entangled in the balanced rhythm of resonant human words.”<sup>8</sup> The Eucharist, for Jungmann, lay at the very heart of Catholic spirituality. Knowledge of its origins, he believed, would provide the Church with a helpful historical context for its present celebration and ongoing renewal.

### Jungmann’s Teaching on the Eucharist

Jungmann treats the Eucharist in a number of places in his literary corpus, and it would be impossible to treat them in detail in an essay of this kind. In *Announcing the Word of God* (1967), he offers a good summary of his essential insights. In it, he makes the point that prior to the Second Vatican Council, Catholic piety was generally delineated along three separate spheres: “. . . it was quite common to find presentations of the doctrine of the Eucharist which spoke first of all about the sacrament, then about Communion, and finally about the sacrifice of the Mass.”<sup>9</sup> In his treatment of the Eucharist, he shifts the focus to another overlooked aspect of the liturgy: “. . . the celebration of the Eucharist is a sacrifice, it is true — the sacrifice of the New Covenant — but first of all it is a memorial. It is a memorial celebration of the redeeming passion in the same way as Sunday is the memorial day of the perfected work of redemption. From the start, Eucharist and Sunday have belonged together.”<sup>10</sup>

He claims that emphasizing the sacrificial dimension of the Mass to the exclusion of it being a *memoria passionis* was the result of the doctrinal controversies of the sixteenth century. He calls for a recovery of the true meaning of Sunday as “the eighth day, the day upon which the Creator continued the work of the seven days and completed it in Christ.”<sup>11</sup> For this reason, it was considered to be “the Christian conclusion and climax of the week.”<sup>12</sup>

In his analysis, Jungmann also claims that the Mass is not only “the sacrifice of Christ, but at the same time the sacrifice of the church, offered in union with Christ; . . . it is primarily the sacrifice of the church.”<sup>13</sup> When seen from this perspective, it is our sacrifice: “. . . it



is our entering into the sacrifice of Christ; it is our affiliation with his oblation to the heavenly Father. The celebration of the Eucharist is a sacrifice, it is true — the sacrifice of the New Covenant, but first of all it is a memorial — so much so, that the symbols of his oblation, the offerings of his body and blood, are allowed to represent our offering also.”<sup>14</sup> At Mass, we share in Christ’s paschal mystery and unite our offering to his.

He continues: “The primary function of the celebration of the Eucharist is not, as it is with the other sacraments, to produce benefits for us, but to glorify God.”<sup>15</sup> The Eucharist, according to Jungmann, “. . . is primarily designed for those who have already been purified in Christ’s blood and enjoy his new life.”<sup>16</sup> “The Mass,” in his mind, “is designed as the church’s sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.”<sup>17</sup> Although Christ’s sacrifice of atonement is present at every eucharistic celebration, it is not the primary focus of the Mass: “The sacrifice of praise and the sacrifice of atonement are not on the same plane.”<sup>18</sup>

Jungmann sought to integrate the eucharistic sacrifice with the notions of Communion and eucharistic adoration: “If we are to advance in the spiritual life, we must see clearly that permanent union with Christ can and must be strengthened in many different ways, and that the *opus operatum* of Holy Communion must not in any event be allowed to stand in isolation, as though in itself providing an infallible, more or less magically effective means of spiritual progress. For this reason, one should maintain a certain detachment even towards daily Communion.”<sup>19</sup>

*Jungmann believed that it was through the Church’s official worship that the values of the kingdom could best be communicated to the faithful.*

Rather than seeing them as three separate acts, they should be understood as an integral part of the church’s “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.” The Eucharist “should once again be seen chiefly in its primary and true function, from which all else is derived. It is not primarily an object for our adoration, nor yet for the nourishment of the soul, but is, as its name indicates, a sacrifice of thanksgiving, of sacrifice within the assembled congregation. It is only this basic view that gathers all of the aspects into a unity.”<sup>20</sup>

Jungmann also highlights the Eucharist’s important relationship to

the other sacraments: "We are accustomed to list the Eucharist as the third of the sacraments. This corresponds to its role within the scheme of initiation sacraments at the beginning of the Christian life: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist."<sup>21</sup> According to this view, the other four sacraments, coming after the Eucharist, are seen as "a kind of supplement, a second line of pious practices in which the generic concept of a sacrament is likewise realized."<sup>22</sup>

Jungmann challenges this position by orienting all of the sacraments toward the Eucharist: "In reality, like baptism and confirmation, although in a different way, they form the foundation for the possibility of the Eucharist: they purify the people of God from sin; they extend the priestly powers; they bless the exit from Christian life; and sanctify the door through which new generations press into the church to become the host who glorify God in the Eucharist."<sup>23</sup> When seen in this light, the Eucharist is the sacrament toward which all the others tend and find their fulfillment.

## **Observations**

Although the above remarks barely scratch the surface of Jungmann's teaching on the Eucharist, they highlight the main contours of his thought and demonstrate how he tried to shape Catholic thinking on the sacrament in a number of areas. The following observations, while in no way exhaustive, seek to draw out some of the implications of Jungmann's thought for today's believers.

1. To begin with, Jungmann acknowledges Christ's presence in the sacrament, the reception of Holy Communion, and the sacrifice of the Mass as three important dimensions of the mystery of the Eucharist. He believes that they should not be separated in the devotions and common piety of the Catholic faithful, but closely integrated. Christ is present in the consecrated species, the nourishment he gives us through them, and the atonement for our sins are all integral parts of the eucharistic celebration. Rather than separating them, however, in Catholic spirituality, efforts should be made to show their intimate relation to one another. Otherwise, the Eucharist is in danger of becoming both theologically and spiritually fragmented in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

2. Jungmann maintains, moreover, that another, often neglected, dimension underlies these three dimensions in the Church's





explanation of the Eucharist. The sacrament is, first and foremost, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving on a part of the church. He makes this claim based on his study of the development of the Mass and by identifying its foundational elements supplied by Christ. The Eucharist's primary purpose, in other words, is not to give nourishment or to be an object of adoration, but to be a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God for the work of redemption accomplished in Christ. This sacrifice is an offering of the church made to God in union with Christ and his paschal mystery.

3. Connected with the notion of the eucharistic celebration as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving is the added dimension of it being a memorial. Jesus told his disciples to break bread and pass the cup in memory of him. This memorial action celebrates Christ's redeeming passion and death and is intimately connected to it. Jesus celebrated his Last Supper on the evening before his crucifixion. The action of Holy Thursday anticipated the action of Good Friday and looked beyond it to the empty tomb of Easter Sunday morning. In this way, the entire paschal mystery is represented in the eucharistic action, which at one and the same time is both in time and out of time.

4. Jungmann points out the intimate connection between the Eucharist and Sunday. As the day of the Lord's resurrection, Sunday is the "eighth day" when God completes his work of creation through the redeeming action of Christ. The Sunday Eucharist, from this perspective, is the culmination of the week and points to the fullness of creation made possible by Christ's salvific action. It also points beyond the pale of death to life in the risen and glorious Christ. Jungmann calls for a rediscovery of the true meaning of Sunday as a day of thanksgiving and as a time when the church, the body of Christ, offers itself with Christ in a sacrifice of praise to glorify God and the New Creation wrought by Christ.

5. At Eucharist, Jungmann claims, the church's sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and Christ's sacrifice of atonement are not on the same plane. Although he recognizes that Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the consequent forgiveness of sins are present at every Mass, he says that the celebration of the Eucharist presupposes this redemptive action and exists primarily as a means by which the entire body of the faithful offers itself with the risen Lord in a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father. Here, Jungmann emphasizes the multidimensional nature of the Eucharist and wishes to bring to the fore one aspect that, until the Second Vatican Council, had been largely overlooked.

6. For Jungmann, the sacrifice of the church is distinct but not separate from Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Christ's mystical body can do nothing apart from its head. The church's sacrifice is possible only because of the sacrifice of Calvary. The Last Supper anticipated this sacrifice of atonement and looked beyond it to the empty tomb of Easter Sunday morning. The celebration of the Eucharist makes it possible for the entire body of believers to participate in Christ's paschal mystery. The sacramental realism of the Eucharist makes it possible for the community of the faithful to share in Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. In doing so, the church glorifies God by its offering of praise and thanksgiving.

7. Finally, Jungmann gives the Eucharist a central place in its relationship to the other sacraments. While he recognizes that it is one of the sacraments of initiation and often listed as the third of the sacraments, he says that all of the other sacraments in their own way "form the foundation for the possibility of the Eucharist." The Eucharist stands apart from the other sacraments, because it represents the summit of Christian worship and is the primary means by which the church renders praise and thanksgiving to the Father. He draws a distinction between the order in which the sacraments are received and the role they play in the ongoing life of the church. In this respect, the Eucharist stands apart from the other sacraments and can be considered as the "sacrament of sacraments."

## Conclusion

Josef A. Jungmann was one of the principal architects of the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. His writings on catechesis and the liturgy in the decades leading up to the Second Vatican Council garnered him much respect in the Catholic theological world and led to his being selected as a council *peritus* and a member of the redaction committee of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Vatican II's document on the liturgy. His knowledge of the origins and historical development of the Roman Catholic Mass was unparalleled in his day, and his writings remain to this day an important resource for an understanding of the historical context of Catholic worship.

The Eucharist, for Jungmann, is the church's sacrificial offering of praise and thanksgiving to God for the work of Christ's redemption. Although this sacrament embodies many facets — the sacrifice of Christ's atonement, the nourishment received from Holy Communion,



the adoration of Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament — its primary function is the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered to God for the work of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. From the beginning, this memorial celebration was closely associated with Sunday. If, as Jungmann suggests, Sunday is the "eighth day," the day God completed in Christ the work of creation, then the Eucharist, by all counts, is the sacrament par excellence of the New Creation.

Jungmann reminds us of the roots of Catholic worship and the role the Eucharist plays in our Catholic identity. The Eucharist, for him, is the primary means by which the church participates in Christ's paschal mystery and offered herself to God in a sacrificial prayer of thanksgiving. At a critical time in the Church's history, he reminds believers of the Mass' corporate nature and the manner in which it enables the entire body of the faithful to glorify God by its grateful celebration of the sacramental memorial of Christ's redemptive activity.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The historical details come from Michael P. Horan, "Josef A. Jungmann (1889-1975)," <http://liturgicalleaders.blogspot.com/2008/09/josef-jungmann.html>. See also [https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef\\_Andreas\\_Jungmann&prev=search](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=it&u=https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Andreas_Jungmann&prev=search).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Josef A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development*, vol. 1, trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1950).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., vii.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Josef A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great*, trans. Francis A. Brunner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 2. See also John Henry Newman, "Reformation of the XIth Century," in *Essays Critical and Historical*, 10th ed. (London, 1890), 250.

<sup>8</sup> Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Josef A. Jungmann, *Announcing the Word of God*, trans. Ronald Walls (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 110.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 125.



## EUCHARISTIC TEACHINGS

# Rethinking Eucharist: A Relational Approach to First Communion Preparation

by Mark C. McCann

*How do we present the Eucharist to children in such a way that they can take hold of the mystery and experience more fully the joy and the grace that it brings?*

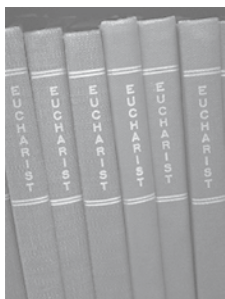
IN AN AGE OF LOW MASS ATTENDANCE, RELIGIOUS CYNICISM, AND MORAL relativism, the Catholic Church has had its share of battles in helping its membership come to terms with what the Eucharist is all about. In one sense, Communion is a mystery, one that cannot be fully understood but only believed. Yet, in another sense, there are deeper ways of relating to the Eucharist through ritual and response. It is in receiving the Eucharist that we experience the presence of Christ in a unique and personal way.

The beauty of the Eucharist is that it doesn't matter if we are 7 or 70 — if we are coming to the table for the first time or the last. The important matter is how we relate to the Savior who took on flesh and died for our sins, the one who gives himself to us in the Eucharist each time we celebrate the Mass. Because of this unique relationship with Jesus and our call to pass on our faith to future generations, it is imperative that we reexamine the ways in which we present the sacrament to children who will be making their First Communion so that, rather than imparting an "understanding" of the Eucharist, we may share with them more relationally what the true nature of the sacrament is all about.

### The Relational Nature of the Eucharist

How do we begin to carry out this incredible privilege and awesome responsibility? How do we present the Eucharist to children in such a way that they can take hold of the mystery and experience more fully the joy and the grace that it brings? The starting point is to establish the relational foundation for the sacrament and then integrate that foundation into the process used for preparing the children for their

Mark C. McCann is a writer and ministry consultant, as well as a former director of religious education and associate director of youth ministry for the Diocese of Norwich, Connecticut. A more complete explanation of the process described in this article and particular adaptations for each liturgical year are available through [www.wordsnvisions.com](http://www.wordsnvisions.com).



## First Holy Communion.

There are many relationships that are part of the Eucharist. There is the children's relationship to Jesus, as they grow in knowledge of the Savior who died to set them free. There is the relationship to family — to parents, siblings, grandparents, and others who are involved as caregivers in the children's lives. There is the relationship to the church family in the common bond we share as believers in Christ who are called to love one another. And, finally, there is the relationship to the larger community in the responsibility we have to reach out with the Gospel to the broken and the lost. These relationships are tied together in and through the eucharistic celebration. As the children receive, they are graced. As they are graced, they are called. As they are called, they are sent forth.

There has been in the last 25 years a tendency to treat First Holy Communion as a one-time, isolated event, a "hoop" through which children must pass on the road to being Catholic. Reversing this trend means instituting a process that acknowledges the interconnectedness of these eucharistic relationships, nurturing them in a spirit of unity and mutual self-giving. All the parties involved in this process must make a connection to the relational nature of the sacrament by committing to the process on behalf of the children, the community, and the Gospel. This commitment is not with an event or an institution, but with the Savior himself and the people he has called for his own.

## **The Incarnational God**

The sacraments are incarnational signs of God's presence among us, and no sacrament is more central to our lives than the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, we are nourished by the body, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. While understanding how the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ is beyond us, grasping the truth that our Savior loved us so much that he gave his life for us is not.

The process that is outlined below is grounded on that love principle and the many relationships it touches through the Eucharist. All of it is tied to helping the children experience what it means to be loved by the one who gives himself to us in the sacrament. As that love is communicated by those who help prepare the children, and as it is expressed to the community of faith over the course of the preparation period, the entire church joins in the celebration. The resulting joy is



also expressed to the larger community through service offered on behalf of the church community.

### **Outlining the Process: Beginning with Reconciliation**

The most appropriate time to go through this process is during the Easter Season, when the church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and all it means for the world. But, in truth, the process begins even earlier by a similar preparation for First Reconciliation, which takes place during the season of Lent, prior to the time of preparation for First Communion. This process is crucial in order to help the children see the importance of coming to the Communion table with clean hearts.

Both preparations are conducted in a similar way, with a three-phase process: the *Commitment Phase*, the *Journaling Phase*, and the *Worship Phase*. During Phase One, families are asked to make a formal commitment to the process, covenanting with the church to enter into the preparation period and complete all that is required. Here, materials are given out, the process is explained and parents and caregivers are instructed in how to carry it out.

*The sacraments are incarnational signs of God's presence among us, and no sacrament is more central to our lives than the Eucharist.*

Phase Two involves the children and their parents spending time reading God's word and completing simple activities, journaling about concepts, and then presenting a visible sign of their work (an activity sheet, craft or symbol) to the church during the offertory at Mass the following weekend.

Phase Three allows the children and their families to come to closure about the process and then participate in the worship experience with the larger church community.

The reconciliation process focuses on four themes fleshed out during the course of Lent, begun on Ash Wednesday with a commitment ceremony and undertaken during the next four Sundays of Lent. The themes, in order, are "Temptation," "Sorrow for Sin," "Forgiveness," and "Reconciliation." Each focuses on corresponding scripture readings and activities meant to teach the theme in an experiential way.



For “Temptation,” the children look at Christ’s temptation in the wilderness, journaling about their own struggles with sin. For “Sorrow for Sin,” the children focus on living God’s law of love and making a more formal examination of conscience, which they will use during the reconciliation service. For “Forgiveness,” the children meditate on the stories of Jesus’ forgiveness and unconditional love. For “Reconciliation,” the children focus on the theme of Jesus, the Light of the world. During this last week, parents and family members also complete affirmation letters that the children will read prior to going to individual confession during the service.

Each week, the children and their families present their visible sign at Mass for the whole congregation to see, so everyone may respond with prayer for the children. Finally, at the reconciliation service, families will be encouraged to participate in the sacrament of reconciliation as well.

### **Outlining the Process: Eucharist**

Similarly, the First Communion preparation follows the same three phases of Orientation/Commitment, Journaling/Activities, and Closure/Worship. During the Second to Fifth Sundays of Easter, the themes are “My Family and My Food,” “Planting God’s Word in Our Hearts,” “God is Our Shepherd,” and “Building the Kingdom as a Prayerful People.” Each week, the children examine the theme through scripture readings and symbolic activities. Instruction at home and at Mass touches upon a different part of the liturgy as well.

*The process is grounded in the love of God and the many relationships it touches through the Eucharist.*

Week One will have the children bringing a special family food to share with the community following Mass. The liturgical focus will be on the Opening and Closing Rites. During Week Two, the children and their families will focus on the Liturgy of the Word and create pieces of a banner to be displayed at Mass. Week Three will see the children completing a “shepherd’s pledge” to focus on the nature of offering our gifts on the altar to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. During this week, the focus will be on the Creed, the offertory, and Prayers of the Faithful. Finally, for Week Four, the children will complete a second banner. Both banners will be used at the First Communion Mass. The focus is

on the Eucharistic Prayer, the consecration, and the preparation for reception of the sacrament.

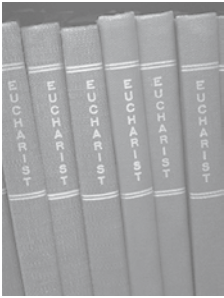
During the Third Phase, the children and their families will talk about the process in a group setting. The children will practice for the First Communion Mass: processing in, singing, dressing the altar, participating in the Mass, and receiving the Eucharist. At the final practice, the children and their families will join together in a “bread baking” ceremony, where each family is given a different ingredient used in making bread, adds it to a bowl, and prays about our unity in the Eucharist: “Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor 10:17). This bread can be used for the First Communion Mass if it follows an approved recipe.

### **Service and Celebration**

Along the way, the children will participate in a service project for the community. The form this takes can be decided based on local needs and the schedules of the families. There may need to be more than one service project, but the idea is to have participation as families and to share the results with the congregation through pictures, slides, or video. The leaders and the pastor will connect this service project to the overall process and to the idea that the Eucharist sends us forth into the world to serve.

### *Eucharist is incarnational, experiential, and communal.*

The celebration of First Communion can take place at a Sunday Mass, although the church may choose to have a special Mass to accommodate the families, guests, and parishioners. It is preferable to use adapted prayers and readings and to allow the children and their families to participate in as many aspects of the worship as possible. The church can decide how the children and their families can be involved with the Liturgy of the Word, the offertory, and as ushers and Communion ministers. The church may choose to have all the children dressed the same or allow for individual choice, and may have the children receive as a group or with their families. There is an argument to having families receive together, since the entire process involves the children and their families working together to complete it.



## Closing Thoughts

Eucharist is incarnational, experiential, and communal. Drawing families and the larger church family into a fuller participation in the process allows the entire church to enter into a deeper relationship with what the Eucharist is all about. Every aspect of preparation is tied to the Mass through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

This simple approach can be tailored to the cycle of readings in the Lectionary and made more meaningful through the use of adapted readings, music, and prayers. By having families take responsibility for preparation, they are given the opportunity to share in the joy and enthusiasm the children experience as they come to the table for the first time.

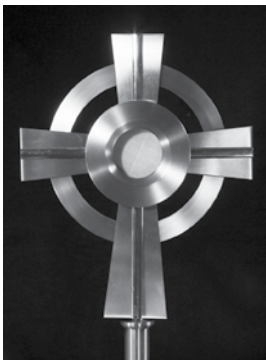
The most important thing to remember in the process of preparation is the church should guide the children to take hold of the love of the Savior so they may see how he calls them with open arms to receive him in the Eucharist. Through this central act of faith, the children will be sent forth into the world to live out their eucharistic faith with strength, determination, and joy.



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## In Christ's Peace Deceased Members

Since its inception, *Emmanuel* has published a list of deceased members of the Priests' Eucharistic League, remembering those who have served the church generously and faithfully and have passed into the promised eternal life. Priests in the Eucharistic League whose names begin with F, G, H, and I are asked to celebrate Mass for deceased priests during March and April.



## EUCCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# The Gift of Self in the Life of Saint Peter Julian Eymard, Part II

by Catherine Marie Caron, SSS

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. Remain in me as I remain in you; you will bear great fruit in me."*

### Gift of Self

ON MARCH 21, 1865, AFTER HOLY COMMUNION, SOMETHING POWERFUL AND life-changing happened. The priest and founder Peter Julian Eymard felt impelled to make a vow of his personality to God. He wanted to make Jesus the center of his existence, his thoughts, his feelings, his words, and his actions. Actually, he used a Thomistic image.

We can wonder about the exact nature of this promise, this vow that Father Eymard was making. Had he not already given himself over and over to God? What was different this time?

Early biographers of Father Eymard tried to dissect the meaning of the Gift of Self, and recent authors have as well. Some referred to it as the gift of his personality, or even the gift of impersonality (which, of course, is impossible). Others have said that he was purifying his motives, acting for God and for God's glory alone. Others have said that he would henceforth be more passive in his relationship with God. In the meditations which he recorded on the days following this vow, we see Eymard himself trying to clarify the meaning of the grace that he had received. He saw it as a call to enter into a life of deeper union with God. If I may, I would like to suggest my own reading of the event.

First, let us look at his words explaining the event. They throw a different light on the grace received. God does not leave a vacuum. Saint Peter Julian had reached the limit of his efforts to surrender to God, and now Jesus himself took the initiative. The initiative was no

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longer Father Eymard's. Notice the words of this text:

After Holy Communion, I made a vow of personality to our Lord, modeled on the image of Jesus in his human nature.

It is as if our Savior said: In sending me by the incarnation, the Father has cut off all root of self-seeking in me . . . in order to make me live for him, so by Communion you will live for me, for I will be alive in you. I will fill your soul with my desires and my life which will consume and destroy in you all roots of self-seeking, so much so that it will be myself who will live and desire everything in you, instead of you, and so you will be clothed with me, you will be the body of my body, your soul the faculties of my soul, your heart the receptacle, the movement of my heart. I will be the person of your personality, and your personality will be the life of mine in you. "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me" (GRR, March 21).

It was Jesus who inspired him with the thought: I will be in you, I will live in you. The gift given by Eymard became the gift received: the Lord giving himself. Father Eymard had reached the limit of his own efforts to be one with our Lord. But the spiritual life is not a question of effort, of will alone; it is a question of grace. God blessed his effort, and now God took over.

The commander-in-chief was Jesus, and Father Eymard became the willing soldier — to use one of his own images. The initiative was God's.

Father Eymard became a new man. A revolution had taken place, the kind of revolution to hope for!

Now what shall we do? Shall we put Saint Peter Julian Eymard on a pedestal, light a candle, and walk away? Wait! Wait! What about us?

I believe that the Gift of Self, as it was understood and lived by Father Eymard, is a Christian path of wisdom and wholeness practiced by all the saints, to which the Holy Spirit led Saint Peter Julian as a teaching not only for himself but for all of us. It is by our "selflessness" that the authenticity of our spiritual growth can be perceived.

But we are not Father Eymard, as he would be the first to tell us. Yet

all of us who have been baptized have been baptized into Christ that he may live in us. By baptism, we have been called in a personal way to this spiritual revolution, each in keeping with his or her own individual gifts and personality. Eymard shows us what can happen if we surrender totally and lovingly to God.

How can we describe it in contemporary terms? The meaning of words has evolved so much in the century-and-a-half since Father Eymard first coined the phrase “*absque sui proprio*,” literally “to be without belonging to one’s self.” Today, psychology has evolved, the words *person*, *personality*, and *self* are defined otherwise. Scripture, theology, and spirituality have also developed and melded. The writings of the apostle Paul and the Gospel of Saint John can help us to go further into this teaching.

*The Gift of Self, as understood and lived by Father Eymard, is a Christian path of wisdom and wholeness practiced by all the saints, to which the Holy Spirit led him and us.*

### **Saint Paul**

There are two passages in the writings of the apostle Paul which are most helpful on this subject. One is in the Letter to the Philippians (2:5-8):

Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself [*kenosis*], taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

The other is Galatians 2:20:

I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now, not my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in this body, I live in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for me.

Philippians contemplates the act of humility, obedience, and self-





emptying of Jesus in the mystery of the incarnation. The passage from Galatians invites us to do the same by letting this same Jesus live in us: “I live now, not I, but Christ lives in me” (2:20).

Let us reflect on the *kenosis* found in the Letter to the Philippians. We pray this text weekly in the Liturgy of the Hours at Sunday Evening Prayer 1 where we are invited to contemplate the great mystery of the incarnation and to see it as a way of identification with Christ.

### **Saint John**

The self-emptying described by Paul is a prelude to the life of union described in the Gospel of John: “I am the vine, you are the branches; whoever remains in me with me in him, bears fruit in plenty. Make your home in me as I do in you” (15:4-5).

When we dwell in him, he also dwells in us. These are not two movements, but one. Jesus is inviting us to let his life flow through us. He is inviting us to a true communion of life, which we would never dare to dream of ourselves. It is in the context of this union that Saint Peter Julian made his vow of personality, that is, the Gift of Self.

*Eymard shows us what can happen if we surrender totally and lovingly to God.*

### **The Fathers of the Church**

Father Eymard was an avid reader of the Church fathers. He taught, as they did, that Holy Communion is a true extension of the incarnation, in the sense that when we receive our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, divine life becomes active in us. Our physical body becomes the receptacle of the real flesh and blood of Christ, and the divine life is energized and strengthened within us. We can see this in parallel with the mystery of the incarnation when the Word became flesh in Mary’s womb. Saint Augustine of Hippo expressed it in other words: “Become what you receive.”

### **Contemporary Authors**

In our own time, authors such as the Trappist spiritual guides Thomas Merton and Thomas Keating, among others, speak of the deeper self

where God dwells, in contrast to the planning, organizing, and feeling self that ambitiously strives to succeed. They show the contrast between the false self, which we create, and the true self, which God creates in the image of his Son; the Christ-self which is continually striving to come alive within us. It is what we have come to call the Gift of Self.

*Holy Communion is the means by which Christ comes to live in us for the glory of the Father.*

For Saint Peter Julian, the key to an authentic spirituality consisted in replacing the selfish, vain, proud, and ambitious self with the self of Christ, meek and humble of heart, ever seeking the glory of the Father and listening to the Father. It is the extension of the incarnation and the paschal mystery. It is the key to authenticity in his spirituality. Holy Communion is the means by which Christ comes to live in us for the glory of the Father.

We could summarize the spiritual movement in Saint Peter Julian's Great Retreat of Rome in two words: surrender and gift. Eymard surrendered, and Jesus gave him the gift of an intimate life with him. It was a path to wholeness and inner harmony, because, body, mind, heart and will became one, focused on God, and taken over by a new life, the life of Jesus in him. It was the fruit of Holy Communion, which is at work in us, too: "As the living Father has sent me, and I have life because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me will have life because of me" (Jn 6:57).

It takes a lifetime to make this surrender. We can turn our limits and failings into steps on the way. Saint Peter Julian Eymard suggests that they are an opportunity to renew our gift of self to our Lord every time we become aware that we have taken ourselves back. He considered this constant renewing of our gift as a means of continual clinging to our Lord, remaining in him.

Father Eymard wrote the following in his notes for the Directory of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament:

God is our guest in the Eucharist. Our Lord so loved us that he could not separate himself from us in his state of glory. The Eucharist is his incarnation continued, multiplied, perpetuated



to the end of time. He wants to live close to us and continue the three states of his life within us as Savior, intercessor, indwelling.

## Conclusion

The day following his vow of personality to God, Father Eymard wrote in his retreat notes:

What is the place of union with Jesus Christ? It is within myself, it is in Jesus Christ. "Abide in me." I must make my home in our Lord, with our Lord, in a thought, a feeling, in a sentiment of love, in the devotion of love, in the heart of the heart of divine love. But, oh, my self, you must go out of yourself, you must live in the heart and goodness of Jesus eucharistic.

He concludes:

Well, if the fruitfulness of the branch comes from its union with the trunk and with the flowing sap, so my spiritual fruitfulness comes from my union with Jesus Christ. "I am the vine," from the union of my thoughts with his thoughts, of my words with his words, of my desires with his desires, from my actions with his actions. Spiritual barrenness comes from its absence; it is the withered branch which has been cut away (GRR, March 22, Second Meditation).

The Gift of Self then becomes the privileged path for a life of identification with Jesus. Let us close with a prayer from the *Imitation of Christ*, which Father Eymard copied in his notes:

Oh, my God, eternal love, my only good,  
my everlasting happiness,  
I offer you my heart's whole life.  
Whatever a devout soul can imagine or desire,  
that do I offer you, that do I make you a gift of,  
with the deepest reverence, the love of my inmost being.  
Nothing do I choose to keep back for myself,  
but freely and with all my heart,  
I make an offering to you of myself  
and all that is mine.





## EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY

# Pondering the Parables, Introduction

by Bernard Camiré, SSS

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

THE PARABLES OF JESUS ARE PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE THAT WE HEAR PROCLAIMED with some frequency in the Gospel at Mass as the liturgical year unfolds. Also, in our personal reading of the four Gospels, we inevitably come upon them — and sometimes in quick succession.

The parables — short, fictitious narratives that make a moral or religious point — have perhaps struck us in a variety of ways. Possibly they stirred our imagination, confirmed a personal conviction, or caused us to reflect on a particular point. Then again, perhaps they left us feeling somewhat bewildered; and if that was their effect, they probably kindled within us a desire to deepen our understanding of them and to penetrate their meaning more fully. That desire, perhaps, was never pursued for one reason or another. In this series, I would like to explore that fascinating portion of the New Testament Scripture that is the parables of Jesus, as a pathway to a deeper understanding of his message and as a resource for our own growth in gospel living.

Blessed Sacrament Father Bernard Camiré is the parochial vicar of Saint Jean Baptiste Church on the Upper East Side of New York City. This series on the parables of Jesus originally appeared in the parish bulletin.

### Characteristics of Parables

Before we delve into Jesus' parables as such, it would be useful to say a few words about the parable as a device in literature in general and in Scripture. The English word *parable* is from the Greek word *parabolē* whose root connotation signifies the placing of things side by side for the sake of comparison.

As we learned in high school English literature class, comparisons fall into two general categories: the *simile* and the *metaphor*. In a simile one thing is likened or compared to another thing of a different kind



for the purpose of illustration. Often in a simile, we find the word “like” or “as”; for example, in the Gospel of Matthew we hear Jesus say, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You are *like* whitewashed tombs” (23:27). This colorful method of describing something is quite common in our everyday speech.

On the other hand, a metaphor is a compressed simile in which one thing is identified or equated with another, or else the qualities of one thing are directly ascribed to another. In Matthew 5:13-14, for example, we hear Jesus exclaim: “You *are* the salt of the earth. . . . You *are* the light of the world.” This figure is more literary than the simile and is frequently found in poetry.

The more elaborate forms of illustration that we find in the parable and the allegory are really expansions of the basic figures. A *parable* is a developed simile in which the story, while fictitious, is true to life, differentiating a parable from a fable. An *allegory* is a developed metaphor prolonged into a continuous narrative. Ideally, the parable is distinct from allegory. In the parable, the details and characters have no hidden meaning, the important thing being the *lesson* of the story. But in practice, as a number of parables in the Gospels demonstrate, the traits of allegory are often present in a parable.

### Jesus, the Storyteller

Jesus was a master storyteller, knowing how to make use of illustrations from daily life that attracted his hearers’ attention. Outdoor scenes of farming and shepherding, indoor scenes in simple one-room houses, laborers and merchants at their workplace, children in the marketplace, wild and domestic animals, lamps and wineskins, harvests, fields, trees, and flowers — all figured in parables narrated with vividness and color.

Jesus employed well the techniques of storytelling. One of these was the “rule of three,” according to which it was customary to have three characters with the point of illustration lying in the third. We find this, for example, in the parable of the three servants entrusted with the talents (Mt 25:14-30), and the three individuals who pass the man who fell among robbers (Lk 10:30-36).


Another technique is that of direct discourse; characters talk aloud to themselves so that the hearer may find out what is in their minds. We

have an example of this in the parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:16-21) and the Pharisee and the Publican (Lk 18:9-14).

### **The Purpose of Parables**

Finally, we may ask: What was the purpose of Jesus' parables? A simple enough question, yet one that entails some complexity and allows a variety of possible responses. Added to this is the difficulty of interpretation, owing to the stages of transmission and the contextual adaptations through which the parables have passed (cf. Mt 13:1-23).

To our initial question, we may answer simply that Jesus made use of parables to give his message greater appeal and to facilitate understanding. If, at times, particular parables left individuals uncomprehending, blinded in mind and heart (Mk 4:1-12), it was more because these individuals refused their piercing challenge than because they could not be intellectually understood.

With this rather brief background, we shall in subsequent reflections delve into the parables narrated in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Our hope is that we shall be further enlightened intellectually and enriched spiritually for our pondering the parables of Jesus. 



## PASTORAL LITURGY

# Making Connections – Children's Liturgy of the Word

by John Thomas J. Lane, SSS

*Helping our younger members appreciate and participate more fully and joyfully in the Liturgy of the Word is an important pastoral priority.*

Father John Thomas J. Lane is the pastor of Saint Paschal Baylon Church in Highland Heights, Ohio. He is one of the authors of *Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons, and Weekdays 2017* and also wrote *Guide for Celebrating Worship of the Eucharist Outside of Mass*, both published by Liturgy Training Publications. Questions or further materials may be obtained by contacting him at [jtlanesss@gmail.com](mailto:jtlanesss@gmail.com).

THIS YEAR, WE EXPLORE VARIOUS PASTORAL PRACTICES SOME PARISHES CARRY OUT IN effort to support their liturgy. Our next topic comes from the *Directory for Masses with Children* (DMC), promulgated in 1973. The new *Roman Missal* (RM3) was to contain this document but in the final publishing did not, for it is a "directory," seen as a cultural adaptation of the liturgy and an appendix to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Unfortunately, some have discounted the DMC and any liturgical or pastoral adaptations that have been "added" to the liturgy since the Second Vatican Council.

The DMC serves as an important evangelization tool and guides parishes in ways to include young families in parish life and have them become excited about "the stories in the Bible." I use this last sentence in quotation marks for it is the number one reason parents cite why they bring their children to church.

The DMC was created to help children realize they are part of the eucharistic celebration and the church assembly, and it invites them to participate in special ways. For weekday Masses, especially with school children, the DMC insists on a simpler structure to the Order of Mass to facilitate more "conscious and active" participation from youth. Three Eucharistic Prayers were added to the *Roman Missal* and include a "call/response" style especially appropriate for children. When Sunday Masses focus on children, (for example, the beginning of Catholic Schools Week), these Eucharistic Prayers facilitate fuller participation. They are shorter, clearer, and more attuned to the young hearer, especially in light of the RM3 Eucharistic Prayers.

Let us address "Children's Liturgy" in this column. DMC, 17 outlines the



importance of having a Liturgy of the Word for Children, including “a homily with the children in a separate, but not too distant room.” For those who have never seen this, adult leaders gather the children in a special room near the church. Before Mass, leaders prepare the room, using the suggestions for activities from the many resources available and providing worksheets that are based on each Sunday’s scripture readings.

In the opening procession, the children use their own Lectionary to process in, along with the *Book of the Gospels*. It is carried in, usually with candles, and placed on the altar together with the *Book of the Gospels*. After the Opening Prayer, the congregation is invited to sit while the children are invited “to share in their own Liturgy of the Word.” The children who have processed in as leaders come forward to the altar, are given the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*, usually with an altar server leading with a cross, candles, and the adult leader. The presider for the Mass or the deacon may say a quick note about the readings they will hear and the activity that will be done after hearing the Sunday readings. They are then “dismissed” with a song or music to guide their procession to the room or chapel where they will hear God’s word.

I have participated in this ritual for years. The excitement of the children and parents about having “their own liturgy time” is wonderful. This is an effective way to encourage children and their parents to participate in the Sunday Eucharist. When we implemented this at our parish, participation at the Mass with the Liturgy of the Word for Children increased dramatically (as did the collection). One parent remarked to me, “When you do something for my child, you do something for me. You help deepen our faith and our love for the Church.” Nothing could be better to hear! Some parishes keep the children in a separate space until the conclusion of the Mass; others have the children return to their families at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

There is criticism from a few that we should not divide a congregation in this way, that it is not “eucharistic” to have “part of the body” go off. And why just the children? Why not the elders who need someone to speak louder? Perhaps a good response is that this is why there are Bible studies and other adult faith formation initiatives offered at other times during the week, but not during the Sunday proclamation. The bottom line is that this is a helpful practice during Sunday Mass. I recommend that you develop it in your parish if you have not already done so.

The “dismissal” and Liturgy of the Word with Children is something

that that helps families feel welcome and included in our parish communities, and there is a tremendous value in this. When you do something for someone's child, you do it for his or her parents and grandparents, and they appreciate this forever.

I can suggest certain improvements in the way things are done, including a more orderly way (e.g., a procession) for the having the children leave and return to the assembly, teaching them The Apostles' Creed, and creating Universal Prayers or at least a few intercessions that are more attuned to their ears.

For the most part, available resources offer good models for enhancing young peoples' participation in the Liturgy of the Word and helping them grow in their appreciation of Sacred Scripture. Developing a deep love for God's word at an early age is something we must continue to foster and develop. The Liturgy of the Word with Children helps facilitate this.

### **Remember in March and April**

**Ash Wednesday is March 1.** Here is an outline for a service that is not a Mass:

- Opening Song
- Opening Prayer (Collect)
- First Reading (of the day) — lector
- Psalm (of the day) — cantor
- Reflection on the Word of God — by the priest/deacon or the lay leader of prayer
- Blessing and Distribution of Ashes — Call forth other ministers to assist before beginning the blessing and distribution at the Communion stations
- Music during this time
- Ushers holding baskets for the collection can be positioned at the doors of the church
- Announcements — Highlight your Lenten practices (i.e., CRS Rice Bowls, Stations of the Cross, Friday fish fry, etc.) and offer a handout of the complete Lent, Holy Week, and Triduum schedule
- Closing Prayer and Dismissal
- Closing Song

**Daylight Saving Time starts on Sunday, March 12**, the Second Sunday of Lent. This often has a noticeable impact on church attendance. Make sure to remind parishioners of the “sacrifice and penance” in attending Mass an hour earlier!

**Review the Rite of Penance** (Second Sunday of Lent, Sunday, March 12) and the Scrutinies (Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent, March 19, 26, and April 2). These are not optional rites, but integral to the RCIA, even for children of catechetical age.

**Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord is April 9.** Check on the status of your order of palm branches as soon as you read this column. Celebrate the procession with palms, for there are few times during the year when the entire congregation has the opportunity to process and do a walk of faith.

**Easter Sunday is April 16.**

**In 2018, Ash Wednesday is February 14 and Easter Sunday is April 1.** No fooling!



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## PASTORAL LITURGY

# On the Liturgy and Transformation

### Living the Eucharist as a Gift of Self

The sacrament of God's love entrusted to the Church impels us to live the Eucharist with our own lives. Yes, the Eucharist is an action of Christ's body, broken and shared. It is a gesture of giving thanks with bread and wine and of being nourished with the body and blood of Christ as a participation in the "body of Christ."

Saint Peter Julian Eymard was troubled by the religious ignorance of people estranged from the Church and oblivious to the living presence of God in Holy Communion. He believed that the fire of God's love burning in the Eucharist could ignite a transformation of society. Sadly though, for many the Eucharist had become an empty ritual that had little or no effect in their lives.

Father Eymard realized the path of spiritual transformation that flows from living in the body of Christ as the people of God. His eucharistic charism initiated a paradigm shift, which re-positioned the Eucharist from the tabernacle to the center of our lives.

While on an extended retreat in Rome in early 1865, three years before his death, Peter Julian experienced the Eucharist as an invitation to share in the *kenosis* of Christ, as expressed in the Letter to the Philippians (2:5-8): "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Eymard taught his followers that it is in and through our lives that Christ continues the work of the Father as we unite ourselves to the self-giving of Christ in the Eucharist and in service to the world.

During this retreat, he experienced the personal love God had for him, drawing him into a self-offering of his personality. Through this self-giving

at the altar in the reception of Communion, it becomes possible for the Lord to “live again in us and continue through us the glorification of his Father.”

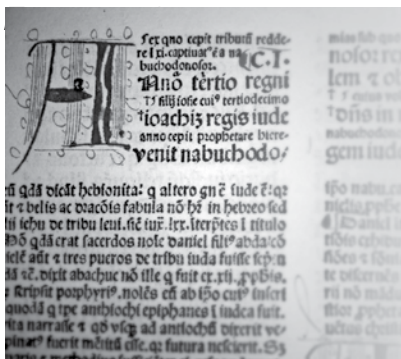
Pope Francis, during his travels to parts of the world touched by extreme poverty and human suffering, has encouraged people to embrace the future with hope. He does not skirt the challenges that are before us in a secular society suffering from hostilities and injustices that deny the dignity of the many who live in deplorable conditions. The children have asked him, “Where is God?” And the pope replies by saying that we are to be “experts in communion.” Our lives need to show forth the joy and love and compassion of God.

The just-concluded Holy Year of Mercy calls all the baptized to live fully the gift of the Eucharist with the insights of Saint Peter Julian’s Gift of Self. We are invited to listen, in the silence of prayer, in order to penetrate more deeply the inner recesses of the heart of God, to experience the overwhelming compassion and mercy of God, and to bring it to others.

These are the words Father Eymard heard Christ speak to him on March 21, 1865, in making the Gift of Self: “You will be entirely invested with me. My heart will beat within your body; my soul will act through your soul. Your heart will be the receptacle and the pulsation of my heart. I shall be the person of your personality, and your personality will be the life of my person in you.”



William Fickel, SSS  
Pastor  
Saint Vincent de Paul Church  
Holiday, Florida



## BREAKING THE WORD

# Spiritual Reflections — HOMILETICS

by John R. Barker, OFM

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

March 5, 2017  
First Sunday of Lent

**Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11**

On this First Sunday of Lent, the Scriptures invite us to consider the distance between where we are and where we want to be. They present us with two related problems that plague the human family — sin and death — and they offer us hope that we can, through Christ, overcome the first and be delivered from the second.

In the beginning, we are told, God planted a garden and placed our first ancestors in it. This garden was full of life: well-watered, lush, and fruitful. The tree of life in the center stood as a visible reminder that the God who planted the garden and placed his creatures within it meant it to be a place of life for them. Here in God's garden, the humans could enjoy intimacy with God and the fullness of life. But there were boundaries; they had to recognize that as finite humans they were not in a position to decide for themselves what was best for them. They could not set themselves up as morally autonomous creatures with no need for God's guidance, no need to be obedient to anyone but themselves. If they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God told them, they would die.

How tempting it was to gain autonomous wisdom, to break the shackles of obedience and dependence on God, especially when they were persuaded they would not die after all. But they were wrong, and the result of their act was that they lost their original intimacy with God, they were cast out of the garden, the place where they could experience the fullness of life. They continued to breathe, but they experienced death nevertheless.

We are our biblical parents' children and like them we often struggle with the desire to break free of obedience to God and to decide for ourselves what is best for us. Saint Paul tells us that since the beginning of our existence, humans have been captive to the power of sin, straining against the bonds of obedience to God. And this has brought death, for it has separated us from the fullness of life that God wants for us, the fullness of life that can come only from intimacy with God, who made us and knows what it best for us. In our desire to be free of bondage to God, we poor humans inevitably place ourselves in bondage to sin. And death rules over us.

The answer to this problem, of course, is Christ. In his Letter to the Romans, Paul looks back on the resurrection of Christ and sees in it the solution to the problem of death. And so, here at the beginning of Lent we already know what awaits us at Easter: the promise that God has freed us from the bonds of sin and from the reign of death; the fullness of life awaits us.

But in the meantime, we have 40 days to consider how we might prepare ourselves to receive this gift. In the wilderness, Christ shows us where to begin. Faced with the temptation to make his own way, to provide for himself with no need of God, Christ refuses to make himself the measure of what is good and evil. Instead, he leans on God, whose voice in the Scriptures provides guidance. Christ not only is the way to life, he models for us the way to life.

## March 12, 2017 Second Sunday of Lent

**Genesis 12:1-4a; 2 Timothy 1:8b-10; Matthew 17:1-9**

After the story of the garden, Genesis chronicles the quick degradation of God's good creation as the chaos introduced by the first humans takes its toll, culminating in God's decision to wipe out humankind with a flood and start all over again. But, of course, this doesn't solve the problem of the human heart, which has a tendency to bend away from God and toward sin, as Genesis 8:21 says, "The desires of the human heart are evil from youth." And so, God begins a new plan, a plan that takes a long, slow route to bring the human family back to God and to the fullness of life. The plan begins with the choice of an old, childless couple named Abram and Sarai. It is through this unlikely



couple that, God promises, “all the communities of the earth will find blessing.”

The call of Abram initiates a relationship between God and a single family, which God will build out of the most unlikely and, in some cases, unsavory characters. But build that family God does, not for its own sake but ultimately so that the God of Israel can be known by all the peoples of the earth and thus find their way back to blessing.

God begins the relationship with a promise, and it is here that we get an early glimpse of this God we meet in the Scriptures: a God who seeks relationship, who makes promises of blessing and well-being, and who fulfills those promises, often in the most astounding and frankly unbelievable ways. This divine urge to relate and to bring blessing in mercy and fidelity is the basis for the salvation we celebrate in this joyous Lenten season.

Abram and Sarai did nothing to deserve the gift they received from God, and Saint Paul reminds us that none of us does either. Like Abram and Sarai, we, too, have been called to a holy life — a life in relationship with God — “not according to our works but according to his own design,” a design destined to bring blessing in the form of the destruction of death and “life and immortality” through Christ. And so, this week’s readings remind us not only of the promise of blessing and life we all receive from God, but the sheer, astounding grace of it all.

## March 19, 2017 Third Sunday of Lent

**Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42**

This week we find ourselves with Israel in the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has made good on the promise to deliver their children from slavery. Now they begin their long, arduous, and sometimes frightening passage from generations of bondage to a new life in the promised land.

This journey begins with anxiety, with the fear that this God who brought them out of Egypt will not now be able to provide for them.

Israel in the wilderness manifests the perennial human tendency to worry that God is not enough, that something or someone other than God is necessary for us to live. And so, the children of Israel cry out in fear and anger: "Why did you drag us out of our place of slavery, where at least we had everything we needed? Now you have brought us into the desert, where we are sure to die of thirst. We look around and we do not see how we can possibly survive here."

The security and comfort of a life only half-lived often has a strong claim on the human heart; it is risky and frightening to learn to live fully in freedom with God. This new life seems impossible, and so we seek to turn back to old patterns of life.

But here in the middle of the Lenten season, we cannot turn back. Nor need we turn back, for the source of life stands right before us, if only we have the eyes to see it. In the middle of a wilderness of rocks, the same God who brought forth life out of Sarah's barren womb brings forth life-giving water in the barren desert. The presence of life where none seems possible is a sure sign that "the LORD is in our midst." Through the story of Israel's struggles, we learn to trust that God can bring life out of the most barren and rocky places, including the human heart.

This is why, in his Letter to the Romans, Paul reminds his audience that "whatever was written previously was written for our instruction, that by endurance and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (15:4). Today, in the same letter, he reminds us that this "hope does not disappoint" — because Christ has already brought life out of death and gives that gift to us. Just as in the desert God provided water for Israel so they would know that he could provide for them and give them life, so God gives to us in Christ "a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

We have this week the opportunity to ponder again the pull that the glittering, Egypt-like bondage of sin has on our frightened, insecure hearts, to acknowledge how reluctant we can be to finally let ourselves be freed from it, and to consider how difficult it can be to believe that God can provide for us all that we need once we do escape the grip of whatever binds us.

The Scriptures give us hope because they remind us that God has always provided water in the wilderness, has always offered life, even

eternal life, to those who learn to trust. Accompanying us on our passage from past bondage to new life is our Rock, Christ, the source of water “welling up to eternal life.”

## March 26, 2017 Fourth Sunday of Lent

**1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41**

So far this Lent many of the Sunday readings have focused on death and God’s promise of new life. Freedom from bondage to sin, fertility from barrenness, water in a rocky wilderness: these all witness to the power and commitment of God to bring life where none seems possible, to conquer death in its many forms out of mercy and fidelity to God’s creation. This week, we turn for a moment to a related theme, God’s offer to bring light to darkness and sight to the blind.

God’s choice of David not only continues the biblical story of God’s long plan for the salvation of the human family, but also introduces the notion of seeing rightly: “Not as a man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart.” To see as God sees is to see reality as it truly is, without being fooled by appearances, wishful thinking, or prejudice. It is the various forms of “blindness” that often lead us astray, mistaking evil for good and sources of death for sources of life. In Lent, we are encouraged to examine our tendencies to be fooled by false realities and to see into the heart of reality, to see as God sees.

As with the gift of life, we are assured this week that the gift of sight is ours for the taking, because we are children of light, the light Christ gives us. We need not stumble in darkness — in whatever form it takes for us. Here in Lent, God calls us to emerge, blinking and stumbling, from the darkness that has allowed us to remain blind to the ways we alienate ourselves from God and others, the ways we choose death instead of life.

The effect of Christ’s light is not at first pleasant. It exposes the darkest parts of our hearts to scrutiny, and perhaps this is why we may wish to avoid it. It can even be painful, especially when we realize how much

damage the “fruitless works of darkness” have done. It can be a harsh light at first, until we get used to it. But slowly we begin to see things as they really are, and like the man born blind we come to believe in the healing power of Christ.

In the final scene of today’s Gospel, Jesus tells the Pharisees that as long as they believe they are not blind, that they have no need to receive the gift of sight from God, they will fail to realize that they are in fact in darkness and sin. Lent calls us to consider with brutal honesty where we have insisted wrongly that we are not blind, and to turn in confident trust to the Light of the world for healing.

## April 2, 2017 Fifth Sunday of Lent

**Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45**

The story of the raising of Lazarus begins with an odd statement: “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was.” Jesus remained where he was, allowing Lazarus to die, *because* he loved him and his sisters. When he returns to Bethany, Martha meets Jesus: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” And Mary says the same thing to him a little later. Finally, at the house of the siblings, some of the crowd gathered wonder aloud, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?”

The evangelist makes it clear to us that Jesus could have prevented the death of Lazarus, and that everyone who knew Jesus also had confidence that he could have done so if he had wished. They all believed that Jesus could heal the sick — they had seen it many times before. So why didn’t he?

Jesus is visibly and viscerally disturbed by the death of his friend; this is no small matter to him. But he has allowed this to happen because he loves Lazarus. He wants Lazarus to know what it is like to die and to receive his life back. And he wants his beloved Martha and Mary and everyone else to see Lazarus brought back from the dead, for bringing life out of death is the perhaps the clearest and most concrete

expression of the “glory of God.”

In the Bible, the “glory” of God is God’s manifest presence. It’s veiled — halfway hidden in cloud often — but it is visible enough to recognize. When we see the glory of God, we experience the presence of God. When Lazarus emerges from the tomb, those gathered there see their friend brought back from non-existence to existence, from death to life. And they experience the presence of God, they know that God is with them, at their side and on their side.

And they see also that it is in Jesus — who is the resurrection and the life — that God’s glory is most tangibly experienced. When they are near Jesus they are near God, and this nearness brings life. And this is why Jesus let Lazarus die: because he loved him, and he wanted him to experience for himself the glory and power of God to bring life out of death, to bring *his* life out of death.

We don’t know what life was like for Lazarus after Jesus raised him from the dead, but surely he understood and experienced God more deeply and more truly. He must have lived his new life closer to God, he must have lived more vibrantly. Jesus let Lazarus die because he wanted him to live.

Those who have struggled with addiction will tell you that they had to die, to hit “rock bottom,” before they could truly live a life worthy of the name. Israel had to die in exile to experience God’s power to bring their dry bones back to life and to learn to trust in God. As we enter into the final days of Lent, the stories of Israel and of Lazarus invite us to consider what dying we have left to do so that we, too, may see the glory of God and appreciate the gift of new life we receive in Christ.

## April 9, 2017 Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion

**Isaiah 50:4-7; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14-27:66**

On Passion Sunday, we are confronted with images of profound suffering and degradation. Yet from the midst of the pain and humiliation emerges an image of Christ — and thus the God he

incarnates — that is astoundingly beautiful.

In the reading from Isaiah, the servant (understood here to reflect the experience of Christ) suffers out of fidelity to the mission “to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.” He is called to comfort God’s people. Yet this seems to bring nothing but pain and humiliation. The servant perseveres, listening daily for God’s voice and acting to serve God and God’s people.

What allows the servant to continue? Fidelity to God, fidelity to God’s people, and trust that God is on his side and will not abandon him. The servant embraces and makes manifest God’s own commitment to God’s people.

The beautiful hymn from Philippians contains this same idea. Christ’s willingness to humble himself — refusing to “regard equality with God something to be grasped at” — reflects the humility of God. If Christ is “in the form of God,” then anything he does reflects the character of God. Because he is willing to enact the humble love of God for God’s people and endure suffering, he is fittingly acknowledged as the Lord of heaven and earth and the reflection of the glory of God.

Saints and sinners for two millennia have been astounded by the love of God shown through the suffering and death of his servant and Messiah, who incarnates that love. And it *is* astounding, although it comes as no real surprise to those who have followed God’s story from the beginning. For, in the beginning, God created humans and desired to have a relationship with us. All relationships, and perhaps especially this relationship, carry risks of hurt, rejection, or betrayal. Yet God willingly committed to the human family, even to the point of becoming one of us and suffering for our sake.

Passion Sunday gives us the opportunity to ponder once again that the God who calls us to fidelity, to obedience, from blindness to sight, and from death to life, is the God who endures beatings and death on a cross for us. This is the God we have been journeying toward this Lent; this is the God who has been journeying with us this Lent. And this is the God who awaits us with the gift of forgiveness and new life.

April 16, 2017  
The Resurrection of the Lord  
Easter Sunday

**Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4 or 2 Corinthians 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9**

Now in Easter, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ — the vindication of God's servant and Messiah and the promise of our own resurrection and life in the world to come. Christ is victorious over death, and so are we.

The readings for Easter Sunday remind us, though, that as we move from death to life, we remain in the already-but-not-quite-yet space. Although in Matthew's Gospel, which we hear at the Vigil, the disciples encounter the risen Lord almost immediately after they discover the empty tomb, in today's reading from John's Gospel there is a delay. Mary of Magdala, Simon Peter, and "the other disciple" hang suspended between the realization that the tomb is empty and the revelation of the risen Christ.

We, too, can experience this sense of suspension and wonder, what now? As we travel from Lent to Easter, we realize that our new or renewed life in Christ must unfold at its own pace. We know what we have left behind, we know that something has changed for us — the tomb is truly empty — but we do not yet know what our new life holds for us. Like Mary and the disciples, we wonder exactly what is next, what does all this really mean? What are the implications of this work God has done in us?

The Letter to the Colossians reminds us that we have died. This is good, this is what we sought, what we worked for with the grace of God during Lent: to die to our old selves so that we could live again in Christ. But for the time being our new life remains hidden, even from us. It is protected by Christ in God — it is our sure gift — but its exact contours cannot be clearly seen.

In the meantime, we hold on to that treasure by continuing to seek "what is above, not what is on earth." Saint Paul tells the Corinthians to "clear out the old yeast, so that you can become a fresh batch of dough. . . . Therefore, let us celebrate the feast . . . with the unleavened bread



of sincerity and truth." Christ has brought us victory. We celebrate that, but we remember that our lives have been transformed. We are not and cannot be the same people we were at the beginning of Lent.

Now in this liminal space between Lent and Easter, as we await further revelation of the power of the risen Christ in our lives, we strengthen our resolve to understand and live that new life as it unfolds. We leave the empty tomb and enter the adventure of Easter life.

April 23, 2017  
Second Sunday of Easter  
Sunday of Divine Mercy

**Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31**

The readings for the Second Sunday of Easter present us with three images of the fledgling church that emerged after the resurrection. Each reading illumines different aspects of our new life in Christ.

The Acts of the Apostles tells us that the followers of Christ formed communities around the teaching of the apostles, prayer, and the breaking of the bread. The apostles showed the power of the risen Christ by working "wonders and signs" as they continued Christ's mission to bring God's healing to broken lives.

These followers were not a collection of individuals, but a community who prayed together and shared their resources. Their lives were filled with joy, and they watched with delight daily as "the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." The disciples celebrated and shared their new lives, and at least at this early stage, they enjoyed "favor with all the people." One result of life in the risen Christ is unbounded joy and enthusiasm, which to be truly fulfilled must be shared so that others may come to know what God has done for us in Christ.

In a similar way, the Gospel reminds us that even if we experience confusion and paralysis, unsure what to make of our new life, Christ comes to us with the gift of the Spirit and peace – and a job to do. Just as the gift of descendants for Abraham and Sarah was not intended

only for them, but ultimately so that “all the communities of the earth” could find blessing, so the gift of new life in Christ is not meant only for us, but for the whole world. We cannot remain locked in our rooms, waiting passively for the next thing to happen. The risen Christ comes to draw us out, even with fear and trembling, into a world that awaits our message of reconciliation and healing. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Yet this mission may not always be greeted with enthusiasm. The First Letter of Peter reflects a situation in which the followers of Christ “suffer through various trials.” The proclamation and living of the Gospel has not brought the favor of the people but persecution, or at least the threat of it. It is a temptation to turn back when the new life meets resistance, misunderstanding, or rejection.

Yet the author of the letter encourages his readers — and us — to hold fast in the “living hope” that God has not abandoned us so soon after our new birth, but remains with us, holding on for safekeeping to our inheritance, which cannot be taken away because it is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” Even when our new life in Christ — our new resolve to live more fully as we are meant to live — brings suffering, we are encouraged to “rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.”

The readings this week make it clear that we must move out from Easter to the world, but that we do not do it alone. We do it in community, gathered around and empowered by the Spirit of the risen Lord, who strengthens us and brings us peace, even in times of trial and fear.

## April 30, 2017 Third Sunday of Easter

**Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Peter 17-21; Luke 24:13-35**

In this third week of Easter, the implications of the resurrection continue to unfold. In his Pentecost speech at the beginning of Acts, Peter affirms for the startled crowd that Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified, had been raised up by God in accordance with the Scriptures, which speak not of David but of his descendant, who would not “see corruption.”

All has happened according to “the set plan and foreknowledge of God.” (History remains firmly in God’s hands — this was no mistake.) Now at God’s right hand, Jesus sends forth the Holy Spirit to create the church and send it forth into the world, to “all the communities of the earth” (Gn 12:3).

This church now, as it did then, gathers around its Lord, who is known in the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread. We come to know Christ anew and more deeply each time we gather together in the Spirit to worship and to receive again the life God has given us in Christ. This is the same Christ, the First Letter of Peter reminds us, who ransomed us from our futile conduct, who gained at great personal cost our redemption from sin and death, that we might live together in his presence for the life of the world.

The author reminds us of this, not to induce guilt or a sense of unworthiness, but to encourage us to live in reverence, to cherish this new life we have received, to place our faith and our hope in God, the only source of life and joy. As the church moves forth once again from the Easter celebration, we are reminded what a precious gift we have received, to be held with care, nurtured in faith, and shared in hope.

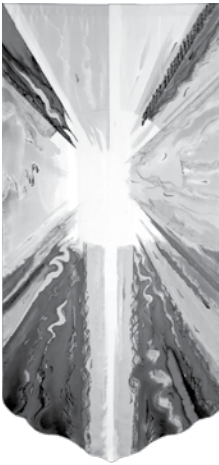




## EUCCHARIST & CULTURE

Art • Music • Film •  
Poetry • Books

### Art Review



Juanita Yoder  
**STATIONS OF THE  
CROSS** (Suspended  
Silk Paintings)  
Saint Thomas More  
Church, Glendale,  
Arizona  
**STATION TWELVE**  
(front and back  
cover)  
**STATION FIFTEEN**  
(inside back cover)  
[www.hillstream.com](http://www.hillstream.com)

John Christman,  
SSS

Abstract paintings may not be easy to understand. In fact, the best abstract paintings are often challenging. And certainly just as there are clumsy or superficial poems, there are inept and jejune abstract paintings. But, at their best, abstract paintings strive to express deeper truths and varied perspectives upon the vast realm of human experience and inquiry.

Juanita Yoder's silk paintings are abstract; however, they are not "art for art's sake." Instead, many of her paintings are abstractions for the purpose of theological insight. Whether the deep violets, reds, and expressive yellows that blaze across the banners of the breathtaking Princeton Chapel or the dazzling spiraling colors ascending her *Jacob's Ladder* mobile in the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, Yoder's paintings remind us that God is always greater than our imagining and that the Holy Spirit is not only free, but active.

Particularly striking is her series *The Stations of the Cross* installed at Saint Thomas More Church in Glendale, Arizona. Here, abstraction and gentle, unobtrusive symbolism open up multiple ways to enter into Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection at the heart of the Stations of the Cross devotion. Each painting guides the viewer into the mystery of the station without forcing a particular interpretation. It is a delicate balance that Yoder accomplishes with grace.

Take for example, the twelfth station — Jesus Dies on the Cross. In many artists' hands, this station is simply rendered literally, Jesus dead upon the cross. But in Yoder's presentation, we are confronted with two banners hanging side by side (see inside back-cover). Potent red and black paint cascades down their length broken by a light v-shaped form perhaps evoking Christ's outstretched arms. Blue rivulets recall the water that flowed from Jesus' side. The space created between the two hanging banners reminds the viewer of the curtain of the temple

that was torn in two at Jesus's death (Mt 27:51). Yoder's portrayal of his death attempts to draw the viewer into this sublime mystery, while allowing for multiple points of focus.

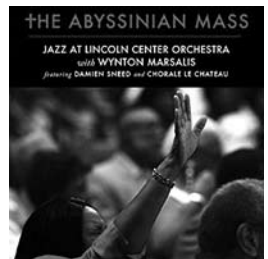
Even more engaging is her inclusion of a fifteenth station, Resurrection (see front and back covers). By including this celebratory image, she reorients the viewer to the hope that all Christians have in Christ, "the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18). Blazing with primary colors energetically radiating from its circular center, this painting is unabashedly joyous. The circle itself is abundant with possible meaning: the empty tomb, the sun (as Christ is the Light of the world), a new earth (a look toward eschatological fulfillment), and certainly the Eucharist (as all are made one in the body of Christ). Through this simple abstraction, numerous fruitful avenues of prayer and contemplation are opened. In her paintings, Yoder carefully guides and evokes theological insight without being didactic or stifling. It is a beautiful way to respect the dignity and thought of each viewer. Our religious and liturgical art only benefits from such care.

## Music Review

Can music transform a concert hall into a house of God? Can a stage become a sanctuary and an audience a congregation? Winton Marsalis, Grammy and Pulitzer Award-winning composer and virtuoso trumpeter, certainly believes it possible. His *Abyssinian Mass* certainly accomplishes this reconciliation of opposites with this historic spirit-stirring, hand-clappin', Amen-shouting offering. Commissioned to mark the bicentennial of the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, New York, *The Abyssinian Mass* is about people coming together. It is a celebration of the relationship between jazz and the church, the secular and the sacred, and focuses more on what unites us than what divides.

Marsalis draws his inspiration from the Isaiah 56:7: "My house shall be a house of prayer for all nations." *The Abyssinian Mass* is the continuation of his mission to use music imbued with a "philosophical, spiritual, and physical logic" to project the theme of universal humanism. The uplifting spirit of the music is meant to do just that, to uplift and to draw people together into an extraordinary, powerful, and inspirational experience of music as prayer.

Though massive in length — two-and-a-half hours with intermission — *The Abyssinian Mass* succeeds in many ways. It is cohesive in its



THE  
ABYSSINIAN  
MASS  
Jazz at  
Lincoln Center  
Orchestra with  
Wynton Marsalis  
featuring Damien  
Sneed and Chorale  
Le Chateau  
Blue Engine  
Records, 2016

Julie  
Parrotta

entirety, while each individual section can likewise be praised for its melodically captivating, technically difficult, and musically sound components. Moreover, it is exceptional for its consistently original use of gospel choir and jazz orchestra staffed by some of the most proficient musicians from around the world.

Opening with the trilling woodwinds and racing brass licks typical of New Orleans Jazz, the “Devotional” gives way to the soulful interplay between trombone and choir, representing the breath of God, the Holy Spirit, and calling on the Lord in true Gospel fashion. Building from the deepest bass to the stratospheric soprano, each note ascends to the heavens and represents the notion that everyone has value, from the deepest, elder voice to the highest, youthful voice and every voice in-between. The 16-person Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Marsalis himself among them combined with the handpicked 70-person Chorale Le Chateau, under the direction of Damian Sneed, masterfully showcase and celebrate the beauty of diversity and the idea that we are always greater as the sum of our parts.

Through and through, *The Abyssinian Mass* is an affirmation of duality and a celebration of traditions in dialogue with one another, not just in its incorporation of varying musical genres and styles but in its form. Though primarily reflecting the form of a typical African-American Baptist service, *The Abyssinian Mass* is heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic Mass. Growing up in New Orleans, Marsalis’ mother Dolores would take him to Saint Francis Catholic Church, where, from a young age, he began to notice and pay attention to the various parts, form, and flow of the liturgy.

There are some very distinctive aspects of the Roman Catholic Mass. The “Lord Have Mercy,” the “Gloria Patri,” “The Lord’s Prayer” with its stunning seven- and eight-part a cappella harmonies, the “Doxology,” and the “Amen,” just to name a few. Even the recessional “The Glory Train” incorporates its own version of a Litany of Saints. This paired with the classic spiritual imagery of a train, depicted by the percussive rhythm, screeching whistles, and spiritual calls of the orchestra and choir draw us into a hope-filled, joyful exclamation of oneness, not only with each other, but with the communion of saints and the choir of heavenly hosts as we “ride up to heaven . . . right past the pearly gates to see my Lord.”

## Poetry

### The Lion and the Lamb

The Lamb,  
the Suffering Servant  
who bore  
“the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6).

The Sacrificial Victim  
who died an ignominious death  
on a cross . . .  
for me,  
for you.

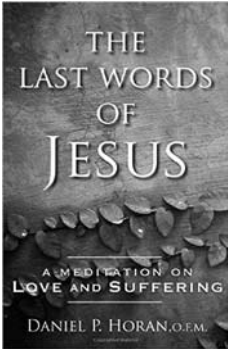
Jesus,  
the God-Man  
who rose from the dead,  
triumphant,  
that we might live!

The Lion,  
the King of Kings  
who reigns forever!  
The Ruler and Redeemer  
who conquered sin and death.

Jesus, the Christ,  
the Lion and the Lamb:  
our strength and our salvation . . .  
our eucharistic Lord!

Jeanette Martino Land

## Book Reviews



**THE LAST  
WORDS OF  
JESUS;  
A MEDITATION  
ON LOVE AND  
SUFFERING**  
Daniel P. Horan,  
OFM  
Cincinnati, Ohio:  
Franciscan Media,  
2013  
128 pp., \$12.99

An older friar asked Father Daniel Horan to give the Good Friday retreat at the Franciscans' church in Manhattan. He was surprised because he felt too young and inexperienced. The theme was to be "The Seven Last Words." He prayed and googled and decided he would attempt it. Later, he was asked to put it into book form for publication.

Horan was given two instructions. The first was to remember that the theme is the same each year, but the speaker is asked to put his own unique twist on the reflections. Second, people come from all parts of the city for the reflections, so they should not be short! He meditated and reflected all through Lent on the task and consulted several scriptural commentaries. Horan decided that his remarks would be scripturally-based and would have a Franciscan spiritual, theological, and philosophical underpinning. There would also be a strong element of social justice, referencing the injustices in the world of today.

Given the situation of the world of today, especially after 9/11, Horan asserts that Jesus' parting words should be full of life for us today. The introduction is an explanation of the cross and the meaning of suffering. Horan explains the meaning of the word *passion* at length. Passion means love; it also means suffering, and there is a sense of enduring both. They are two sides of a coin. The cross is not saying how much Jesus suffered for us, but how much he loves us. Think about that the next time you look at a crucifix.

Every chapter begins with the traditional words from the extended scriptural passage, followed by what the words mean for us in solidarity with today's world. He closes the chapter with reflective questions, so this is a valuable book for groups to share their own experiences of love, suffering, and the struggle for justice. Each reflection ends with a prayer.

Horan's reflections include powerful examples of love and suffering. This is a book for the head and the heart. He injects his own unique spirituality into each chapter. These are not "standard" reflections you've heard over and over; there is much food for thought.

I was struck by the third word, "Woman, behold your son." He explains



that Mary stood near the cross and her sister stood next to her. I wonder how many people realize that Mary had a sister. I've never heard this mentioned in a homily. I discovered it years ago and teach it. Too often, we don't really hear all the words that are repeated year after year. I hope people are surprised by this detail and go check John's Gospel to see if it is really there.

In the fourth word, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" Horan gives a detailed commentary on the meaning of lament. Lament does not always mean misery. It is a way of struggling over what is difficult and perplexing. Looking at all the divisions and separations in our Church, maybe a little more lament might bring about the social justice that is the great need of our world at this time. In the fifth word, "I thirst," the author describes at length the thirst of this world, where so many people across the globe do not have enough water, or clean water.

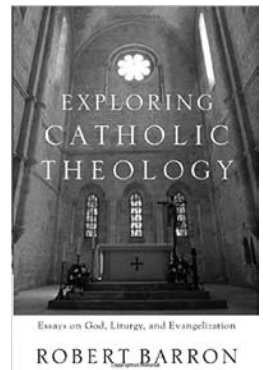
Horan ends the book with an Afterword explaining Jesus' first words in the Gospel, "Father" and "It is written." The third time Jesus speaks is in the synagogue at Nazareth, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." The book is very powerful and thought-provoking.

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Bishop Robert Barron was born in Chicago, Illinois, on November 19, 1959, and ordained a priest on May 24, 1986. He earned his MA in philosophy and the Basselin Scholarship in philosophy and public speaking with the thesis *Production and the Political Animal in the Writings of Karl Marx*. His doctorate was awarded for the thesis *Creation as Disciple: A Study of the De Potentia of Thomas Aquinas in the Light of the Dogmatik of Paul Tillich* at the Institut Catholique de Paris in 1992. He was ordained an auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles on September 8, 2015, by Archbishop José H. Gomez.

Theologian, author, and evangelist, he is well known for his *Word on Fire* broadcasts on WGN, Chicago, as well as a commentator on NBC television. His *Catholicism Project* for adult catechetical education is used in many parishes, and he has published numerous books and



**EXPLORING  
CATHOLIC  
THEOLOGY:  
ESSAYS ON GOD,  
LITURGY, AND  
EVANGELIZATION**  
Robert Barron  
Grand Rapids,  
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Academic, 2015  
272 pp., \$24.99

articles. He is often compared to Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen for his depth of intellect and talent for communication.

I was attracted to his writings by a book on the Eucharist published by Orbis Press in 2008, which is an excellent presentation of the eucharistic theology of Thomas Aquinas as banquet, sacrifice, and real presence. My reading of the current work drew my attention and appreciation.

The book has four parts entitled: "Doctrine of God," "Theology and Philosophy," "Liturgy and Eucharist," and "A New Evangelization." Part One discusses the relevance of Augustine's theology of God today, Thomas Aquinas' insistence that God is not a generic term — he is *ipsum esse subsistens*, the Father Creator who brings all things into existence and "in him we live and move and have our being."

Barron's "Meditation on the Christian Message" is an antidote to the "new atheists," stressing that God is mystery and beyond our imagination or understanding. Seeking the truth about God and his goodness and beauty is a lifelong search and a spiritual journey. Jesus Christ is the incarnation of God, "the face of God," as has often been said. In Christ, God has drawn near to human beings to save and to transform.

The "idea" of God moves in Part Two to the theology and philosophy of Avery Dulles and John Henry Newman. Newman is also a light for postmoderns. This part examines biblical interpretation as well. Part Three uses the same trilogy as Barron's earlier work on the Eucharist, but is a more comprehensive synthesis and reveals the genius of the Angelic Doctor, who centers his treatment on the presence of Jesus Christ as spiritual nourishment, companion, and Savior through his gift of self.

Part Four shows the evangelical strength of the author as well as his focus on establishing a dialogue with millennials and the modern culture. Barron is at his best here in the chapters on contemporary culture, correlation, and assimilation, and "a new model for evangelization" for an evolving culture. The chapter on "Why Bernard Lonergan Matters to Pastoral People" is only one of many examples of Barron's appreciation of many contemporary theologians.

This is a book of substance, depth, and scholarship. It is articulate

and cohesive — a synthesis of the Catholic tradition together with a dialogue with contemporary culture. It reaches out in dialogue with postmodern and millennial readers with respect and a sincere desire for conversation and openness to mutual enrichment. Written in a pleasant style, it is a very readable text.

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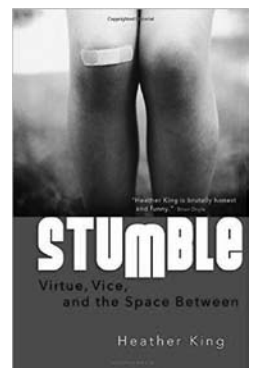
Every musical composition, whether a song, an opera, a concert, or a symphony, has a theme, a musical set of notes that announces a message and then continues in and out of the composition, hitting all the subparts together. The same holds true for a written composition. Heather King, the author of *Stumble*, is a prolific writer of nine books. There are two key experiences of the author that are the subliminal major themes of *Stumble* that tie all 19 chapters together.

The first experience is a 20-year battle with alcohol. She lost the fight to an addiction which drove her to her dark places like promiscuity, abortion, and failed marriages. An intervention and treatment led her into a new identity, an alcoholic. Working the Twelve Steps and attending fellowship meetings created within her a spiritual identity with a higher power: God.

How you look at something changes the way it works. Her Twelve Step work gave her a new way of seeing, a deeper inner awareness of a severe threatening vulnerability for which only God could and would supply a daily reprieve. Recent research has confirmed that the Twelve Steps and fellowship meetings actually reach deep down to the brain, its tissues, structure, and electrochemical processes, all of which create a new sense of self.

This first process leads to another profound inner change to choices and a new spiritual identity in Christ. The author expresses this experience in one liners like “Once we understand ourselves, the rest of living falls in line” (28).

Living this relationship with Christ is the theme that runs throughout

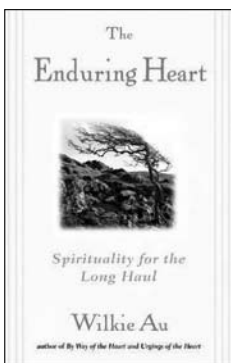


**STUMBLE:  
VIRTUE, VICE,  
AND THE SPACE  
BETWEEN**  
Heather King  
Cincinnati, Ohio:  
Franciscan Media,  
2015  
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the book, all of which elaborates on the different experiences of her life that require a new way to think, feel, and act. For example, the first chapter, not surprisingly, is all about getting close to Christ and others through the compassion King experienced in living in Koreatown, Los Angeles. In the second chapter, the author, in a beauty salon, finds women who are brutally honest and open with each other. In another chapter, King reflects on the life of Dorothy Day and her work with the homeless.

Earlier, in the '60s, I met Dorothy Day in Rhinebeck, New York, where she opened a house for the homeless, still existing to this day. Day attended Sunday Masses at Good Shepherd Church where I regularly celebrated Mass. Today, Dorothy is called a saint. Many of the chapters are about the transformation of darkness, failure, suffering, and loneliness in the light of Christ's experiences.

A final, very interesting chapter is on Richard Rohr's encounter with a solitary monk who said to him, "You get to preach outside. I don't. So please tell the people one thing: "God is not 'out there.'" King knows only too well that it's an inside job.



Shifting from the content of *Stumble* to King's writing style. She says that her bout with alcohol led to her new career as a writer. Her vocabulary is very concrete. She finds metaphors in the everyday experiences of life. Those metaphors are woven into the narrative, a storytelling style that sweeps the reader up into the experience. After all, "is it not our own inner experiences that create our sense of identity?" Her style is granular and gritty as she describes people, places, and things in great detail. The book is good read.

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THE  
ENDURING  
HEART:  
SPIRITUALITY  
FOR THE LONG  
HAUL  
Wilkie Au  
Mahwah, New  
Jersey: Paulist  
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*The Enduring Heart* was originally published in 2000 and the current paperback edition in 2015. I found the 15 year hiatus intriguing — it accounted for a sense of datedness in the presentation of the material. Paradoxically, it also provided a comfort level of déjà vu for readers in the afternoon and evening of life. Familiar authors' references supported the life journey theme. Perhaps as people live longer

and longer lives, these spiritual resources needed for the "long haul" assume greater importance as well as personal meaning.

Wilkie Au makes a distinction between being rooted on life's journey and being stuck. This statement alone is worthy of self-examination. He builds on Walter Brueggemann's thesis that spirituality is our walk with God through recurrent patterns of being securely oriented, being painfully disoriented, and being surprisingly reoriented. Scripture stories move the reader from the memory of God's intervention in the past to recognition of divine intervention in the current reality.

Au proposes that as people seek to live more attuned to the presence of God in the midst of their busy lives, contemplation becomes simply a pausing to notice. Contemplation can flourish in the ordinariness of everyday surroundings. His descriptions of living contemplatively encourage readers to take in existing reality with spiritually sensitive eyes.

Committing ourselves to staying alive and growing continuously is an essential part of the spiritual path. Although it is important, it is also frequently challenging for the "enduring heart." Human life is meant to be dynamic, not static. Au suggests that people "choose life" for the "long haul." With the lifeline extending every year, this is no small endeavor.

Prayer poems by Phillip Bennett, particularly the one on loss, convey a heightened awareness of the goodbyes experienced as part of the life journey. Although many of the references have been encountered before, like good friends their contributions are nuanced in surprisingly fresh ways for those with "enduring hearts." Questions and personal reflection at the end of each chapter, in the words of the author, "let God into the private chambers of our hearts."

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## *EUCCHARISTIC WITNESS*

Bob Owczarczak


### **Fleeing the Lord (Judges 6:36-40)**

Have you ever felt like you needed to do something, but just couldn't get yourself to do it? Your taxes, cleaning the car, or getting out of bed on a dark, rainy day? This is how I felt about my call to the priesthood. I always had a feeling that I was being called to enroll at the seminary, but to get up and actually do it was another story. Why? Because I was comfortable in my life and I thought I could keep putting this off and eventually God would stop calling me. . . . Well, that wasn't the case.

When I first started to discern the call to priesthood, I decided I was going to ask God to give me a sign. This sign would be just between us and would be very clear. So, while praying at Mass, as the desire for priesthood grew stronger in my heart, I asked God to give me a part of the broken host, part of the large host that the priest consumes, as a sign that I needed to enter the seminary.

Nervously, I walked up to receive the Eucharist and . . . there it was, a triangular host, just what I asked for in my prayer! But I decided that this time didn't really count because I was sitting in the front on the priest's side and it was likely that I would receive this section of the host. The following week, I moved toward the back of the church and prayed the same prayer, only to find that when I received the Eucharist it was again part of the broken host. For eight straight weeks, I moved around to different Communion ministers, and each time I received the broken host and always found an excuse as to why this time didn't count.

The next week I knew was going to be different. I was going to my parents' church where the priest never uses a large host, so it was impossible to get a broken host. Finally, I was in the clear! I prayed my prayer again, quietly thinking, "Ha-ha, God, I got you! I don't have to be a priest." As I approached to receive the Eucharist, the Communion minister stopped me and looked down in the ciborium and noticed that there were not enough hosts for everyone in line, so he broke one in half and gave it to me. God must have been laughing at me that day!

I wish that I could say that was all that I needed for the Lord to get me into the seminary, but it wasn't. I keep asking for signs and kept receiving them. Eventually, I knew that like John the Baptist, I must decrease so that he (Christ) could increase in me. In January 2013, I entered Christ the King Seminary and began my journey to the priesthood for the Diocese of Buffalo. 



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