

**The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another**



**Theological and Pastoral Reflections in Preparation**

**for the**

**50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress**

**to be celebrated in Dublin, Ireland  
(June 10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> 2012)**

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## **Part I A Golden Opportunity**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **I. a. The Fiftieth International Eucharistic Congress**

1. In June 2012 the fiftieth International Eucharistic Congress will be celebrated in Dublin, Ireland. By a happy coincidence 2012 also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Second Vatican Council. The theme for the Dublin Eucharistic Congress 'The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another' picks up on the notion of communion that was so central in the Council's vision.

2. The Second Vatican Council could be described as a Pentecostal event that remains a sure compass by which the Church today too takes its bearings. A major concern throughout its deliberations was how, at a time when the human race has entered a new stage of history involving many new, rapid and profound changes,<sup>1</sup> the Church can best manifest Jesus Christ so that people of our time can see, hear and meet Him living among us. In response to this concern, the Holy Spirit guided the Council to promote an ecclesiology of communion. It is very appropriate, therefore, that the Eucharistic Congress, coinciding with this significant anniversary of the Council, should draw our attention to this theme of communion.

3. The Congress presents us with a golden opportunity to explore further how far we have let the reform proposed by the Council in terms of communion impact upon us, both in terms of the fabric of the Church's own inner life of communion as well as in reference to our outreach to all who journey with us along the pathways of history. The notion of communion is, in fact, very significant for evangelization, that is, for communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ who wants to be among us with his happiness and freedom, ardour and peace. The many sisters and brothers in the faith from Asia and Africa, from the Americas and Oceania, as well as from Europe, who will gather for the International Congress, will enrich our exploration of the Congress theme by expressing the unity and diversity of the Church's communion.

4. It is eighty years since an International Eucharistic Congress was last celebrated in Ireland, then marking the 1500th anniversary of Saint Patrick's arrival on the island and the spread of love of the Eucharist by Irish missionaries. The 1932 Congress was a very significant event in many ways. Though characterized, by the standards of today, by a certain triumphalism it is said that the Congress made a powerful contribution to healing the wounds of the civil war that had torn Ireland apart just a few years previously.<sup>2</sup> It has also been pointed out, however, that the enthusiastic fusion of Catholic sentiment and national pride on that occasion was not without drawbacks in the long term. There have been many changes in Ireland in the intervening period. The contemporary context is very different. The style, purpose and outcome of Eucharistic Congresses have also altered considerably over the years. In recent times an International Eucharistic Congress is more like a festival of faith, consisting of seminars, concerts, workshops, exhibitions. The upshot of all of this is that the 2012 Congress will be quite unlike that held eighty years ago.

5. The contemporary Irish setting for the Eucharistic Congress is one of light and darkness. On the one hand, mindful of 'the rock' of faith from which Irish women, men and children of the Church were hewn (cf. Is 51:1), we can still be grateful to God for the generous, often heroic, contributions made by past generations of Irish to the Church and to humanity.<sup>3</sup> The Northern Ireland peace process has been a good news story in recent times to which the churches have contributed. Despite the present financial difficulties, Ireland can acknowledge with satisfaction the enormous socio-economic improvements on the island compared to 1932. It must be recognized, however, at the outset of these theological and pastoral reflections that today the Catholic Church

in Ireland is treading a path of healing, renewal and reparation for the abuse of children and vulnerable young people, particularly by priests and religious. In many ways, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Irish Catholics feel disorientated by the things that have happened in their Church. The cry of victims and survivors of clerical sexual abuse pierce heaven and earth urging radical signs of repentance.

6. The 2012 Congress can be viewed as a '*kairos*' moment in the biblical sense of an opportune time when something special can happen due to God's intervention. It is a moment when the Church both in Ireland and worldwide can benefit much from listening again to what the Holy Spirit has said and is saying to the Church, in and through the Second Vatican Council. It is indeed a providential occasion for people to come together in communion with Christ and with one another 'to reflect on the wounds inflicted on Christ's body, the sometimes painful remedies needed to bind and heal them, and the need for unity, charity and mutual support in the long-term process of restoration and ecclesial renewal.'<sup>4</sup> The Congress can also be considered as a kind of '*statio*' moment, that is, a pause of commitment and prayer, a station along the Church's journey to which the Church in Ireland invites the universal Church. As such it is a specific moment in its pilgrim journey when the universal Church is invited to focus especially on one particular aspect of the Eucharist, that of communion with Christ and with one another, proposed in the Congress theme. In doing so we shall worship publicly in the bond of charity and unity. Gathering with pilgrims from every part of the world, the Congress is to be an authentic sign of faith and charity in communion offered to all.

### I. b. What does Communion mean?

7. At the very beginning of this document it is necessary to clarify what is meant by the notion of communion. Catholics are used to speaking of 'going to communion' or of 'receiving communion' at Mass. The theological notion of communion ('*koinonia*' in New Testament Greek), however, is multi-faceted.

8. In proclaiming the Kingdom of God, Jesus knew he was sent 'to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free' (cf. Lk 4:16-20). Through his words and deeds he formed a messianic community of disciples who experienced this Kingdom of God draw near to them in Jesus himself. The members of this community related to one another in a new way, in relationships marked by love, freedom and truth, equality and reciprocity. Those called to lead were to exercise their responsibility by serving. In the Fourth Gospel we hear Jesus pray, the night before he died, a prayer that seems to summarise his mission, 'may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me' (Jn 17:21). The community was to be nothing less than a sharing in the very life of God.

9. Jesus' messianic project, however, seemed to have failed miserably with his death on a Cross. And yet, that was not the end of the story. The Risen Christ conquered death. Where sin existed, with all its darkness, division and dread, now grace abounded with all its light, communion and freedom (cf. Rom 5:17-21). The Risen Crucified Christ reconvened his community. The bonds of fellowship deepened. He was alive, building up his community through the Gospel proclaimed, through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist administered, through the service of those entrusted with ministry, through charisms and through the mutual love of the members of the Church: 'they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42). Just as it was during his life on earth, and indeed more so, those now following Christ were not on their own. They were united in communion with Jesus Christ and so with one another through many bonds of communion but especially through the Eucharist.

10. The apostle Paul, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, reflects on the meaning of the Eucharist as presence, communion banquet and sacrifice (cf. 1 Cor 10:16-22). He is writing to a community that was enriched with many gifts and functions, but in which there were also serious

divisions. St. Paul wants to bring home to them that because of the Eucharist we are bound together in communion. He writes: 'The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.' (1 Cor 10:16-17). The word Paul uses for 'sharing' is 'communion'. In receiving the Eucharist the many members of the community become one, that is, they share so profoundly in the body and blood of Christ that together they become the body of Christ. Accordingly, it is Jesus Christ who gives meaning and harmony to the diversity of gifts and functions. People don't belong to Christ simply as if members of a social association or corporation that Jesus set up, but rather they are in a very real sense, through the Eucharist, brought into a deep personal union with the Risen Christ and so with one another.

11. The Apostle Paul feels he has to re-evangelise the community of Corinth as to what communion means. So he provides a very ancient account of the Last Supper (1 Cor 11: 17-33) as if to underline that we find in the paschal mystery, anticipated sacramentally at the Last Supper, the genetic code of the Church's identity as communion. After all, it was Jesus' self-offering in his death and passion that gained salvation for humanity, and salvation can be understood as communion with Christ and so with one another. The Eucharist now enables us and invites us to live out this communion in our lives. This implies a logic of reconciliation, forbearance and mutual being for one another:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgement against themselves... So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another (1 Cor 11:23-29, 33).

12. Saint Paul was so convinced that because of the Eucharist we and our relationships with one another have been utterly transformed that he was shocked to find indifference, neglect of the poor and a general lack of mutual love among the Corinthians. Indeed, referring to the divisions among the Corinthian community, Paul, the founder of their community, goes so far as to say they are actually condemning themselves in the sense that they are contradicting with their lives what they are proclaiming in their Eucharistic celebration. The Eucharist is not a moral duty; it is first and foremost a transformation brought about by Jesus Christ. It is our dignity to be called to communion in Christ and to respond with our lives to that calling.

13. As we mentioned at the beginning of this document, the Second Vatican Council has drawn our attention once again to the importance of the theme of communion. The communion among the faithful in Christ is based on a sharing in holy things. There is communion in the faith, communion of the sacraments, communion of charisms and, above all, a communion in charity. Communion extends to the sharing of goods, both spiritual and material. Our communion is not limited to those on earth, it is also with those who have gone before us and especially with the saints.

14. The topic of communion has also been the subject of dialogue between churches. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (hereafter, ARCIC) has provided the following account of the notion of communion:

Union with God in Christ Jesus through the Spirit is the heart of Christian *koinonia*. Among the various ways in which the term *koinonia* is used in different New Testament contexts, we concentrate on that which signifies a relation between persons resulting from their participation in one and the same reality (cf. 1 John 1:3). The Son of God has taken to himself our human nature, and he has sent upon us his Spirit, who makes us so truly members of the body of Christ that we too

are able to call God 'Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Moreover, sharing in the same Holy Spirit, whereby we become members of the same body of Christ and adopted children of the same Father, we are also bound to one another in a completely new relationship. *Koinonia* with one another is entailed by our *koinonia* with God in Christ. This is the mystery of the Church.... By the Eucharist all the baptized are brought into communion with the source of *koinonia*. He is the one who destroyed the walls dividing humanity (Eph 2:14); he is the one who died to gather into unity all the children of God his Father (cf. John 11:52; 17:20ff).<sup>5</sup>

15. The life of communion has already begun for us here on earth in the ways mentioned above but it is not yet complete until the new heavens and new earth come about as promised by Jesus Christ. The Eucharist is a foretaste and a promise of those new heavens and the new earth where the life of communion will be unending. The closing cry of the scriptures is 'Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!' (Rev 22:20). The Eucharist orientates us in communion with one another to that future not as threat but as invitation. In a world that can easily become preoccupied with the present, the Eucharist invites us to open our hearts in hope to the future as God's promise. Through the Eucharist we anticipate this new future through words and actions so that the future communion can already be grafted onto the present and so that we can already taste and live out what we are to become.

### I. c. The Relevancy of the Theme

16. The theme of communion speaks to the heart of our identity and mission particularly at a time when there are fundamental shifts in patterns of communication and human relationships. The more traditional interpersonal networks and social ties diminish, the more there is a need to find new models of relating at regional, national and global levels. And this raises questions for the way the Church expresses its own community life.

17. In God's plan, the Church is to be a sign and instrument of uniting people with God and with one another.<sup>6</sup> As Tertullian, one of the early Church writers put it, 'One Christian alone is no Christian'. In the Eucharist we discover the genetic code of communion that is at the heart of the Church's identity. It is in meditating what Eucharistic communion means that we realise how the brokenness in communion of the body of Christ strikes at the heart of the Church's evangelising mission. The Church's capacity to gain a hearing from society is seriously diminished when its own failures in the life of communion are shown up, causing scandal to many, whether this be seen, for instance, in mechanisms of sectarianism, hurtful abuse of position, institutionalism or judgementalism. All of this calls for continual attentiveness to what communion with Christ and with one another means in all aspects of life. In particular, we have to find new ways to pass on the life of communion to young people living in the Western world where even the plausibility of faith is often denied. Never has it been more true to say that the great challenge of today is 'to make the Church the school and home of communion' with all that that also implies for institutional reform.<sup>7</sup> That we may be one, so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21).

### I.d. The Eucharist in Ireland

18. The Second Vatican Council defines the Eucharist as 'the source and summit of the Christian life'<sup>8</sup> and affirms that it 'contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth'.<sup>9</sup> Since the time of Patrick, Catholics in Ireland have held the Eucharist in high esteem. It has been celebrated faithfully by them in small island chapels, monastic villages, cathedrals and later, during times of persecution, on Mass rocks. So many treasures remind us of our heritage of love for the Eucharist.<sup>10</sup> The oldest known Latin Eucharistic Hymn is *Sancti venite* found in the Irish seventh century monastic text, the *Antiphonary of Bangor*.<sup>11</sup> There is a wealth of Eucharistic imagery contained in the renowned Book of Kells. In more recent Irish history, the image associated with the apparition of our Lady at Knock includes a Eucharistic motif.<sup>12</sup> The previously mentioned 1932 Eucharistic Congress and the 1979 Papal Visit were both events that bore testimony to the revered place of the Eucharist among the Irish. The Mass has been of central importance for the thousands of Irish missionaries who brought the faith to Africa, Asia and the Americas as well as for many Irish emigrants in various parts of the world. Today too, Ireland still has one of the highest rates of

participation at weekly Mass in Europe. The numbers attending daily Mass are also striking. There is a significant presence of Eucharistic adoration in ecclesial life in Ireland. The practice of having Mass offered for someone continues to be a popular one. And in more recent times, Eucharistic liturgies have been enriched by the presence of new migrants in Ireland.

19. The high regard in which the Irish have held the Eucharist is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps it was remotely prepared for by the Irish ancestors who, like other peoples, left powerful signs of their quest for the Absolute. For instance, the stone age monument at Newgrange (built about 3200 BC) in the Boyne Valley was constructed in a manner that expressed a people's search to be attuned to what for them was the only thing that did not pass away—the annual renewal of the earth by the sun. What was celebrated each year at the winter solstice in Newgrange was, in some sense an intuition, perhaps prompted by the Holy Spirit, at the cosmic level, of the Christian paschal mystery that speaks of reconciliation, peace, oneness with God and with one another. In encountering the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Irish discovered the Eucharist as the great and true treasure that unites us with God, the One who does not pass, and with one another in Christ, who is 'the Alpha and the Omega' of human history (cf. Rev 1:8).

20. In more recent times, however, there have been changes in attitudes to the Mass. Many today say they no longer find Mass life-giving nor does it seem to connect with life. It is said to be boring. It lacks a sense of mystery. There is a tendency to seek spiritual fulfilment outside the Eucharistic community of a church. The disproportionately lower participation of young people is a serious concern. With the drop in the number of priests, Ireland may soon encounter the problem already faced in other countries with respect to the Eucharist – lack of weekly local access to a Sunday celebration.

21. There are clearly many reasons for the change in attitudes to the Mass – not least a sometimes poor, unattractive celebration of the liturgy. Nevertheless, at a time when the very sense of God is experienced by many like a Sun that has gone down beneath the horizon, the restoration of the Eucharist to its central place in people's lives is very much linked to a rediscovery of the true face of the Incarnate God, the God who is love, the God who has come among us: 'For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Mt. 18:20).

22. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council states that in renewing the liturgy, 'the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered above all else'.<sup>13</sup> Pope Benedict has spoken of the importance of knowing the *ars celebrandi*, the art of celebrating the liturgy. Those who have specific roles to play in the celebration, above all the priest, but also readers, musicians, extraordinary ministers of holy communion, those expressing prayers of the faithful as well as those involved in serving or in the presentation of gifts, need to prepare well. Often today parish groups prepare liturgy together. Commentaries on the Mass are helpful and here mention can be made particularly of the *General Introduction of the Roman Missal* and the *General Introduction to the Lectionary*. No one, however, is merely a spectator at Mass. All are called to participate actively, entering into the mystery of the Eucharist, seeking to love one another, and taking part attentively and devoutly, inwardly uniting themselves with all that is going on. Indeed, it could be said that active participation at Mass needs to begin well before the actual celebration. All our effort to live the Gospel in the bits and pieces of life is the best preparation for tuning in to what the Eucharist is about.

23. One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council was the 1970 Roman Missal. By the time the Eucharistic Congress is taking place the English translation of the 2008 Latin Missal is expected to have been published. This new English translation of the Missal will reflect the guidelines outlined in an instruction for the Roman Rite called *Liturgiam authenticam* that calls for a more accurate translation of what is in the Latin Missal.<sup>14</sup> The Eucharistic Congress will be using the English translation of the Roman Missal, Third Edition.

## I.e. Sisters and Brothers in Christ

24. Inspired by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress aims to be an occasion when our sisters and brothers of other churches and ecclesial communities can share the insights and wisdom of their ecclesial experience and structures.<sup>15</sup> There is much Eucharistic doctrine that we hold in common. It is clear that many churches and ecclesial communities understand themselves as Eucharistic fellowships, celebrating the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

25. The 1982 Lima Text, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* was warmly welcomed by many precisely for underlining the teachings we share. The numerous bi-lateral dialogues in which the Catholic Church is engaged regarding the Eucharist enrich us all. They help Catholics understand their faith in a deeper way<sup>16</sup> In the context of the Congress, therefore, joint study of the many documents that have issued from the dialogues is to be recommended. They include: *The Lima Text: Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982); the Joint Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, *The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982); ARCIC, *Eucharistic Doctrine* (1971), *Eucharistic Doctrine: Elucidation* (1979), *Clarifications of Certain Aspects of the Agreed Statements on Eucharist and Ministry* (1994); the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue, *The Eucharist* (1978); the Reformed-Catholic dialogue, *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* (1977). The Eucharist has been explored also in Methodist-Catholic dialogue such as *The Dublin Report* (1976) and *The Grace Given You in Christ* (2006).

26. Increasingly, thanks to ever deeper contacts with one another and mutual co-operation, Christians have experienced a burning desire to join in celebrating the one Eucharist of the Lord. Nevertheless, despite the many rich fruits of dialogue, our churches are not yet at the point of uniting in full fellowship around the same Eucharistic table. It is, therefore, above all at the Eucharist that Christians feel most acutely the impact of their divisions. The hurt and pain of this wound are to be acknowledged. The Lima document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, n. 26 voices the tragedy of this situation in terms of its impact on missionary witness.

27. The Second Vatican Council laid down two key principles which govern sacramental sharing. The first is witness to the unity of the Church and the second regards sharing in the means of grace. Witness to the unity of the Church does not, as a general rule, allow Eucharistic sharing by members of churches not in complete communion with the Catholic Church, but the grace to be had from it sometimes commends this practice. It is not always easy to walk between these two principles. They are, in fact, complementary. Catholic teaching reminds us that the two basic principles must always be taken into account together. It is on this basis that the Catholic Church envisages certain situations in which, because there is an objectively grave and pressing spiritual need, a member of another church who manifests the faith which the Catholic Church has in the Eucharist, may receive Holy Communion in a Catholic Church. Examples of such circumstances (each occasion to be judged separately) include: the admission to Holy Communion of the parent of a child to be baptised during Mass, or receiving First Holy Communion or Confirmation; the parent or wife of someone being ordained; the immediate family of the deceased at a Funeral Mass.

28. While full Eucharistic sharing among all Christians is not yet possible, other expressions of communion are possible and need to be cultivated.<sup>17</sup> In our desire for unity we are not starting from zero. If the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, there is a vast expanse around it that we all can and need to explore further. Since, through baptism, we have been inserted into the one Church of Christ (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4) there are many 'presences' of Jesus Christ to be valued and shared, celebrated and lived together. Our baptismal faith is the gateway into many forms of inter-communion in a dialogue of life that provides the basis for various initiatives, especially around our communion in the Word of God, such as ecumenical vespers, peace projects and liturgies, ecumenical pilgrimages, charitable works and outreach to the poor

and marginalised, local pastoral councils, evangelising projects as well as affiliation together in new and old communities and associations, monasteries, religious orders and movements.

29. It is to be hoped that the Eucharistic Congress can be a forum to develop avenues of common reflection in the light of many positive experiences that have come to life since the Second Vatican Council. It should also be an occasion to acknowledge with gratitude the valuable and often trail-blazing role of inter-church families in building up communion with Christ and with one another among Christians of different churches. Perhaps we can join in common prayer for the Congress — that it be an opportunity for us to live a greater communion of life and love so that we can enter 'that interior space where Christ, the source of the Church's unity, can effectively act, with all the power of his Spirit, the Paraclete.'<sup>18</sup>

### I.f. A Eucharistic Congress for All

30. It is sometimes suggested that the phrase 'here comes everybody' used by James Joyce in one of his works referred in some way to the notion of catholicity. Since the Eucharist contains all that God has done and will do for all of humanity in the history of salvation, an International Congress on the Eucharist has to reach out towards everybody, including both present and future generations, baptized or not. The Second Vatican Council teaches us that since Jesus Christ died for everyone, 'we ought to believe that the Holy Spirit, in a manner known only to God, offers to everyone the possibility of being associated with this paschal mystery.'<sup>19</sup>

31. It cannot be denied that some find it difficult even to enter the doors of a church after what they have experienced through the actions of priests and religious or the inaction of their superiors. Others, for many different reasons, maintain little more than a tenuous contact with the Church or engage with it primarily for special occasions. It is to be hoped, however, that those who, for whatever reason, feel alienated from the Church, might consider re-visiting it and taking a new look at its message in the context of the Congress. It is to be hoped that they will discover a community that in recent years has recognised more clearly its faults and failings, seeking now in a spirit of repentance and reconciliation to heal memories and begin anew in the commitment to *be* and *speak* of Jesus' life-giving message.

32. In line with what the Second Vatican Council encourages, the Church today wants to learn from its sisters and brothers with whom it travels on its pilgrim journey.<sup>20</sup> Everyone can contribute to reform in the Church. In the words of the prophet Isaiah 43:19, 'I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?'

## II. Journeying Together towards the 2012 Eucharistic Congress

33. The Eucharistic Congress is more than simply what will happen in June 2012. The lead-up to the event as well as the follow-up to the Congress are very important. The programme of healing, renewal and reparation linked to the scandal of clerical sexual abuse continues as a priority. The signposts to guide us along the coming year and a half of preparation are provided by the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The following points, gathered around the motifs of communion and evangelisation are merely indicative. Above all, the Eucharistic Congress can be seen as a platform for evangelization that begins with Catholics themselves engaging in a journey of new evangelization.

## II.a. Promoting the Ecclesiology and Spirituality of Communion

34. There are many activities that the theme of the Congress could suggest. However, before making practical plans, it is necessary above all to promote a spirituality of communion centred on the encounter with the Person of Jesus Christ. As Pope Benedict wrote in his very first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 1, 'Being 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.' In the light of the Second Vatican Council's ecclesiology of communion that centred on the Person of Jesus Christ, it could be said that the Spirit today is prompting the whole Church in the direction of promoting a spirituality of communion that lets Jesus Christ be seen and encountered.<sup>21</sup> In what is perhaps one of the strongest descriptions of communion in terms of brotherly/sisterly love ever found in a Magisterial text addressed to the whole Church, Pope John Paul explained key features of a communitarian spirituality that is at the root of all vocations.<sup>22</sup> This spirituality is to be exercised in relations between bishops, priests and deacons, between priests and laity, between clergy and Religious, between associations and ecclesial movements.

35. First of all the spirituality of communion involves 'the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us'. It also means 'an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me"'. Here the Pope underlines a new 'thinking' and 'feeling' in terms of sharing with others 'their joys and sufferings... their desires and... their needs'. This means offering deep and genuine friendship.

36. A spirituality of communion implies also 'the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me"'. Finally, Pope John Paul points to the need to know how to 'make room' for our brothers and sisters, bearing 'each other's burdens' (Gal 6:2) and resisting the selfish temptations which constantly beset us and provoke competition, careerism, distrust and jealousy.

37. In striking fashion, Pope John Paul concludes his commentary on a spirituality of communion saying, 'Let us have no illusions: unless we follow this spiritual path, external structures of communion will serve very little purpose. They would become mechanisms without a soul, "masks" of communion rather than its means of expression and growth.'

38. On the basis of the spirituality of communion being lived among us, we can and must proceed to tease out the implications of the ecclesiology of communion at all levels of Church life. This brings with it a new attentiveness to the Word of God as proposed by Vatican II, an increased sense of co-responsibility in pastoral care, a love of preference for the poor and the young, a rediscovery of the Church's charismatic dimension and a greater appreciation of the dynamics of synodality in the life of the Church.

39. The period of preparation for the Congress is a time to look again at the significance of the weekly Sunday Mass in terms of communion with Christ and with one another. The 'Sunday obligation' is an obligation not least to ourselves, to heed the fact that we are part of a community and that we and the community suffer when this is overlooked. The Apostolic Letter, *Dies Domini* (2 July 1998) is a valuable resource for exploring the many profound aspects of Sunday Mass. Catechesis on this theme can highlight how the Eucharist is the mystery of Christ living and working in the Church understood as communion. Such catechesis can also explain more clearly the social, ethical and cultural implications of the Eucharist.

40. The family, as 'domestic Church', plays a primary role in the Church's life. The mutual self-giving of man and woman creates a new reality of communion, of a shared life that overflows into the life of society and of the Church. The Church has often spoken of the nuptial character of the Eucharist, the sacrament of Christ the Bridegroom and His Bride. In Pope Benedict's Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, *Sacramentum caritatis*, n. 27 we read how 'in the theology of Saint

Paul, conjugal love is a sacramental sign of Christ's love for his Church, a love culminating in the Cross, the expression of his "marriage" with humanity and at the same time the origin and heart of the Eucharist. For this reason the Church manifests her particular spiritual closeness to all those who have built their family on the sacrament of Matrimony.'. The 2012 Eucharistic Congress is a valuable occasion to explore how the family can be helped in contemporary society to live out its life of communion and also to discover what family life – in the richness of its many dimensions – has to offer to the broader life of communion in the Church. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* (1981) and his *Letter to Families* (1995) can also be studied in this context.

41. The contribution of loving marriages and stable family life to the common good is immeasurable. The heartbreak of broken marriages and ruptured families is, therefore, all the greater. The Church wishes to reach out to all the faithful who find themselves in such difficult circumstances and there needs to be careful discernment of different situations. The 2012 International Eucharistic Congress should explore what is said in *Sacramentum caritatis*, 29 'the divorced and remarried continue to belong to the Church, which accompanies them with special concern and encourages them to live as fully as possible the Christian life through regular participation at Mass, albeit without receiving communion, listening to the word of God, eucharistic adoration, prayer, participation in the life of the community, honest dialogue with a priest or spiritual director, dedication to the life of charity, works of penance, and commitment to the education of their children.'.

## II. b. Evangelization

42. The Church exists to evangelise. It has good news to bring. It is called to indicate the pathway towards happiness and fulfilment. In the Gospel we read about some Greeks who came to the disciple Philip during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover and requested to 'see Jesus' (cf. Jn 12:21). Many people today too want to see him. Perhaps more than before they want Christians not only to 'speak' of him but to 'show' him.

43. The Eucharist draws us into a communion which, of its very nature, is missionary, evangelising. If we live out the implications of the Eucharist we show Jesus Christ in our personal and community life. Communion and evangelisation are intimately linked. As one contemporary author puts it, 'it is certainly clear that only a people of God that has allowed itself to be gathered into unity and unanimity could convince the world'.<sup>23</sup> It is out of a debt of love that we go out transformed by the Eucharist to transform the world around us with the love we have encountered in the Eucharist. We go with conviction to continue Jesus Christ's outreach to all, building up communion: 'That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us' (1 Jn 1:3).

44. Accordingly, the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress is a time to review together the implications of the Eucharist for evangelization. On the basis of the Council's ecclesiology of missionary communion, the Church's evangelising mission is often spoken of in terms of 'circles of Dialogue'.<sup>24</sup> We dialogue with one another, with our sister and brother Christians, with sisters and brothers of other religions. Dialogue extends to all people of good will, whether of religious conviction or not, who strive to build up a world based on the dignity of the human person and the values of justice and liberation, life and peace, solidarity with the marginalised, education and care for the sick and those in need. Recognising this fact, the Eucharistic Congress can become an event of respectful proclamation, of dialogue, of sharing the Good News and offering of testimonies. And this also means renewing our calling to 'always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you' (1 Pet 3:15). Here we can draw inspiration also from Blessed John Henry Newman's keen insights into the relationship of faith and reason.

45. The Church today invites us to be imaginative. It speaks of the need for a New Evangelization, one that is new in energy, method and expression. The Eucharistic Congress

should involve and integrate the various forms of popular piety linked to the Eucharist into the Church's new evangelization.

46. It seems appropriate that the preparation for the Congress should include some form of acknowledgment before God and before all, of the faults that have been committed by members of the Church. Purification of memory is essential both to communion and evangelization.

47. The Eucharistic mystery opens our eyes to the social, cultural and political implications of the Gospel. It is the 'school of active love for neighbour'.<sup>25</sup> We can think of Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta's comments to the effect that in the Mass we have Jesus in the appearance of bread, while in the slums we see Christ and touch him in broken bodies and in abandoned children. A true participation at Mass will prompt revision of our personal, social and institutional relationships with all our neighbours. The 2012 Eucharist Congress can be an occasion to reflect in the light of the Church's social teaching on the implications of the Eucharist for the Church's commitment to promoting justice, peace and freedom. In particular, economic and political life can be analysed in terms of communion in the light of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009).

48. Exploring the protection of creation in the logic of communion is another avenue that can be gainfully pursued in preparation for the Congress. It is an opportunity to reflect on threats to the environment and the Christian hope that commits us to working responsibly for the protection of creation. The Eucharist has a universal and, so to speak, cosmic character, because 'even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated *on the altar of the world*. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation.'<sup>26</sup>

49. Finally, the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress could be an opportunity to reflect on the immense possibilities offered by mass media and digital technology for building up the worldwide family of humankind. Reflecting on the message of the Eucharist, we can find spiritual, theological and cultural perspectives that have something to offer to reflection on how to understand and best use mass media.

## **II.c A Story to Guide us: the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus**

50. The episode of Jesus Christ's encounter with the disciples on the road to Emmaus has much to say to us as we set out on our journey towards 2012 (Lk 24: 13-35). The story is a metaphor that can inspire us. It is an event that happens 'along the road'. Two disciples who had followed Jesus are journeying together and talking about the recently distressing and mysterious events that had happened in Jerusalem – Jesus' crucifixion and the discovery of the empty tomb. A 'stranger' comes up to them and walks with them. They don't recognise him. In their disillusionment and wavering faith the two disciples look sad and are unable to recognise that it is the Risen Crucified Jesus. Stuck in their trauma, they are unable to see what is new. But the unknown stranger enters into their discussion. In what is almost an Easter proclamation, they tell their story right up the Crucifixion. The only piece missing is the Resurrection! Jesus' death had clearly banished their hope of liberation. They had hoped he would inaugurate the coming of the Kingdom of God with its implications for their relationship with God and with one another in the newly formed Messianic community. Instead, it was some of their own leaders who handed him over to be condemned to death. The disciples are disorientated and saddened. Things had not worked out as they had hoped. True, they had heard the first rumours of the empty tomb from the female followers of Jesus, the first to announce the Resurrection, but even that had provoked in the two men no more than mere passing wonder.

51. At this point, Jesus who has been listening attentively begins to talk. He is the Good News they need to experience! The first thing he does is to point to everything in Scripture that will help them to understand the Christ event. He underlines the essential condition for entering into the new heavenly life with God: suffering and dying like Christ in order to rise to new life. The journey comes to an end. The disciples have reached their destination. Night has come. The disciples

press Jesus to remain with them. Can we discern in this a plea to Jesus to remain with us in our community when the night of trial draws near?

52. Jesus carries out the actions associated with the ritual of the Jewish meal. The Christian reader perceives the language of the Eucharistic action. Now Jesus has become the head of the family, as it were, sharing his table with the disciples. It is a reminder that in the Eucharist, believers are invited to share in the heavenly banquet presided over by the risen Christ himself. The two disciples experience his presence there. In the Eucharist they finally recognise who it is that has been journeying with them. But, once recognised, Jesus vanishes from their sight. His presence now becomes 'visible' in a new way through faith. It becomes 'visible' in the disciples themselves, whose eyes have been opened by the Scripture and the Eucharist. They now, as it were, continue Jesus' mission of spreading the Good News. He is in them and among them.

53. In his account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke the Evangelist underlines for us how, before opening their eyes, Jesus opened the Scriptures to the disciples, a real preparation for personal encounter in faith. Luke is also helping us note how it was the Holy Spirit who was at work in them, 'burning' their hearts (cf. Lk 3:16) as Jesus spoke, arousing faith, creating for them a new relationship with the Risen Christ and giving them the strength to go out and witness. The two disciples, we are told, return immediately to Jerusalem, even though it is late. Obviously, it is important to return to that communion with others who, in Jesus Christ, are the nucleus of the early Church. There they hear the proclamation of the eleven: "Jesus is truly risen and has appeared to Simon", that is Peter. The witness of Peter and that of the apostles chosen by Jesus will be authoritative for faith in the resurrection of Jesus. But the disciples also go to Jerusalem evangelising. The two disciples go to tell their story about what had happened along the way, that is, the explanation of Scripture by an unknown companion and then their recognition of the Risen Christ in the 'breaking of bread'. The message is clear. For the Christian community, Scripture and the Eucharist are major sources of encounter with the Risen Christ who then builds us up in communion with one another, as 'other Christs' and sends us out evangelising.

## Part Two:

### The Parts of the Mass as a Guide to the Congress Theme

54. In the second part of this document, we come to a consideration of the theme of the Congress. No synthesis could do justice to the wealth of meaning and reference contained in the Eucharist. As the Catechism of the Church puts it, 'the Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the Church is kept in being'.<sup>27</sup> In the Antiphon *O Sacrum Convivium*<sup>28</sup>, St Thomas Aquinas provides us with a wonderful summary of the Eucharist: 'O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory given to us.'

55. The Mass is the action of what St. Augustine calls the 'Total Christ', that is Jesus Christ and his body, the Church. Jesus Christ is the real presider at the Eucharist. It is he who loves us first by assembling us, speaking to us, taking up our prayers and, in the power of the Spirit, offering himself to the Father on our behalf. It is he who nourishes us with the bread from heaven, the bread of life, the bread of truth. The Eucharist projects us towards the glorious return of Christ. The Church depends totally on this action of Christ. The People of God prays and offers itself to the Father through Christ, with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Every community that assembles for Mass, no matter how small, represents the universal Church in this great action of the Eucharist. As such, Mass is a public act and not a private or individual activity.<sup>29</sup>

56. In order to focus on the Congress theme, this part of the document will be organised around the structure of the celebration of the Eucharist. A careful study of the Mass parts and texts reveals so many of the Church's spiritual treasures. As we let the parts of the Mass guide our reflection on the theme for the 2012 International Eucharistic Congress, we can note how three communions inter-relate – communion with Christ in our neighbour, communion with Christ in the Word and communion with Christ in the sacramental signs of bread and wine. A quote from the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus will begin our reflection in each section.

### III. The Introductory Rite of the Mass: Journeying in Communion with Christ in our Neighbour

*'Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus... While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them... As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them.'* (Lk 24:13-17, 29)

#### III.a. The Risen Crucified Christ gathers us together

57. The disciples on the road to Emmaus ask Jesus to stay with them. In doing so he becomes the head of the family, as it were, gathering them together for the Eucharistic banquet. As each Mass is about to begin, people assemble together in one place drawn by Jesus Christ himself.

58. Our coming together is the Church assembling in that place. Writing about participation in the Lord's Supper, St. Paul uses a phrase ('when you come together...' [1 Cor 11:18, 20; cf. 14:26]) that resonates with the word used in Greek for Church (*ekklesia*) and the Hebrew word for the assembly (*qahal*) of the People of God. Jesus Christ who always precedes the Church, the invisible but real presider at Mass, is gathering his priestly people (cf. 1 Pet 2:9). He is the Bridegroom of his spousal people, the Church, inviting us to enter anew into the 'banquet-memorial' in which the once-for-all event of salvation is to become effectively present. Our singing at Mass is a fusion of voices into one voice that expresses the fact that we are this people, one heart and soul, giving glory to God.

59. Our gathering for Mass is such an obvious thing that the significance of assembly could be overlooked. Yet, in an era when encounter with others is framed by the technology of television, internet and mobile telephone rather than the face-to-face human interaction especially in the anonymity of the urban metropolis, it is good to rediscover this most obvious characteristic of the Mass – it assembles people of different ages, backgrounds and interests together. One of the most ancient names for the Eucharist is, in fact, *synaxis*, a coming together, an assembly.

60. The action of processing signals the beginning of the celebration. The procession – large or small – calls to mind for us the journey dimension of our lives. All of us are on a holy journey together. The people of Israel journeyed in the desert 'on eagle's wings' under the guidance of Moses, Joshua and others towards the promised land (Ex 19:4). God provided them with manna as food for their journey. Jesus himself gathered disciples around them and together they journeyed up to Jerusalem. On a more profound level, Jesus spoke of his journey in terms of passing over from this world to the One he called 'Abba' Father. As we see in the case of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, after his death and resurrection, the Risen Crucified Christ re-assembled his Messianic community who had been so shattered by the apparent total failure of his mission. He transformed his disciples to become followers of what they soon called 'the Way'

(Jesus Christ himself being the Way, the Truth and the Life [Jn 14:6]). At every Mass Jesus Christ assembles this people to celebrate the great memorial of his passion, death and resurrection. This memorial unites us and makes us share in the victory of our head, the new Joshua, who leads us on our journey into the new promised land of communion with Christ and with one another.

61. In the very opening greeting when the bishop or priest, acting in the person of Christ says, 'The Lord be with you', and the people respond, 'And also with you' (or 'with your spirit' as the new translation puts it), we are recognising the reality that Jesus Christ is present among us fulfilling and exceeding our every desire to gather together. He has promised: 'where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them' (Mt 18:20). But when we say that Jesus is among us, we also are recalling that he wants us to be where he is – in the very heart of God.

62. At the very beginning of Mass, indeed, when we make the sign of the Cross on our bodies, we are reminded that we are not simply in a particular church doing an act of worship to a God who is distant. We are not outsiders to God but rather, through Jesus Christ, we are 'insiders', that is, baptised believers who already share in God's life, living, as it were, within God's own inner relations of loving communion between the Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus our high priest and presider of prayer, stands before the throne of grace, interceding on our behalf. Through the liturgical rite we are brought into a movement of love that reaches us in Christ Jesus, draws us in the Spirit towards the Father and so opens our eyes towards our sisters and brothers in the communion of faith. Yes, we are in a building called a church, but in reality we are also in a sacred space that has been opened up for us by the Holy Spirit. In this pneumatic atmosphere of the Triune God who is love (1 Jn 4) we are invited to discover each neighbour as a sister or brother with whom we are united because each one is a sister or brother for whom Jesus Christ died (cf. 1 Cor 8:11).

### **III.b. The Penitential Act and 'Collect' – In Solidarity with One Another**

63. Immediately after the initial declaration at the Mass that 'the Lord is with us' and conscious of the great event we are about to celebrate and just before we hear the Word of God we are given an opportunity to pause in silence and then confess our sins and receive God's healing forgiveness. Only God can forgive sins. But in the Fourth Gospel we read how on the evening of the first day of the week, Jesus conferred upon the Twelve the power to forgive sins (Jn 20:21-23). He did so through their reception of the Spirit symbolised by the breath of Jesus upon them. The community that assembles for Mass seeks forgiveness not just as individuals but as a community as there is solidarity in our need for forgiveness. We rely in prayer on our communion with Mary, the angels and saints and all our brothers and sisters. We commit ourselves to beginning again in our baptismal journey of loving God and our neighbour with all our heart and mind. The rite of the blessing and sprinkling of water at the beginning of Mass underlines this link between our baptism and participation in the Eucharist. The Gloria is the opportunity to give voice together to praising God for every good gift, above all the gift of his Son.

64. The invitation by the priest, 'Let us pray' leads to the 'Collect' that concludes the opening rite of the Mass. We are invited into silence and prayer. It is a call to gather up all the prayers in our hearts and together let them be expressed in the Church's 'collect', the 'collective' prayer to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. The fact is that, imbued by faith, hope and love, our life is called to be an extended 'yes' to God, expressed in neighbourly love and daily prayer. This is most powerfully declared at Mass. We bring with us all of our personal and family life. We carry with us before the Lord the joys and sorrows, hopes and desires of the whole Church and of all humanity. We need this moment at the very beginning of Mass when we remind and thank God for past goodness to us and petition him for further gifts. The Collect often provides profound statements about the feast day or the liturgical season.

## IV. The Liturgy of the Word:

### Communion with Christ in the Word

*'Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.... They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"' (Lk 24:27, 32)*

#### IV.a. The Twofold Table of the Word and of the Bread of Life

65. In the Emmaus story we hear the Risen Jesus reproach the two disciples for not sufficiently allowing Scripture to nourish their faith, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!...' (Lk 24:25). Before opening their eyes to recognise him in the breaking of bread, Jesus opens the Scriptures for the disciples and interprets them. The encounter with him in Scripture, in other words, is intimately linked to their personal encounter with him in faith in the breaking of the bread. The sixth chapter of the Gospel according to John also indicates that receiving the Bread of Life cannot be detached from listening to, believing in and living out the word of Jesus Christ.

66. The history of the people of Israel tells the story of a people guided in a lively manner by the Word of God. The world was created through the Word. The prophets spoke the Word of the Lord. The Word was seen almost as having a personal presence. It became clear to the people of Israel that just like the rain and snow, the Word does not return without accomplishing that for which it was sent (Is 55:10f). In the writings of St. Paul, the Word is also presented as something alive and active. He entrusts the elders of Ephesus to the Word that builds up (cf. Acts 20:32). In the prologue of the Fourth Gospel we read how Jesus achieved all that the Word of God is said to have done in the Old Testament. Jesus is the 'Word made flesh'; he pitches his tent among us (Jn 1:14). There is an intimate bond between Jesus, the Word come down from heaven, his words of life communicated to us in Scripture and the Bread of Life that he gives as our spiritual nourishment. The First Letter of St. John begins with a description of how the apostles heard, saw, contemplated and handed on the 'Word of life'.

67. In continuity with ancient tradition, Scripture is read at every Mass. Writing around 150 AD, St. Justin describes the Mass in terms that are easily recognisable still to us today as he provides the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration that have stayed the same until our own day. He mentions how the 'memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read' as long as time permits and that, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things.<sup>30</sup>

68. Recognising the presence of Christ in Scripture, many Patristic and Conciliar texts draw a parallel between the Eucharist and the Word. Ignatius of Antioch affirms: 'My refuge is the Gospel which is for me like Jesus' flesh'.<sup>31</sup> Caesarius of Arles writes: 'Tell me, brothers and sisters, what do you think is more important: the Word of God or the Body of Christ? If you want to respond well, you must without doubt say the Word of God is not less than the Body of Christ. And therefore if we are so careful when we are handed the Body of Christ so that nothing of it may fall to the ground from our hands, ought we not take equal care so that the Word of God, that is offered and given to us, might not escape our heart, something that would happen if we are thinking of something else? It is not less culpable to listen negligently to the Word of God than to let the Body of Christ fall to the ground'.<sup>32</sup> Saint Jerome too compares the body and blood of the Lord with the science of Scriptures: 'Certainly, since the body of the Lord is true food and his blood true drink... we have the advantage in our actual life in the world to be able to eat his flesh and drink his blood, not only in the mystery, but also in the reading of Scriptures. The true food and true drink that one takes from the Word of God is the science of Scriptures. Whoever does not eat my flesh and drink my blood...'.<sup>33</sup> And, of course, we remember St. Jerome's famous phrase: 'ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ'.<sup>34</sup> Many excellent things were said about the importance of the

Word of God at the Second Vatican Council.<sup>35</sup> It was one of the great merits of the Council to urge that 'the table of the word of God be more lavishly prepared for the faithful, opening to them more abundantly the treasures of the Bible'.<sup>36</sup>

69. Using the imagery of the 'table' of God's Word and of Christ's Body that we gather around at Mass, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* brings out the link between the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist: 'The Mass is made up, as it were, of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These, however, are so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship. For in the Mass the table both of God's word and of Christ's Body is prepared, from which the faithful may be instructed and refreshed'.<sup>37</sup>

70. The main part of the Liturgy of the Word is made up of readings from Sacred Scripture as well as a psalm between the readings. The homily, the profession of faith, and the universal prayer or prayer of the faithful carry it forward and conclude it. Admittedly, there are many words spoken and heard in this part of the liturgy and in the flood of words in our world today it is easy for us to grow weary and become dulled to the impact of words. And yet, we have all had the experience of the right word said at the right time helping us greatly. Words can console or encourage, establish or restore friendship, express love or resolution. Words communicate more than just information! They are the vehicle for interpersonal relationship. How much more this is so in the case of Jesus Christ who speaks and is present in his Word read in the Church, the Word that builds up communion.<sup>38</sup>

#### **IV.b. Through the power of the Spirit, the Word 'Christifies us' making us one**

71. The Liturgy of the Word is an important moment in that it provides the gathered community with a rich and effective encounter with Jesus Christ in his Word building up our communion with him and with one another. This encounter takes place in the power of the Holy Spirit. As we read in the *General Introduction to the Lectionary*: 'the Word of God constantly proclaimed in the Liturgy is always, then, a living and effective word through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father's love that never fails in its effectiveness toward us'.<sup>39</sup> The Liturgy of the Word leads us into an active dialogue in which the Spirit is at work. Indeed the Holy Spirit makes possible our effective response to the Word of God, so that we identify with what is heard in the celebration of the Liturgy and want to do what the Word tells us (cf. Jas 1:22).

72. The Word builds up communion not least because through the power of the Spirit, the dialogue-encounter with Jesus Christ in the Word, if we are open to it, 'Christifies' us, that is, it causes a certain death and resurrection in our lives; a dying to what St. Paul says is the 'old self' in order to put on the 'new self', Christ in each one of us who fulfils who we are in God's plan (Cf. Eph 4: 22-23). Keeping us in a living communion with the witness of the Apostles that is handed on in Scripture, the Word helps us understand more deeply our baptismal identity: 'it is no longer I who live but Christ living in me' (Gal 2:20). And if Christ lives in us, then all of us are one: 'there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28).

73. As we learn from Jesus' parable of the sower going out to sow seed (Mk 4: 1-20), the Word of God contains the power of the Kingdom of God. It can bear much fruit. That the Word proclaimed and heard at Mass can have such a powerful effect in our lives can be seen from the fact that throughout the history of the Church there have been many significant episodes of people hearing the Word at Mass and changing direction in their life. Yes, the Word is prophetic and disturbing! It's enough to think of Anthony the Abbot. Hearing the sentence of the Gospel proclaimed at Mass 'if you wish to be perfect, go and sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me' (Mt 19:21) and putting it into practice was what changed his life completely. He became the founder of the monastic tradition in the Church, a tradition that has provided or inspired countless communities characterised by a radical life of communion. Similarly Francis of Assisi whose encounter with the Word gave life to the reforming Franciscan movement. A practical piece of advice, therefore, given in the early

centuries of the Church by St. John Chrysostom still has value. Speaking to some men he commented: 'When you go home together with your wife and children you should take the Scriptures and re-read them and repeat the Word you have heard (in Church)'.<sup>40</sup>

#### IV. c. The Homily, the Profession of Faith and the Prayer of the Faithful

74. It could be said that the homily is to the Liturgy of the Word what the breaking of the bread is to the Communion Rite. Its purpose is to encourage us to accept the Word as what it truly is, the Word of God, and to put it into practice in the bits and pieces of our lives. The word 'homily' comes from the Greek word that means 'familiar conversation' or 'heart speaking to heart'. Through the homily, the spoken Word of God and the liturgy of the Eucharist together become 'a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ'.<sup>41</sup> In helping people put on the mind of Christ by exposing some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass of the day, the homilist needs to take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners.<sup>42</sup> The homily is aimed at explaining the Word of God and helping people discover the 'art of living' in communion with Christ and with one another that flows from the Eucharist.

75. The Creed or Profession of Faith recited at the weekly Eucharist summarises the great mysteries of the faith. The Creed is like our identity card, expressing in a common language of faith our communion in faith. The Catechism comments that 'to say the Credo with faith is to enter into communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst we believe'.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, when in the early Church variations of the expression 'in pace' (in peace) were found on the Christian tombs, this idiom wasn't simply a prayer for the repose of the person who had died, but a declaration that the deceased had lived in the communion of faith of the Church. Every time we recite the Creed we affirm our faith in the Triune God, the ultimate source and model of the Church's communion. The Church's vocation is to be seen as 'a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.<sup>44</sup>

76. After reciting the Creed we pour out our petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the entire Church and for the salvation of the whole world. In the Prayers of the Faithful we extend the awareness of our communion beyond the confines of the praying community gathered in any one place. We pray with confidence, relying on Jesus' promise that 'if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.' (Mt 18:19). At this point we stand with Jesus before the throne of grace, interceding for all of humankind. Intercession is a form of prayer found in ancient synagogue patterns of prayer that Christians adopted and inserted into their celebration of the Eucharist from the beginning. The Prayer of the Faithful is not something to be taken for granted. Catechumens are asked to withdraw before the Prayers of the Faithful. It is a privilege to be part of this praying community united with Christ and with one another.

### V. The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Communion with Christ in the Eucharist

*'When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them'* (Lk 24:30)

#### V.a. Corresponding to the Last Supper

77. In describing the culminating moment of the Emmaus story, Luke depicts the Risen Christ performing the same basic actions he had performed at the multiplication of the loaves and at the Last Supper. He takes the bread, blesses, breaks and distributes it. Luke clearly intends a Eucharistic connotation. Indeed behind all four accounts of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper given to us in Scripture (cf. Matthew 26:17-35; Mark 14:12-31; Luke 22:7-38; 1 Cor

11:23-26) we can detect a liturgical text that was in use early in the apostolic communities in which Jesus' words and deeds at the Last Supper are summarised.

78. The General Instruction on the Missal, n. 72 reminds us that the Liturgy of the Eucharist corresponds to the words and actions of Christ at the Last Supper that have been handed down to us in Scripture and Tradition:

- At the Preparation of the Gifts, the bread and the wine with water are brought to the altar, the same elements that Christ took into his hands;
- In the Eucharistic Prayer, thanks is given to God for the whole work of salvation, and the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ, source of our communion with one another;
- Through the breaking of the bread and through Communion, the faithful, though they are many, receive from the one bread the Lord's Body and from the one chalice the Lord's Blood in the same way the Apostles received them from Christ's own hands.

### **V.b. The Preparation of the Gifts: Signs of Love, Thanksgiving and Communion**

79. At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist the gifts of bread and wine, which will become Christ's body and blood, are brought to the altar. They are simple elements, signs of God's love, representing in microcosm the gifts of creation that God has given to us and that our work and creativity have helped to form. The presentation of the offering at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and 'commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices'.<sup>45</sup>

80. The offering of the bread and wine echoes the Jewish liturgy with its formula of blessing called *berakah*. The *berakah* blessing isn't simply a ritual blessing on things but rather a statement of thanksgiving to God for the benefits and wonders he has done for his people. It expresses admiration and faith as well as recognition of the need to respond fully to God who has made a covenant with his people that has bonded them together. It is only because God loved us first, coming to meet his people and bless us, that we can celebrate the marvels of salvation thanking God and blessing his name.

81. The bread and wine presented at this point of the Mass are signs that prepare us also for what is to come. The bread and wine will be transformed by God into the glorified body and blood of his Son. Then his glorified life will be communicated to us in the form of food and drink that will energise us and bond us as a community. When, at the rite of communion, we will chew, swallow and digest the bread transformed into the bread from heaven, thereby in a certain sense 'unmaking' it, its 'unmaking' will really be the 'making of us' because it will form us in Christ in communion with one another. So, in preparing the gifts, we are not only opening ourselves to the action of God who will change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, we are making ourselves available to be transformed into instruments of communion. The addition of a drop of water to the chalice can be understood in this sense too as signifying our humanity that is to be united to Jesus Christ's self-offering that we commemorate at the Eucharist and in whom we are made one.

82. The Preparation of the Gifts also helps us realise we are involved in what is sometimes called a 'cosmic liturgy', that is, the movement of the whole of creation towards the ultimate eschatological goal of the glorification of God and the transformation of the world. The goal of the Eucharist is to begin here and now the 'Christification' of the whole cosmos so that it is taken up into the worship of God who will be 'all in all' as St. Paul writes (1 Cor 15:28). The fact that we use bread and wine, simple elements of creation, reminds us of the sacredness of creation. The world is not something indifferent, raw material merely to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is created by God and forms an essential part of the divine plan. Linked to humanity it is associated

with our calling to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:4-12). The Eucharist has a cosmic character. Teilhard de Chardin has written beautifully of the Eucharist in terms of the 'hymn of the Universe'.

83. Often at mass, as well as the presentation of bread and wine, a collection is made or charitable gifts are brought to the altar at this time, underlining the strong bond between the Eucharist and the commandment to love others. We know that from the beginning, Christians were concerned with the social consequences of faith and so began to share their goods (cf. Acts 4:32) and to help the poor (cf. Rom 15:26) as an expression of their life of communion. Descriptions of the Eucharist from the middle of the second century mention the collection for orphans and widows and those in need because of sickness or other causes. We can think of St. Justin's words, 'Those who are well off, and who are also willing, give as each chooses. What is gathered is given to him who presides, to assist orphans and widows, those whom illness or any other cause has deprived of resources, prisoners, migrants and, in a word, all who are in need'.<sup>46</sup> St. John Chrysostom's words can also be quoted in this context: 'If you want to honour Christ, do it when you see him naked, in the person of the poor. No use, if you bring silk and precious metals to the temple, and leave Christ to suffer cold and nakedness in the outside. No use, if the temple is full of golden vessels, but Christ himself is starving. You make golden chalices, but fail to offer cups of cold water to the needy. Christ, as a homeless stranger, is wandering around and begging, and instead of receiving him you make decorations.'<sup>47</sup>

### **V.c. The Eucharistic Prayer – A Communal Act of Thanksgiving to God the Father**

84. With the Eucharistic Prayer we come to the heart and summit of the celebration of the Mass. This prayer is a communal act of thanksgiving through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit to God the Father. In the course of the prayer we remember the great things God has done, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ and we too are formed into one body, one spirit in Christ. We join ourselves to the one and only perfect sacrifice of love, that of Jesus Christ who lay down his life for us.

85. The Eucharistic Prayer begins with the priest, acting in the person of Christ, opening a dialogue that will lead us into the Eucharistic Prayer: 'The Lord be with you... Lift up your hearts...'. By virtue of their royal priesthood, the congregation, participating in faith, responds: 'It is right to give him thanks and praise.' The Preface then goes on to express thanks to the Father for all his works of creation, redemption and sanctification.

86. The whole Eucharistic Prayer resonates with motifs of communion. Mention is made, for instance, of the local bishop and of the whole college of bishops united with the Pope. We are not simply praying for them; we are expressing our communion with them. And so we hear in one of the Eucharistic Prayers: 'Strengthen the bonds of our communion with N. our pope, N. our bishop, with all bishops, priests and deacons, and all your holy people.' Often in the early Church, Christians travelling away from home would take a letter from their own bishop, who would confirm that they were in full communion with him. The 'away bishop' would then check the list of bishops with whom he was in full communion in terms of the creed they professed. If the person's 'home bishop' was on that list, the traveller would be admitted to communion at the Eucharist in that town because he or she shared in the communion of faith. The Pope is mentioned during the Eucharistic prayer. Since he has the ministry of Peter in the Church, he is associated with every celebration of the Eucharist. He is named as the sign and servant of the unity of the universal Church.<sup>48</sup>

87. At the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, in the great doxology, we all together acclaim: 'Amen', a powerful 'yes' to God. In 'the Great Amen' we proclaim that we believe what has been said, that we unite ourselves to the prayer and that we are committed to all that it means. Our personal affirmation 'I believe' is taken up into the 'we believe' of the Church community gathered around the Risen Crucified Christ for worship.

88. There is much that could be meditated upon in the texts of the Eucharistic Prayer. At this point in our document we can briefly review some of the features that stand out in terms of the Congress' theme of communion

### **V.c.i. Epiclesis – Being brought together in Unity by the Holy Spirit**

89. The Mass is the most intense action of the Holy Spirit. The third divine Person is the One who brings about the communion of the Church and joins us so intimately in Christ that He is the principle of the Church's unity. The invocation of the Spirit during the Eucharistic Prayer is called *epiclesis*. Already in the creation account we hear how the Spirit hovered over the cosmos to bring about the first creation. We know that in the fullness of time the Spirit rested on Mary to bring about the creation of the humanity of Jesus, who was the beginning of the new creation. In the Eucharistic prayer the Spirit is invoked to bring about the marvel of a new creation and grace. It is an important reminder that the action we are celebrating is beyond our capacity. It comes from God. In the *epiclesis* the Church asks the Father to send down the Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing) to hallow the gifts of bread and wine so that they may be the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and to make of those taking part in the Eucharist one body and one spirit.

90. In the third Eucharistic Prayer, for instance, we hear it said firstly that the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit gives life and holiness to creation and gathers us together: 'Father, you are holy indeed, and all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord by the working of the Holy Spirit. From age to age you gather a people to yourself...'. After proclaiming this dynamism or power of the Spirit as the source of life and universal consecration, the life-giving and sanctifying action of the Spirit is invoked to carry out its culminating activity of the 'sanctification' or consecration of the gifts of bread and wine to become for us the Body and Blood of Christ: 'We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit'. To our *berakah* in the Preparation of the Gifts, there responds the consecration on the part of the Holy Spirit. Following the institution narrative we then hear proclaimed the *epiclesis* of communion, the invocation of the Spirit upon those gathered for the Eucharist: 'Lord, look with favour on your Church's offering, and see the Victim whose death has reconciled us to yourself. Grant that we, who are nourished by his body and blood, may be filled with his Holy Spirit, and become one body, one spirit in Christ.'

91. The invocation upon the community gathered at the Eucharist is noteworthy in terms of the theme of the Congress. Through the power of the Spirit, the elements of bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ but the Spirit is invoked also upon the people because as the body of Christ they must more fully correspond to the gift of communion that God has bestowed upon them 'until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.' (Eph 4:13).

92. The *epiclesis* tells us something important about our identity. The Church has many external means of organisation as a social body. But the action of the Spirit is vital in bringing about our communion. Without the Holy Spirit our community life is dead. If the action of the Spirit is missing it is 'useless to make plans, organize, issue laws and directions, and have everything foreseen and controlled. We would have a model enterprise, an exemplary society, but a community of men and women can only be said to be the body of Christ when it is sustained and animated by the Spirit of Christ, and this is the sense of the Eucharistic *epiclesis*'.<sup>49</sup>

### **V.c.ii. Anamnesis – A Communitarian 'Calling to Mind'**

93. In recent years there has been a deeper discovery of the rich biblical meaning of the notion of 'memory' (*anamnesis*) that lies behind our 'calling to mind' in the liturgy.<sup>50</sup> We remember what Jesus did, not as a history lesson but as an event that involves us now.

94. From the time of the Mosaic Law, in fact, the People of God have commemorated the astonishing actions of the Saviour God that formed them as a people. In particular the Passover

celebration became the memorial (*zikkaron*) of the foundational event of their history as the People of God. The Passover ritual, celebrated every year, commemorates the passage from slavery to freedom. It is outlined in Ex 12:1-28 where the rite is described as a banquet in which a lamb is eaten. Blood is smeared on the doorpost to ward off the destroying angel who slew the firstborn of the Egyptians. In celebrating the feast, the Jewish people do not simply tell the story of a past event but make effective in the present an event that occurred in the past. Through the celebration they participate in the foundational moments of their identity and so prepare too for the future.

95. The Last Supper that Jesus celebrated with his disciples the night before his passion and death was the Passover supper (Mt 26: 2, 17-19; Mk 14: 12-17; Lk 22: 7-14). When it came to the moment of eating the paschal lamb, Jesus took the bread and wine, blessed them and proclaimed: 'This is my body, which is given for you' and 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you' (Lk 22:19-20).<sup>51</sup> In doing this he interpreted his death on the Cross as the sacrifice of the lamb. In his case he would save humanity from the condition of slavery to sin with all its division and lack of communion, and introduce us into the condition of the freedom of the children of God and so in communion with one another.

96. The Passover meal that Christ celebrated with his disciples represented a sacramental anticipation of his passion and death that would lead to the resurrection and outpouring of the Spirit. Of the bread, He made a sign of His body given up for us, and of the wine a sign of His blood poured out for us. The bread and wine became sacramental signs of the eschatological covenant that is fulfilled in Him. He told his disciples they were to commemorate His action: 'Do this in memory of me.' (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:25).

97. The Eucharistic memorial is celebrated in fidelity to Jesus' command. It is no mere calling to mind of a past event. It is the Church's effectual proclamation of God's reconciling action in Christ. Through it, we not only recall Jesus Christ's passion on behalf of the whole Church but we participate 'today' in these benefits and enter into the movement of his self-offering. Through the power of the Spirit, the once for all event of Jesus' death on the Cross is made present in our time in each Mass. Or we could put it another way. We become present to that great event and are bound together in communion by it, not only with those we meet in any particular Mass, but with those gathered around the Eucharist in all corners of the world and throughout time.<sup>51</sup>

98. Through the Eucharist, then, we become contemporaries of the foundational events that have established our communion with Christ and with one another. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* we read,

In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father 'once for all.' His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything toward life.<sup>52</sup>

99. Every Eucharistic celebration also sacramentally accomplishes for us 'today' the eschatological gathering of the People of God. Each Mass, in other words, is a real foretaste here and now of the final banquet foretold by the prophets (cf. Is 25:6-9) and described in the New Testament as 'the marriage-feast of the Lamb' (Rev 19:7-9). In the Third Eucharistic Prayer, after calling to mind Jesus' ascension into heaven, when the celebrant says the words 'and ready to greet him when he comes again' we are invited to recognise that our 'calling to mind' of the foundational events of our faith brings us into contact with our shared future in the coming of Christ. For this reason, in proclaiming the mystery of faith, we acclaim that 'Christ will come again'. At every Mass we remember our future and are drawn towards it.

100. Because of the dynamic Eucharistic sense of 'memorial' where past and future are in some way already present to us here and now, we are never as close to our departed brothers and sisters as we are at the Mass. Our communion with those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith is renewed. As *Lumen gentium*, n. 50 affirms, 'Celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice therefore, we are most closely united to the Church in heaven.' In this context we understand St. Monica's words to her sons, St. Augustine and his brother, before her death: 'I simply ask you to remember me at the Lord's altar wherever you are.'<sup>53</sup>

### **V.c. iii. Consecration – Jesus Christ, source of transforming communion is really, truly and substantially present**

101. The Eucharistic Prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. The Risen Crucified Christ acts upon the bread and wine through the power of the Spirit, communicating his definitive life by means of these transformed elements. Bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ 'by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself' (Phil 3:21). From the beginning of the Church the efficacy of the Word of Christ and of the action of the Holy Spirit to bring about this conversion has been affirmed. The Council of Trent summarises:

Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God...that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.<sup>54</sup>

102. The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. In its *Elucidation*, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission states: 'Before the Eucharistic prayer, to the question: 'What is that?', the believer answers: 'It is bread.' After the Eucharistic prayer, to the same question he answers: 'It is truly the body of Christ, the Bread of Life.'<sup>55</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and man, is 'truly, really and substantially contained' under the outward appearances of bread and wine.<sup>56</sup> The bread and wine are raised to a new order of being to express Jesus Christ's love: 'When the chalice we mix and the bread we bake receive the word of God, the Eucharistic elements become the body and blood of Christ, by which our bodies live and grow.'<sup>57</sup>

103. The theme of the real presence is to be understood also in the line of the great works of God in history forming his people in communion with him and with one another. Throughout the history of salvation we read of God 'dwelling' (*shekinah*) among his people – he dwells in the cosmos, he is present in Israel. In Jesus Christ God becomes flesh and dwells among us. Jesus Christ is now present in many ways to his Church: in his word, in the Church's prayer, 'where two or three are gathered in his name' (Mt 18:20), in the poor, the sick, and imprisoned (Mt 25: 31-46), in the sacraments. But he is present most especially in the Eucharistic species. The Crucified-Risen Christ is concentrated in body and blood under the appearances of bread and wine so that he can communicate himself to us through them and form us into his body.

104. By means of these transformed elements Jesus Christ communicates his definitive life of communion with the Father to us. Changed into the body and blood of Christ, the bread and wine insert us into a principle of gradual transfiguration that will draw us towards the goal we long for – the definitive transformation of all in communion with Christ and with one another: 'And all of us...are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18). Our personal concerns and care for our family, our work and relationships with others are taken up into this transforming principle. Every time we come to Mass we offer something new to be changed, especially the most stubborn and difficult aspects of our relationships with one another as well as painful situations – socio-economical, cultural or ecological, whether local or global, about which we have heard perhaps through the news media. The Eucharist is the testimony, guarantee and anticipation of our own and our world's transformation in communion.

#### **V.c.iv. Sacrificial Banquet – Our participation in Christ's sacrificial gift of himself**

105. The Eucharist is a sacrificial banquet. As we have already seen above, it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross. Indeed, the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice that results in our communion.

106. In the Old Testament we find a strong link between 'covenant', 'sacrifice' and 'covenantal/communion meal'. In the Book of Exodus (24:1-11) we read of how God's new relationship (covenant) with his chosen people was sealed with the pouring of animal blood (sacrifice) and the eating together of some of the sacrificial food (communion). Moses said of the blood, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.' (Ex 24:8). He then sprinkled blood both upon the altar (symbolising God) and upon the people, a gesture that expressed the communion of life that God established between himself and Israel. By eating the sacrificial food together in what can be called a sacrificial banquet, the people were committing themselves to the covenant relationship and were made one as they shared the blessings of God. In time a new covenant was promised, one that would be written on the hearts of believers (cf. Is 55:3; Jer 31:31-34).

107. During his life Jesus spoke of the need of genuine interior piety and not simply external sacrifices or rituals. His whole life was one of self-sacrificing love for others. The Letter to the Hebrews says that when Christ entered into the world he said: 'sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God"' (Heb 10: 5-7). His whole mission was to lay down his life so that we might be one. The meals he shared with others expressed his outreach. Jesus' 'love to the end' as John the Evangelist puts it (Jn 13:1), culminated in his passion and death.

108. At the Last Supper Jesus interpreted for us, as it were, the sacrifice of his death on the Cross. He applied to himself the words of Moses: 'This is my blood of the covenant.' (Mt 26:28), or, as we read in Luke: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you.' (Lk 22:20). He interprets his death as vicarious suffering for us. If, during his approach to Jerusalem he had said, 'the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk 10:45), on the Cross he was to live this out to the extreme. Jesus' offering was not some 'thing'. It was his self-surrender out of love. He becomes one with the offering. He is the sacrificial priest and the offering all in one. The apostle Paul was to further expand the meaning of this when he pointed to the exchange of places that occurs on the Cross between us and Jesus Christ. He, the sinless one, was made to be sin for us, so that we might become in him the justice of God (2 Cor 5:21). He who was the Son of God 'emptied himself' for our sake so that we might share in the life of God. He was to feel far from God, abandoned, so that we might know God who is near, with us, among us in our communion with one another. Paul writes, 'though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich' (2 Cor 8:9).

109. While we benefit from the objective communion that results from Christ's sacrifice and that comes to us as a gift, at Mass we are also given a privileged opportunity to express our participation in Christ's sacrificial gift of himself. Already through our baptism Jesus Christ draws us into his sacrifice because we become members of his body. We offer ourselves day by day as a living and holy sacrifice (Rom 12:1). But at Mass, as we hear in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, Christ and the Church are united in the sacrifice of praise: 'Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church; and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise'. Our prayer, praise and self-surrender are taken up into his to be offered by the Church 'through him, with him, in him'. In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ becomes also the sacrifice of the members of his Body. Augustine describes this as follows:

This wholly redeemed city, the assembly and society of the saints, is offered to God as a universal sacrifice by the high priest who in the form of a slave went so far as to offer himself for us in his Passion, to make us the Body of so great a head. . . . Such is the sacrifice of Christians: 'we who are many are one Body in Christ'. The Church continues to reproduce this sacrifice in the sacrament of the altar so well-known to believers wherein it is evident to them that in what she offers she herself is offered.<sup>58</sup>

110. Christ's sacrifice present on the altar makes it possible for all generations of Christians to be united with his offering. In the Roman catacombs the Church is often represented as a woman in prayer, arms outstretched in the praying position reminiscent of Christ who stretched out his arms of the Cross. The point is clear: in communion with Christ, the Church offers herself and intercedes for all.<sup>59</sup> What is it we can offer? We give to God our sufferings and prayers, works and acts of love. Uniting them with Christ and his total offering gives new value to everything. Even the smallest thing offered takes on new value. We are allowing Jesus Christ's self-sacrificing love to touch and transform all our limited efforts at building communion with others. If united with Christ's self-sacrifice, all becomes permeated with love. And this is no small thing. By associating ourselves and the world around us with Christ's sacrifice we are contributing to what Teilhard de Chardin called the 'amorization' (from the Latin word for love) of the universe.

111. Our participation in the Son's self-offering becomes a prayer not only for the living but also for the faithful departed, our sisters and brothers who have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified in love. St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes: 'By offering to God our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, if they have sinned, we...offer Christ sacrificed for the sins of all, and so render favourable, for them and for us, the God who loves us'.<sup>60</sup> Not only that. Our prayer is in communion with those who are already in the glory of heaven, especially Mary. 'In communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, the Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. In the Eucharist the Church is as it were at the foot of the cross with Mary, united with the offering and intercession of Christ'.<sup>61</sup>

## VI. The Communion Rite: Replying 'Amen' to what we are

*'Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him' (Lk 24:31)*

### VI. a. Receiving Holy Communion

112. The Communion Rite follows logically from the movement of the Eucharistic Liturgy so far. The community has assembled in one place. God's agenda has been put before us when the Scriptures were read, arousing a response in the form of offering. Thanksgiving has been expressed. The bread and wine have been changed into the body and blood of Christ and we too have been transformed into one body, one spirit in Christ. Now the time for receiving holy communion has arrived.

113. The 'Our Father' begins the Communion Rite. As the Catechism puts it, placed between the Eucharistic prayer and the communion, 'the Lord's Prayer sums up on the one hand all the petitions and intercessions expressed in the movement of the *epiclesis* and, on the other, knocks at the door of the Banquet of the Kingdom which sacramental communion anticipates'.<sup>62</sup> The Lord's Prayer is the quintessential prayer of the Church. It reveals us to ourselves at the same time as it reveals the Father to us. In our communion with Christ we have the confidence to cross the threshold of the divine holiness with Jesus Christ and recognise that we have one Father and that we are all sisters and brothers. This is also recognised again in the exchange of the sign of peace.

114. In the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, n.80 we read, 'Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet; it is desirable that in keeping with the Lord's command, his Body and Blood should be received, by the faithful who are properly disposed, as spiritual food. This is the sense of the fraction and the other preparatory rites by which the faithful are led directly to Communion.' The breaking of the bread, or '*fractio panis*' is a symbolic act that reminds us that

we all share in this one bread from heaven that we are about to receive. At the fraction a particle (known as the *fermentum*) of the host is added to the chalice. One interpretation of this gesture is that it is a reminder of an ancient practise symbolising the unity of each local celebration of the Mass with that of the Bishop of Rome. For several centuries the Pope sent a particle of the consecrated bread from his celebration of Mass to each priest presiding at a local celebration, so that they would not be separated from communion with him. This particle (known as the *fermentum*) was then added to the chalice before the distribution of communion, to express the truth that the Eucharist is the sacrament of the unity of the Church. The term *fermentum* was possibly a reference to the Eucharist as the leaven of the Christian life, and the instrument by which Christians spread throughout the world were united in the one Body of Christ as a leaven in the world.

115. Since it is the 'bread of heaven' and 'the cup of salvation' we are receiving, St. Justin reminds us that no one may take part in it unless he or she believes the teaching of the Church, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth, and lives in keeping with what Christ taught.<sup>63</sup> When the priest or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion holds the host in front of us and says 'the Body of Christ,' we are implicitly being asked: 'Are you the Body of Christ?', that is, 'Are you in communion with Christ and with his sisters and brothers?' And if we can reply: 'Amen,' then we can nourish ourselves on the Body of Christ.

116. We receive the body of Christ so that together we may be more truly the body of Christ in the world. As St. Augustine of Hippo reminds us, at the Eucharist we are to be what we see and receive what we are.<sup>64</sup> He goes on: 'You reply 'Amen' to that which you are, and by your reply you consent. For you hear 'the Body of Christ' and you reply Amen'.<sup>65</sup> Now the 'Amen' said as we receive communion is a continuation of the great Amen expressing our readiness to enter into the life of communion that Christ has achieved for us by his death and resurrection.

## VI. b. The Eucharist makes us one

117. The remarkable effect of the Eucharist, as St. Thomas Aquinas and many others in the Tradition have affirmed, is our real, mystical assimilation to Christ. St. Augustine, for instance, expresses this conviction by interpreting Jesus' deed in giving himself to us in communion as saying: 'I am the food of full-grown men. Grow and you shall feed on me. But you shall not change me into your own substance, as you do with the food of your body, instead you shall be changed into me.'<sup>66</sup> The great Medieval theologian, Albert the Great, also affirms that 'this sacrament transforms us into the body of Christ, in such a way that we become bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, member of his members'.<sup>67</sup> And as a good teacher he goes on to explain: 'Each time two things unite in such a way that one is completely transformed into the other, the one which is more powerful transforms the weaker into itself. Therefore, since this food has a strength that is more powerful than those who eat it, this food transforms those who eat it into itself.'<sup>68</sup> In thanksgiving, he exclaims: 'What thanks we owe to Christ, who with his vivifying body transforms us into himself, so that we become his holy pure and divine body.'<sup>69</sup> Thérèse of Lisieux, a more recent doctor of the Church wrote: 'Jesus each morning transforms a white host into himself in order to communicate his life to you. What is more, with a love that is greater still, he wants to transform you into himself.'<sup>70</sup> At the Second Vatican Council, Leo the Great is quoted: 'the partaking of the body and blood of Christ does nothing other than make us be transformed into that which we consume'.<sup>71</sup>

118. Given this remarkable effect of the Eucharist – our transformation into Christ, we can grasp how the Eucharist really makes us one body and soul in a unique manner. Pope Benedict comments on this by noting how the process of our transformation that began already when the bread and wine were transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ, now gathers momentum and brings other changes in its wake:

The Body and Blood of Christ are given to us so that we ourselves will be transformed in our turn. We are to become the Body of Christ, his own flesh and blood. We all eat one bread, and this means

that we ourselves become one. In this way, adoration...becomes union. God no longer simply stands before us as the One who is totally Other. He is within us, and we are in him. His dynamic enters into us and then seeks to spread outwards to others until it fills the world, so that his love can truly become the dominant measure of the world.<sup>72</sup>

119. A new communion of life exceeding all our experience of sharing comes about, creating true human community. All the seeds of disunity in our lives and around us can be countered by the unifying power of the body of Christ. Pope Benedict likens the whole process to 'nuclear fission in the very heart of being'. 'Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can then trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world.'<sup>73</sup>

120. In receiving the Eucharist we are called to anticipate a new future through words and actions so that the future can already be grafted onto the present and so that we can already taste what we are to become. An experience of silence in our Eucharistic celebrations gives people an opportunity not just to recollect the past and celebrate the present, but also to open their hearts to the future as God's promise of perfect communion with Christ and with one another. With the eyes of our soul we catch a glimpse of the new heavens and new earth that the Eucharist opens up for us.

### VI. c. Spiritual Communion

121. Not all those in attendance at Mass may be in a position to receive communion at that Mass but everyone is able to live what is called 'a spiritual communion' in the sense of an act of worship, uniting themselves with the self-giving movement that is being celebrated at Mass. St. Teresa of Avila wrote: 'When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you.'<sup>74</sup> We are all in some way united by the Holy Spirit. Those unable to receive communion can in their heart declare their heartfelt desire to receive it and unite themselves and their suffering of that moment with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In recent times, the invitation is often given at Mass to those who may not receive sacramental communion - for example, children before their First Communion and adults who are not Catholics - to receive a 'blessing' at the moment of Communion.

## VII. The Concluding Rite: Made One so that All may be One

*'Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight... That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together... Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread' (Lk 24:31-35).*

### VII.a. The Dismissal

122. With the dismissal, 'The Mass is ended, go in peace' spoken by the deacon or the priest at the end of Mass, we are sent out 'to do good works, praising and blessing God'.<sup>75</sup> There is something mysterious about the 'dismissal' of the disciples in the Emmaus story. Immediately after recognising the Risen Christ in the breaking of bread 'he vanished from their sight'. How might we interpret this? This detail is worth attending to as it tells us something important about the effect of our encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. What we see in the Emmaus story is that once the disciples of Emmaus had welcomed the Word of God and the Eucharist into their lives, they could now take up the Easter life that Jesus Christ has given them and become his presence in the world: 'For me, living is Christ' (Phil 1:21). They have been transformed into Christ. Now he continues to live, as it were, in them and among them. Here we can think of the words of a prayer attributed to St. Teresa of Avila, 'Christ has no body now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but

yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion must look out on the world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.' It is now we together who continue Christ's journey along the pathways of the world.

123. If in the Eucharist, the Risen Crucified Christ mediates his presence to us in many ways, especially at the twofold table of the Word and the Eucharist, now in the liturgy of life it will be we, the 'two or more' gathered in the name of Christ, who will 'mediate' his presence that becomes tangible and visible through and among us for others (cf. Mt 18:20). It will be our faith working through love (cf. Gal 5:6) that shares the warmth and joy of the Eucharist with others. In a sense, we can go further and say that the Risen Crucified Christ who, in the power of the Spirit, precedes the Church, gathers us together and nourishes us with his Word and Sacrament, also wants to be the fruit of our witness to him (in itself his gift to us!) in the Church. Taking up the Servant of God, Dorothy Day's words: 'We must practice the presence of God. He said that when two or three are gathered together, there he is in the midst of them. He is with us in our kitchens, at our tables, on our breadlines, with our visitors, on our farms... What we do is very little. But it is like the little boy with a few loaves and fishes. Christ took that little and increased it. He will do the rest.'<sup>76</sup>

### VII.b. Taking our lead from Jesus' example of the Washing of the Feet

124. The concluding rite sends us out to live eucharistically. If we want to understand how, we can take our lead from Jesus' example in the washing of the feet that summarises the measure of self-giving love that the Mass commemorates. In the Fourth Gospel, the Last Supper is presented as the setting for Jesus' final symbolic actions that show us the inner meaning and continuing social and interpersonal implications of the Eucharist. His 'love to the end' (Jn 13:1) is made manifest when he washes the feet of the disciples. Laying aside his outer garment, he performs this menial task, thereby assuming the condition of a slave, serving his friends out of love. In the symbolic act of the washing of the feet, Jesus is giving an example of service that the disciples should now follow – to lay down their lives in service of each other: 'I have set you an example that you also should do' (Jn 13: 15); 'You also ought to wash one another's feet' (Jn 13: 14).

125. Later, in the Farewell Discourse Jesus will again spell out his new commandment that finds its measure in the Eucharist: 'Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (Jn 15:12f). It is by putting into practice the mutual service of one another that others know we are Jesus Christ's disciples (cf. Jn 13:34-35). To live 'eucharistically' means taking up our responsibility to build up a world imbued with the logic of fraternal communion that the Eucharist gives us and teaches us. At Mass we have been blessed 'in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places' (Eph 1:3). Now the door opens for us to evangelise with our life and our words. Each of us will leave the assembly to go our separate ways but we are not alone. We now contain each other within our hearts in order to continue what has happened to us in the Eucharist, becoming builders of relationships of communion wherever we go. Our act of adoration of the Eucharist outside Mass also prolongs and intensifies all that takes place during the liturgical celebration itself.<sup>77</sup>

126. As we leave Mass, what we have celebrated begins to have a ripple effect. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:13) that we have experienced, now remain with us and bear fruit beyond the Eucharistic celebration. We can go out in confidence, because during the Mass the Church has asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to make our lives a living sacrifice to God by our spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in the Church's mission through the witness and service of charity.<sup>78</sup>

## VIII. Conclusion

127. Pierre Julien Eymard, founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, wrote: 'Jesus Christ too wants to have his memorial..., his masterpiece that unceasingly recounts his love for humanity. He will be the inventor and craftsman, the one who gives his supreme gift. He will consecrate it as his

last testament, and his death will be its life and its glory. What is this supreme memorial of the love of Jesus Christ? It is the Eucharist...<sup>79</sup> In these theological and pastoral reflections we have explored Jesus Christ's 'masterpiece', the Eucharist, from the perspective of communion with Christ and with one another, the theme of the 2012 Eucharistic Congress.

128. As we conclude our reflections, we acknowledge the inadequacy of our words. Perhaps when all is said and done it is best simply to invite all who will take part in the Congress to come to the Eucharist and invite Jesus Christ himself, with his light and love to prepare their hearts and minds. Today, just as it has been through the centuries, the Eucharist silently but tenaciously invites us to go back to the Upper Room where, by the institution of the Eucharist, the Church was born as 'God's family', 'one heart and one soul' in communion with Christ and with one another. In that Upper Room we discover in the Eucharist the heartbeat of Jesus Christ who invites us to recognise what he has done for us. He loved to the end, to the extent of remaining with us in every time and place in the Eucharist; in what was the highest expression of his love: his passion, death and resurrection. Thérèse of Lisieux, for instance, struck by the sheer gratuitous love expressed in the Eucharist, spoke from the depths of her heart when she exclaimed: 'Oh, Jesus, let me say, in overflowing gratitude, let me say that your love reaches madness!'<sup>80</sup>

129. The Eucharistic Congress is an opportunity to let ourselves be captivated anew by this gift of love and to let our hearts beat in love of him who has asked us to be perfect in love and to be holy (1 Thes 4:3). To strive for holiness, not as a personal achievement, but as a contribution to building up universal sister- and brotherhood in the world. Our communion is in service of universal solidarity. We leave the final word of this document to a young woman recently beatified, Chiara Luce Badano whose love for the Eucharist strengthened her to live for others even in the painful circumstances of declining health. It brought her life, light and love to the point that her last words to her mother could become 'be happy because I am'. It is the happiness of communion with Christ and with one another.

<sup>1</sup> See the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et spes*, 4

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Corish, *The Irish Catholic Experience* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1985), p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, *Letter to the Catholics of Ireland*, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Final Report* (Windsor, 1981), ns. 5-6

<sup>6</sup> The Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, 1-4.

<sup>7</sup> Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter at the Beginning of the New Millennium, *Novo millennio ineunte* (6 January 2001), n. 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 11. See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1322-1419.

<sup>9</sup> The Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> The very popular hymn entitled *Audite omnes* by Secundinus, a contemporary and fellow missionary of St Patrick, has interesting references to Patrick and the Eucharist. The text of the Hymn occurs in the famous *Antiphony of Bangor* (A translation occurs in Dr Ludwig Bieler's *The Works of St Patrick* [Longmans, Green and Co.: London, 1953]). St Columbanus' *Instructio XIII* is a beautiful and deeply mystical text on the Eucharist, steeped in the language of the Gospel of John (cf., *The Divine Office*, Office of Readings for Wednesday and Thursday of Week 21, Vol. III, 469-470 & 473-474). The standard critical edition of Columbanus' works is G.S.M.Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera, Scriptorum Latini Hiberniae*, vol. 11 (Dublin: 1957). See Finbarr Clancy, 'Vive in Christo ut Christus in te: The Christology of St Columbanus', in T. Finan & V. Twomey (eds), *Studies in Patristic Christology* (Four Courts Press: Dublin, 1998), 163-195. Eucharistic chants are also found in ninth century *Stowe Missal*.

<sup>11</sup> The text and a commentary on it occur in the late Dom Vincent Ryan's *The Shaping of Sunday: Sunday and Eucharist in the Irish Tradition* (Veritas: Dublin, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. T. Lane, *Reflecting on Knock: Before our merciful Lamb* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2007).

- <sup>13</sup> Second Vatican Council: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 14.
- <sup>14</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction on the Use of the Vernacular Languages in the Publication of the Books of the Roman Liturgy, *Liturgian authenticam* (28 March 2001).
- <sup>15</sup> See the Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*.
- <sup>16</sup> See Cardinal Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2009).
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul, Encyclical Letter on Ecumenism, *Ut unum sint* (25 May, 1995).
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>19</sup> See the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et spes*, 22
- <sup>20</sup> See *Gaudium et spes*, 11 and 45.
- <sup>21</sup> See the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops 1985, *Final Report; Novo millennio ineunte*, 43 and Pope Benedict XVI's Encyclical Letter on Christian Love, *Deus caritas est*, 1.
- <sup>22</sup> See *Novo millennio ineunte*, 43.
- <sup>23</sup> Gerhard Lohfink, *Does God Need the Church?* Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1999, p. 60.
- <sup>24</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 14-16; *Gaudium et spes*, 92; Pope Paul VI's Encyclical Letter on the Church, *Ecclesiam suam* (6 August 1964), ns. 96-114.
- <sup>25</sup> Pope John Paul II, Letter on the Eucharist, *Dominicae cenae* (24 February, 1980), n. 6.
- <sup>26</sup> Pope John Paul II's Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church, *Ecclesia de eucharistia* (17 April, 2003), n. 8.
- <sup>27</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1325.
- <sup>28</sup> Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), "Magnificat" Antiphon, Second Vespers: Liturgy of the Hours, Vol. 3.
- <sup>29</sup> See *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 27; 48
- <sup>30</sup> *First Apology of Justin*, I, 67: PG 6, 429.
- <sup>31</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Philad.*, 5: PG 5, 699-700.
- <sup>32</sup> Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo*, 78,2: PL 39,2319.
- <sup>33</sup> Saint Jerome, *Comm. in Eccles.*: PL 23, 1092
- <sup>34</sup> *Comm. In Isaias*, Prol.: PL 24, 17.
- <sup>35</sup> See especially the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei verbum*.
- <sup>36</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 51.
- <sup>37</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 28.
- <sup>38</sup> *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 7 and cf. n. 33.
- <sup>39</sup> *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, 4.
- <sup>40</sup> In *Ev. Matth.*, 5.1: PG 57,55.
- <sup>41</sup> *General Instruction on the Lectionary*, 24. Cf. *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n. 35, 2
- <sup>42</sup> Cf. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on the orderly carrying out of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Inter oecumenici* (26 September 1964), n. 54: *AAS* 56 (1964), p.890.
- <sup>43</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 197
- <sup>44</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 4. See Cyprian, *De Orat Dom.* 23: PL 4, 5S3.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 1350.
- <sup>46</sup> *First Apology of Justin*, I, 67, 6: PG 6, 429.
- <sup>47</sup> *Commentary on Matthew*, Homily 50.3-4: PG 58, 509-509.
- <sup>48</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1369.
- <sup>49</sup> Luis Alonso Schökel, *Celebrating the Eucharist* (Middlegreen, Slough, St. Paul Publications, 1988), p. 89.
- <sup>50</sup> See *Sacrosanctum concilium*, 47. See also the Second Vatican Council's Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, *Ad gentes*, 14.
- <sup>51</sup> ARCIC, *Eucharist*, 5; cf. 3.
- <sup>52</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1085

- <sup>53</sup> Augustine's *Confessions*, IX, 11, 27: PL 32, 775, quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1371.
- <sup>54</sup> Council of Trent (1551): DS 1642.
- <sup>55</sup> Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *Elucidation*, no. 6.
- <sup>56</sup> Cf., Paul VI, Encyclical on the Holy Eucharist, *Mysterium fidei* (3 September, 1965), n. 45. Cf. Council of Trent, *Decree on the Eucharist*, ch. 1.
- <sup>57</sup> Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* V, 2, 2-3: SC 153, 30-38.
- <sup>58</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, 10, 6: PL 41, 283; Cf. Rom 12:5.
- <sup>59</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1368.
- <sup>60</sup> *Catech. Myst.* 5, 9 and 10: PG 33, 1116-1117.
- <sup>61</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1370.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 2770.
- <sup>63</sup> *Apology of Justin*. I, 66, 1-2: PG 6:428.
- <sup>64</sup> *Sermo*, 272: PL 38,1246-1248.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>66</sup> *Confessions*, VII, 10: PL 32, 742.
- <sup>67</sup> *De Euch.*, Dist III, Tract. I,5,5; BORGNET XXXVIII, P. 257
- <sup>68</sup> *In IV Sent.*, Dist. IX, A, 2; BORGNET XXIX, P. 217
- <sup>69</sup> *De Euch* Dist. III, Tract. I, 8,2 ; Borgnet XXXVIII P. 272.
- <sup>70</sup> See *Poesies de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jesus*, Office central de Lisieux, 1951, p. 31.
- <sup>71</sup> *Lumen gentium*, 26. Cf. S. Leo M., *Serm.* 63, 7: PL 54, 357 C.
- <sup>72</sup> Pope Benedict, *Homily at the XX World Youth Day, Marienfeld* (21 August, 2005)
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>74</sup> St. Teresa of Avila, *Camino de Perfección*, Chapter 35.
- <sup>75</sup> *General Introduction of the Roman Missal*, 90.
- <sup>76</sup> *Catholic Worker*, Feb. 1940
- <sup>77</sup> Cfr *De sacra communione et de cultu mysterii eucharistici extra Missam* (21 giugno 1973), 89.
- <sup>78</sup> See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1109
- <sup>79</sup> Pierre-Julien Eymard, *Œuvres complètes*, XIII, p. 819, PD 42,6
- <sup>80</sup> See *Autobiography of a Saint*, trans. Ronald Knox (London: Harvill Press, 1958), p. 241.

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