

## Eucharist and life

The Eucharist wants to form in us a new man who “communicates”, who is in communion with Christ: therefore it is in “peace” and in “forgiveness”, in “reconciliation, first of all with Christ and then with the others. Finally he wants to form in us a man to be saved, a man to be restored to his truth according to God: because this man that we are is always “the sinful Adam” who must persuade himself to relate with the true Adam, Jesus Christ; he, however, needs to be re-created again and again, to be re-made in the Holy Spirit.

(G. Moiola)

### Final prayer

“Our Father, we thank you for the holy vine of David, your servant , that you have wanted Christ, your servant, to disclose to us. Glory be to you through the centuries. Amen”.  
“Our Father, we thank you, for the life and the knowledge which you wanted to be disclosed to us by Jesus Christ, your servant. Glory be to you through the centuries. Amen”.  
As the broken bread was spread on the hillocks and once gathered has become one and the same thing, similarly let your Church be united in your kingdom from the extreme boundary of the earth; because yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Didaché, 9*

cards of formation



*“make this  
in memory of me”*

Lk 11, 24

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To the re-discovery  
of the mystery of the Eucharistic

## To begin...



*In every relation of communion, a moment comes in which words are not enough to express the richness and fecundity of love. A gift follows, a self-gift, a gift of total donation. This is the logic of Jesus. Words are not enough for him. First he speaks to us, then he demands a perfect self-donation. He donates himself totally, he becomes given bread, shed blood. This is the liturgical Eucharist: the desire of God, the desire of self-donation. Here is communion. Here is how the Eucharist educates us to service, to testimony.*

*If the Eucharist were not this, it would remain a kind of incomplete sacrament.*

## To reflect

*From the Encyclical 'Ecclesia de Eucharistia'.*

Incorporation into Christ, which is brought about by Baptism, is constantly renewed and consolidated by sharing in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, especially by that full sharing which takes place in the sacramental communion. We can say not only that *each of us receives Christ*, but also that *Christ receives each of us*. He enters into friendship with us: "You are my friends" (Jn 15:14). Indeed, it is because of him that we have life: "He who eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:57). Eucharistic communion brings about in a sublime way the mutual "abiding" of Christ and each of his followers: "Abide in me, and I in you" (Jn 15:4).

By its union with Christ, the People of the New Covenant, far from closing in upon itself, becomes a "sacrament" for humanity, a sign and instrument of the salvation achieved by Christ, the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-16), for the redemption of all. The Church's mission stands in continuity with the mission of Christ: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). From the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross and her communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church draws the spiritual power needed to carry out her mission. The Eucharist thus appears as both *the source* and *the summit* of all evangelization, since its goal is the communion of mankind with Christ and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

## **SIGNS and GESTURES to be remembered**

### **The Sacrament**

The Eucharist is a sacrament. The sacraments are sensible and efficacious signs, instituted by Christ to communicate grace to us. They are signs and symbols because the supernatural they contain cannot be expressed fully and adequately in the rational language. They are efficacious, that is they not only signify, but actually communicate the grace. The sacraments are celebrations, that is ritual and festive actions.

## To meditate

*From the Expositio Myste., passim by Narasi the Leper.*

Happy is he whose heart is pure, the moment in which the tremendous mysteries of the Body of our Lord are consecrated. The angels of heaven judge as fortunate the children of the Church who have been made worthy to receive the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glory be to your name for your ineffable gift.

Who can adequately give glory to your divinity?

Come, therefore, you, who are admitted into the sacrament of the children of the Church, come to learn according to the prescriptions that you can go close to the priests, provided you do it according to the manner which the Apostle has decided.

With a pure heart go close to the body and the blood of the Lord. They will purify you and wash away the sins you have committed. Let the priests not send away the sinners who come repented, neither the impure who is afflicted for being impure. They are to welcome both the impure and the sinners, provided they resolve not to fall into evil any more. Pray, then, with love, together with the priest, so that He who gives life and forgives sins, may welcome you! Be attentive, however, not to go out of the boat to go elsewhere, the moment the tremendous mysteries are consecrated. Who is he who would knowingly refuse this meal to which the angels and men are invited? Who is he who, the moment he inserted in the Church would prefer to stay among the strangers whom the Church has sent away?

It is a moment in which we are supposed to behave like the angels when the Holy Spirit dwells in us. This instant gives life to those who are present and share the gifts with him who welcomes them. Happy is he who believes and receives these gifts. If he is dead, he will live again, and if he is alive, he will not die for having sinned!

## The Word of God

*From the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (1 Co 11,23).*

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 judgment against themselves.



## SIGNS and GESTURES to be re-discovered

### The supper

"The supper of the Lord", according to Saint Paul, is the sacrament of the presence of Christ, it establishes the believer in a real communion with his body and his blood, it makes the multitude of Christians to be one body, symbolizes and actuates the unity of the Church; finally it announces the eschatological banquet, in which the presence of the Lord will be manifested. We need "to eat the body" and "drink the blood" of Christ, if we want to partake in the true life.

## Self Formation

The supper of the Lord according to St. Paul - **First Part**

a) *The sacrament of the presence of Christ.* In chapter 10 of the first letter to the Corinthians, the Apostle proposes himself to explain to the faithful two important truths: First: the sacrament is not a guarantee of salvation for those who lack faith and love; second: that it is impossible for the believer to participate in the banquet of the Lord and at the same time to that of the devils, because the actual act commits the whole person.

In treating the first argument, St. Paul seeks an illustration in the old covenant and calls to memory, among other things, the manna and the water during the Exodus. The manna and water are a sign of the will of Yahweh to assist his people with his goods and his loving presence. Thus, they are also a figure of the Eucharist, since the same divine will, the same God who once supported Israel, today constitutes and supports the Church of Christ with the Eucharist.

In spite of having benefited of all these visible signs of God's Grace, the Israelites were punished for their unworthy behaviour; their participation in the spiritual aliments did not secure immunity to them. Their end must, therefore, be of warning also for the Corinthians, who put a false trust in the power of the sacrament. Also In the new community, constituted by Baptism, and nourished by the Eucharist, it is a must, first of all, to welcome with faith the gift of God and to acknowledge Him as Lord.

The sharing of the spiritual food, moreover, must not favour laziness, rather it must lead to the full obedience of the church to the Lord. If the sacrament is the sign of the commitment of God towards his people, of his presence and his gifts, it implies also the commitment of the faithful towards God. The Eucharist is not a magic remedy of salvation, but must be accompanied by faith and by good will, supported by the divine help (1 Co 10).

*1Co 10:1* I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the

### EUCCHARISTIC DICTIONARY

#### Manna

The food which the Israelites received from above, during their wandering in the desert. The name seems to derive from the expression of the people "*Man hu*", which means "*What is this?*". By putting together several data which have reached us, it seems that it was granular, like the coriander seeds (Nb 11,7). They had just to grind and to eat it; it tasted like honey. All the different references to the manna speak of it as a providential protection of God, and this is what it actually was, because of its opportunity, abundance and other circumstances.

same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

b) "*Communion with the body and blood of Christ*". Then, St Paul passes on to the teaching of another truth: he who partakes in the banquet of the Lord, can in no way partake in the banquet of the devils. It so happened, in fact, in Corinth, that some Christians lead an open-minded behaviour with regard to the pagan sacrifices: they participated publicly in the sacred banquet that accompanied such sacrifices. This, to Paul, is an act of idolatry that must be avoided: even if the gods do not exist, the devils are in reality the objects whom this act of cult goes to; they are God's enemies. They lead men far from the truth, by using the pagan cult (1 Co 10).

1 Co 10, 16.18-21: 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. Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Through the Eucharist, the believer enters into relation of communion with the Lord, who excludes any other communion. St. Paul tries to evoke the depth of such a communion with Jesus. Its argumentation is full of the memory of the last supper. The holy supper is to him the meal in which we eat at the table of the Lord. Christ receives the believers at this table and dispenses his good to them, His task as a dispenser had already been shown by the image of the rock. Whatever we receive at this banquet we receive it from Christ. He, invisible, but present in the bread and wine, dispenses his gifts to the church and nourishes her with his grace. Like the disciples one day, similarly now the faithful come to his mass and receive from him the vivifying food. It is he who presides the holy supper, just as he had presided that of the cenacle. This is why it is called *the supper of the Lord*.