

God's Radiation Therapy

A PRIEST — Biochemist — Hermit

Reflects on the Eucharist

Rev. George W. Kosicki, C.S.B.

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DEDICATION:

To:

St. Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Pope John Paul the Great — A Living Eucharist.

Table of Contents

Title	1
Dedication	2
T.O.C.	3
Acknowledgements	5
Preface	6
Introduction	7
Chapter 1: My Eucharistic Devotion: Origins and Development	10
Chapter 2: A Eucharistic Parable	14
Chapter 3: Eucharist as Presence	18
Chapter 4: More on Eucharist as Presence	21
Chapter 5: The Holy Spirit and the Presence of the Eucharist	26
Chapter 6: Eucharist as Sacrifice	29
Chapter 7: Eucharist as Communion	35
Chapter 8: More on Spiritual Communion	39
Chapter 9: The Action of the Mass	41
Chapter 10: Eucharistic Word and Real Mnemonics	45
Chapter 11: Eucharist, the Ultimate Extreme Humility of God	58
Chapter 12: Eucharist, the Ultimate Extreme Mercy of God	67

Chapter 13: The Ultimate Transcendent Holiness of the Eucharist.....	69
Chapter 14: The Radiance of the Eucharist	73
Chapter 15: An Equation for the Eucharist.....	77
Chapter 16: Mary, Mother of the Eucharist	83
Chapter 17: Consecration to Mary is Eucharistic	87
Chapter 18: The Three-fold Consecration of John 17:17-19	93
Chapter 19: The Encyclical on the Eucharist by John Paul II	
Part A	97
Part B	100
Chapter 20: Pope John Paul II: Lived the Eucharist.....	105
Chapter 21: Saint Faustina: An example of Living Eucharist	107
Chapter 22: Transformation into a Living Eucharist	114
Chapter 23: The Big Bang Begins the Eucharist	123
Chapter 24: Be a Living Eucharist.....	134
Epilogue: The Counter — Sign to our age	141
Appendix I The Eucharist — a Radiance of God’s Mercy and humility — The answer to the Crisis in the Church	143
Appendix II The Crisis over “This is My Body” : Abortion	146
Appendix III How do I make a Holy Hour?	150
Appendix IV Books that influenced me; and books that I’ve written on the Eucharist.....	157

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Preface

Vinny Flynn, author of **7 Secrets of the Eucharist**, Ignatius Press, 2007.

Introduction

A desire grew in my heart on reading some reports on the Synod on the Eucharist (October 2005) that spoke of the need of a strong and clear teaching (Catechesis) on the Holy Eucharist. The bishops of the Synod expressed the fact that the Eucharist is not adequately understood by many people of the Church.

The desire of my heart was to write my reflections on the Eucharist. My desire in these reflections is to show my life's experience that would apply and make practical the teachings of the Church so that the Holy Eucharist would be more fully understood, more deeply adored and more meaningfully celebrated.

What do I have to offer to you that may help you to come to realize the treasures of the mystery of the Eucharist? The very title and sub-title of these reflections suggest what I can give you as a priest — biochemist — hermit:

- * as a *priest*, ordained in 1954 I have offered over 18,000 Masses, directed over a hundred retreats for priests, given numerous teachings on the Holy Spirit, The Holy Eucharist, Divine Mercy, Mary at conferences, in published articles and books and on Television.
- * as a *biochemist*, as a member of the Basilian Fathers my specialty was biochemistry with a Masters degree and doctorate from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, teaching at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada, and directing research in enzymology, and research sabbatical at Harvard University.

- * as a hermit I lived with Camaldolese hermit in Bloomingdale, Ohio for a total of a year, and now I have been a hermit with the Companions of Christ the Lamb, in Upper Peninsula Michigan for seven years in my “retirement” years. Where my daily life’s centered on Holy Mass and three hours of Eucharistic adoration.

What can you expect to find in these reflections of a priest — biochemist — hermit? **You can expect:**

- * prayers and parables centered on the Holy Eucharist,
- * formulas and equations,
- * MNEMONICS to help to understand and remember the teachings on the Eucharist,
- * insights coming from my extended time in prayer, solitude and Eucharistic adoration,
- * insights into Mary, Divine Mercy, St. Faustina and John Paul the Great and their relationships to the Eucharist,
- * my personal witness and experiences of my life,
- * “gems” about the Eucharist from writing, publishing, conference work, retreats and TV presentations.
- * what I’ve learned from the study of the life and writing of Pope John Paul on the Eucharist.
- * how you can be transformed by the Eucharist into a living icon of

Jesus, from my experiences of studying, “writing” icons (the term used to paint icons) and writing about them, and praying before them.

May these reflections be an inspiration and encouragement to you to live a more intense Eucharistic life and come to experience the desire of John Paul the great: “*Eucharistic Amazement!*” (Encyclical of Pope John Paul II on the Eucharist, 2003).

During Lent of 1990 I wrote a series of Reflections on the Eucharist (Published as **Living Eucharist**. Counter Sign to our Age and Answer to Crisis, Faith Publishing, Milford Ohio, now defunct and out of print). On reading it now I am amazed at my first chapter which I present here in substance. (see Appendix I). It is even more true 16 years later! I begin by stating a summary of what I intend to write.

I intentionally am presenting the substance of **Living Eucharist** (14 chapters) but adding developments and new insights and a dozen new Chapters.

Chapter I:

My Eucharistic Devotion:

Origins and Development

Today is Holy Thursday morning! And it was the Holy Thursday adoration at the Altar of Repose at St. Theresa's Church, Detroit, Michigan in the 1930's that is my strongest early memory of Eucharistic devotion. The side altar of Mary covered with white lilies and ablaze with candles and lights honoring the Holy Eucharist was a time that moved me. To describe it in the words of Pope John Paul II in his encyclical on the Eucharist it was a time of "Eucharistic Amazement"! It touched me deeply and has remained with me as a strong memory.

The years 1930 to 1942 at St. Theresa's School and Church were the beginning of my priestly vocation: in the sixth grade I joined my older brother Father Bohdan (Ordained 1951) who had started to go to daily Mass. I served Mass regularly for Msgr. John Joseph McCabe who said to me prophetically: "You'll be a priest someday". At a Mass that Bohdan and I were serving my mother was in attendance. Afterwards she told me the word she received in my regard: "Another Sacrifice will be asked of you".

During the years 1942-1946 while studying at Catholic Central High School, Detroit, run by the Basilian Fathers I usually attended morning Mass

at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral before class, right next door to the school. Msgr. Babcock, later auxiliary bishop of Detroit (1947) and then bishop of Grand Rapids, Michigan (1954) was normally the celebrant.

I joined the Basilian Novitiate in 1946 and continued studies at Assumption College, Windsor, Ontario. I experienced a growing awareness of the Blessed Sacrament. It was during Theological Studies (1951-1955) I grew in the awareness of the *presence* of the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament through my readings of Abbot A. Vonier of the *Presence as the key* to understanding the Eucharist, it is a sacrifice because of the presence of Jesus, the Sacrifice of the New Covenant. The book *Liturgical Piety*, by Louis Bouyer was a very special grace that stayed with me over the years. He explained to me the richness of the text of St. Paul's letter:

“**The** mystery is Christ *in you* the hope of Glory” (Col. 1:27). It was an ecstatic moment that illumined the meaning of my Christian priestly life.

Ordination in St. Basil's Church, June 29, 1954 by Francis Cardinal McGuigan of Toronto, Ontario was the beginning of a new phase of my Eucharistic life. Celebrating Mass over 18,000 times was and is the greatest grace of a half-century of ordination.

I chose Pope St. Pius X as one of my ordination cards because he was Canonized in 1954 and he was also responsible for frequent communion and earlier first Holy Communion being restored to regular practice in the Church. A large photo with his relic hangs in my chapel.

During studies of biochemistry and research (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor) daily offering Holy MASS was central as it was during the years of teaching and directing research at the University of Windsor, Ontario. During my years of “post-Vatican II faith crisis” over the departure of so many seminarians that I was in charge of, daily offering Holy Mass was virtually my only sustenance along with short visits to the Blessed Sacraments.

The light that pierced the darkness was the prayer over me by the charismatic community in Ann arbor, Michigan. Challenged by the example of Ralph Martin I began a daily Holy Hour. Soon I was leading priest retreats in four continents, challenging them to a Holy Hour before the Holy Eucharist each day. At our Bethany House of Intercession for Priests we had extended to two periods of Eucharistic Adoration.

During a period of exhaustion and too much traveling I was challenged by Fr. Kevin Scallon, C.M. and Sr. Briega McKenna, P.C.C. at a retreat in Larchmont, New York to take extended time of presence before the Eucharist, that grew into three hours per day. It was a time of “radiation therapy”. This exposure to the radiance of the Holy Eucharist continued in my initial time of hermitage with the Camaldolese hermits in Bloomingdale, Ohio. It was during that period of time I was challenged by the saintly prior Fr. Charles Kubsz E.C. to move into the Divine Mercy message and devotion full time.

At St. Stanislaus Parish, Steubenville, Ohio I continued the Eucharistic Adoration. When asked to help out with Marians of the Immaculate

Conception in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, I arranged for half-time hermitage style of life in order to continue the Eucharistic Adoration (eg. 1992-1998) where I continued to write on the Divine Mercy Message and Devotion and directed the department of Divine Mercy.

It was during the periods of Eucharistic adoration and hermitage that insights developed on Living Eucharist, radiation therapy and an equation for Holy Eucharist and various articles.

After retirement I moved back into full-time hermitage and Eucharistic Adoration with the Companions of Christ the Lamb in Paradise, Upper Peninsula, Michigan (Fall of 1999 to the present).

Two holy people have deeply influenced my life of Eucharistic adoration: St. Maria Faustina (Kowalska) of the Most Blessed Sacrament and the late John Paul II of happy memory who canonized St. Faustina as the first new saint of the Jubilee year 2000. Both St. Faustina and John Paul the Great and their Eucharistic life is described in two chapters that give a glimpse of their influence on me. Both of their photographs are hanging in my Chapel.

The books on the Eucharist and that have influenced me and those that I've written are listed in the *Appendix*.

Chapter 2

A Eucharistic Parable

This is a spiritual-biochemical parable of the Eucharist! A spiritual-biochemical parable? Yes, a parable of multi-levels is needed to describe the transforming power of the Eucharist. The Eucharist transforms us from glory to glory each time we receive Holy Communion, or gaze upon its radiance (see II Cor 3:18).

Once upon a time the wheat in the field was given the gift of speech. It spoke to the soil, asking, “Soil, how would you like to become wheat?”

“What do you mean?” replied the soil.

“Well, you don’t need to stay as dirt, you could become part of me, and grow and have kernels of grain with golden hair, and wave in the wind,” said the wheat.

But immediately the soil inquired, “How can this happen?”

“Well,” said the wheat, “just say ‘Yes’, and when the rains come and dissolve some of your minerals I’ll absorb you, draw you up into myself and you’ll become part of me.”

“Is it really true?” wondered the soil.

“Oh, what joy and beauty is in store for you!” promised the wheat. And

so the soil said a humble “Yes”. When the rains came and soaked the soil, the wheat roots reached out and drew the minerals up into the wheat, and the soil became part of the golden grain which grew and waved in the breeze under the summer sun.

Then one day a lamb jumped the fence into the field and said to the wheat, “Hey, wheat, how would you like to become a lamb?”

“What do you mean?” the wheat answered.

“Well, you wouldn’t have to stay in one place, rooted in the soil. You could skip and jump, grow wool and make more lambs,” explained the lamb.

“But, oh, what will it cost me?” said the wheat.

“It will cost you a total ‘yes’, a surrender to me, and then I will eat you up, digest and absorb you and then you will be part of me.”

“Is it worth it?” asked the wheat, trembling in the wind.

“Oh, you have no idea what it is to be a lamb! Come now and say ‘Yes’!”

And so the wheat tipped its head of grain and said a quiet “yes”. The lamb ate the wheat, digested it, absorbed it, and the wheat became part of the lamb, which bounded across the field and joyfully skipped back over the fence into the pasture.

Then the lamb heard the voice of the shepherd. “Hey, lamb, how would you like to become part of me?” A chill ran down the spine of the lamb as it bleated. “That sounds like the question I just asked the wheat!”

“Oh yes, it may be similar, but what a difference!” You have no idea what it is to be a man! You could love and think, choose and create, invent and write, and more!”

The lamb was curious about this new kind of life and really wanted something more, so despite his fear, he meekly bowed his head and said, “Yes.” The shepherd sacrificed the lamb, cut him up, roasted him and had a fine meal.

After his meal, the shepherd was walking in his garden in the cool of the evening and he heard the voice of God. “Hey, man, how would you like to become a son of God?” On hearing the voice of God, the man had hid himself for fear, but God pursued him and again asked, “How would you like to be like me?”

Trembling, the man responded, “I am afraid of what it will cost me. I know what it cost the lamb that I had for supper.”

“Do not be afraid, oh man,” said God reassuringly. “I had My Son pay the cost for you. He has shown the way to Me, step by step. He became man. Then the shepherd that laid down His life for His sheep, buried in the ground like grain to bring forth new life as the living bread, a lamb pierced yet risen and victorious, wants to bathe you in His life-giving blood that you may be transformed, transfigured, divinized!

“You will become sons and daughters of God, members of the body of My beloved Son, if you say, ‘Yes’ and surrender to My will and plan for you.

Unless you eat the flesh of My Son and drink His blood you will not have life in you. When you do eat His flesh and drink His blood, you will become what you eat and drink, and have eternal life. You will become sons and daughters of God.”

Some men heard this proposal of God and couldn't accept it, and so walked away sad and confused. Others heard this proposal and their hearts began to be warmed with expectation and they asked, “Is it really true?”

And God said, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, I have prepared for those who love Me, and this I have revealed through My Spirit” (see 1 Cor 2.9-10).

And so, for those whose hearts were burning within them, for those who said, “Yes” to God's proposal and plan, it began to happen. Day by day, year by year, the transformation took place and they began to radiate His mercy to the world.

This spiritual-biochemical parable of transformation is true. Besides, it is good biochemistry. We really do become what we eat!

Chapter 3

Eucharist as Presence

One word, one reality stands out for me about the Holy Eucharist and that is **Presence**. This presence is not a what, nor a thing but a *Person*: Jesus Christ, the word of God made flesh and now dwelling among us.

Jesus Christ as the Holy Eucharist is a real presence. Consider the following statement carefully: Jesus Christ is not *in* the Eucharist rather He **is** the Eucharist. Jesus, Himself made His presence very clear when He took bread and said: “This *is* my Body.” then taking a cup of wine said “This *is* My Blood...” (see Mt 26:26-28). If we should deny His presence — then we call Jesus a liar! The Eucharistic presence of Jesus is a real presence, a sacramental presence only veiled by the appearance of bread and wine. What a marvelous mystery that Jesus gives Himself as food and drink for our eternal life in a manner that reveals His love for us and does not threaten us by the sight of flesh and blood! He reveals His love for the many by multiplying His Body and Blood so that all the faithful may eat His Flesh and Drink His Blood as He commanded (see John 6).

I love to play with words, so I will reflect on the word “presence” as a key to understanding something of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. The reality of the presence of Jesus as the Eucharist is a **KEY** to opening up other

dimensions of the Holy Eucharist.

So let us “play” with the word presence. The Holy Eucharist calls us to be present to the ONE:

Who is present here and now,

Who is presence itself;

Who is a present — all gift to us.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Mass makes the *past* of the sacrifice of Calvary, the Resurrection of Easter and the *future* of the Heavenly Banquet of the Bridegroom — all *present* — to the here and now in the eternal now of the Holy Spirit (see Heb 9:14). God is not in space-timing as we are all is present to Him now.

- * This presence of Jesus who is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (see John 1:20 and 33). calls us:
- * This Jesus calls us to Communion with Himself; into a communion-in-Christ.
- * this Jesus calls us to believe — to TRUST in Him, to hope in Him and to Love Him.
- * This Jesus calls us to praise, worship and adoration.
- * This Jesus calls us to Thanksgiving (The word in Greek for Thanksgiving is the root of the word *Eucharist*).

- * This Jesus calls us to Transformation to eternal life!
- * This Jesus calls us to come to Him (Mt 11:28).
- * This Jesus calls us to service. “The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life for many (Mk 10:45).
- * This Jesus calls us to battle; to stand firm in our faith even in persecution.

A mnemonic for “battle” can help us to respond to the call of Jesus and the challenge of the angel of Portugal to the children of Fatima: “Pray for souls”:

Believe for those who do not believe.

Adore for those who do not adore.

Trust for those who do not trust.

Thank for those who do not thank.

Love for those who do not love,

Eucharistically for those who do not live Eucharistically.

A note of Thanks to my brother Father Bohdan who composed this mnemonic.

Jesus invites us and calls out to you and me:

“Be present to Me as I am to you. Be a living Eucharist! Be a presence of Me to the world.”

Chapter 4

More on Eucharist as Presence

The presence of the Lord is special. Webster's dictionary has a long list of meanings for the word "presence" and "present". Here I am using the word for a real and unique "being here and now", in a particular place and time in the sense of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is present in the Church and in our hearts by the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways:

The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple.

(cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Lumen Gentium, #4).

The Second Vatican Council also describes the presence of Christ in His Church in her liturgical celebrations: "He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister ... but especially under the Eucharistic species." The Council Fathers go on to teach that Christ is present by His power in the Sacraments, present in His Word proclaimed in the Church, and present when the Church sings and prays (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* #7).

The **presence** of the Lord is the foundation of the three-fold dimension of the Eucharist giving "this truly most holy Sacrament its full magnitude and its essential meaning" according to John Paul II, who continues:

It is at one and the same time a sacrifice/Sacrament, a communion/Sacrament, and a presence/Sacrament

(Redemptor Hominis, #20).

In his letter to bishops and priests on the occasion of Holy Thursday, 1980, John Paul II wrote of the close link between the Eucharistic liturgy and its sacredness:

It is a holy and sacred action because in it are the continual presence and actions of Christ, “the Holy One” of God (Lk 1:34; Jn 6:69, Acts 3:14; Rev 3:7), “anointed by the Holy Spirit” (Acts 10:38; Lk 4:18), “consecrated by the Father” (Jn 10:36) to lay down his life of his own accord and to take it up again (Jn 10:17), and the High Priest of the new covenant (Heb 3:1; 4:15).

(Dominicae Canae #8)

Jesus Christ is continually present through the Holy Spirit and continues to accomplish His saving work as High Priest. At the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus Christ’s sacrificial offering of His life, death and resurrection is made present, present in order that we unite ourselves with this sacrifice (*Lumen Gentium* #11; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #48; *Presbyterorum ordinis*, #4). The sacrifice of Christ is made present to us by the power of the Holy Spirit and the priestly words of institution of the Eucharist. What is made present before us here and now is the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as He is now — sacrificed, risen and glorified. This is the teaching of the Church.

This sacramental, sacrificial presence of the Lord Jesus Christ is what we receive in Holy Communion. Wonder of wonders, the almighty God humbles Himself totally to be consumed by us, present to us, in order to transform us into His presence in the world!

During my time in the hermitage in 1985, I composed a litany of presence. Over the years I've used it with groups on retreat and I've prayed it with growing meaning. May your reflection on the "prayer of presence" deepen your awareness and experience of the Lord Jesus present in the Eucharist and in your heart.

JESUS, YOU ARE PRESENT:

The RESPONSE is: "Jesus, You are present:"

Jesus, You are here as the Eucharist —

As Son of the Father and Son of Mary (Creed) —

As at the Annunciation when You the Word were made flesh

(Lk 1; Jn 1) —

By word and the Spirit (Jn 3) —

As Mercy Incarnate (John Paul II) —

Because you love us (Jn 13:11) —

As the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29) —

As totally given and poured out (Lk 22:19-20) —

As the new covenant (Jn 6:27; Lk 22:20) —

Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity (Council of Trent) —

As the memorial of Your passion, death and resurrection
(Canon of Mass) —

As the remembrance of all you have done for us (1 Cor
11:25) —

As the thanksgiving to the Father (Mt 26:27) —

As the sacrificial gift to the Father (Heb 10:10) —

As the promise of resurrection (see 1 Cor 11:30) —

To give us eternal life (Jn 6:51-58) —

To nourish us (Jn 6:54) —

As “My Lord and my God” (Jn 20:28) —

As the icon of the invisible God (Col 1:15) —

Though hidden like the Father —

As a pleasing aroma to the Father (see 1 Cor 2:15) —

As Priest, Prophet and King —

As the Holy One, the Humble One, the Merciful One —

In all past and future (*O Sacrum convivium*) —

As the pledge of your coming again (see 1 Cor 11:26) —

As the Bridegroom longing for communion (Lk 22:15) —

As the mystery of faith —

As the mystery of mercy —

As the hope of glory —

Jesus, you are here and you call us (Jn 11:28) —

(Icons of Mercy, Faith Publishing Co, P.O.

Box 237, Milford, OH 45150)

Chapter 5

The Holy Spirit and Presence of the Eucharist

Today as I was reflecting on the Key reality of the presence of Jesus as the Holy Eucharist I kept in mind the role of the Holy Spirit in the celebration of Mass. I read a clear description of the role of the Holy Spirit by Father Roniero Cantalamessa OFM, Cap, retreat master to the bishops and the Holy Father in Advent and Lent. He said that there are two special moments of presence:

- * At the **Consecration**: The Spirit gives us Jesus; makes Jesus present.
- * At **Communion**: Jesus present gives us the Spirit, makes the Spirit present.

In the words of the Third Eucharistic prayer the priest invokes the Holy Spirit in preparation for the words of Consecration:

Father, we bring you these gifts. We ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit, that they may become the body and blood of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at whose command we celebrate this eucharist.

Then at the words of consecration: “ ... this is my body ⇝

this is my blood ... ”,

the Holy Spirit makes Jesus present; He gives us Jesus.

Following the consecration the priest again prepares for the action of the Holy Spirit in the coming Holy Communion:

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.

Then at communion time the priest says to each communicant:

“The Body of Christ!”

and you answer: “AMEN!”

Then he says “The Blood of Christ!”

and you answer “AMEN!”

“AMEN” is a powerful and important response. It is our “FIAT” that we say with Mary ³see John Paul II in the Church lives by the Eucharist) Mary said her AMEN, her FIAT to the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and Jesus was conceived in her womb. The Word of God was made flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:14).

At Communion, Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit! — the same Holy Spirit that overshadowed Mary; the same Holy Spirit that gives us Jesus. As we say our AMEN, FIAT with Mary we too surrender our bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to transform us into a “Living Eucharist”, an icon

of Jesus, the icon of the Father (see Col 1:15).

With great meaning and awesome awareness we too can offer our bodies (our whole person as created) as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, our spiritual worship (see Romans 12:1).

In Sacramental Holy Communion, we eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus, born of Mary by the Holy Spirit — and become what we eat. A great biochemical transformation described by both St. Leo the Great and St. Augustine.

What a great calling! — to be a living presence of Jesus! — a living Eucharist (see 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27, Gal 2:20).

Chapter 6

Eucharist As Sacrifice

The Lord Jesus came among us to share in all our miseries and humanity. By His love, He transformed suffering into sacrifice, bringing salvation to all of us. Now He invites you and me to unite our sufferings with His, with even the little love we can muster up, to be a sacrifice bringing His salvation to those in need. He invites all of us to be partners in His continued work of redemption.

The most effective way we can unite our sufferings with the sacrifice of Christ is through the Eucharist, which Christ left us, to remain with us. Church teaching has been consistent that the Eucharist is a sacrifice and we are to offer ourselves along with the Immaculate victim:

*At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Savior instituted the **Eucharistic Sacrifice** of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection*

Christ's faithful should be instructed by God's word and be refreshed at the table of the Lord's Body; they should give

thanks to God; by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also with Him, they should learn to offer themselves too

(Sacrosanctum Concilium, #47, 48)

The teaching about offering our own selves along with the Immaculate Victim is made even more explicit in the main document of Vatican II, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, which spells out the many aspects of our lives we should offer, exercising our baptismal priesthood:

[As for the lay faithful,] ... all their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labor, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne — all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus (see 1 Pt. 2:5). During the celebration of the Eucharist, these sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father along with the Lord's Body. thus, as worshippers whose every deed is holy, laity consecrate the world itself to God.

(Lumen Gentium, #34).

The lay faithful “consecrate the world to the Father!” The people of God really are a priestly people. The ordained, ministerial priest consecrates the bread and wine to be the Body and Blood of Christ and the lay faithful, by

means of the presence of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ, now consecrate the world — and their lives, their families, their works and possessions. The lay faithful transform the world, that all may be divinized in Christ.

The lay faithful are charged with “living” the Eucharistic sacrifice so that Christ may be all in all. The Council Fathers conclude Section #48 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, quoted above, with this sweeping picture of the daily transformation of the world:

Through Christ the Mediator, [the Christian laity] should be drawn day by day into even closer union with God and with each other,, so that finally God may be all in all.

(ibid., 48).

This means in practice that every one of our actions and desires, pains and joys, disappointments and hopes, loves and frustrations — all that we are, all that we do and think, all that we have — everything can be offered in — “spiritual sacrifice” (Rom 12:1) in union with the Eucharist sacrifice for the sake of others.

Your pain and joy is precious, don’t waste it! Offer it! Offer it for the members of your family, for families of the whole church and world in order that in Christ we may be one family, one Body of Christ to the glory of God the Father.

The making of “spiritual sacrifices” is always possible for us because the

Eucharistic sacrifice is being offered continuously around the world. As an approximate calculation, consider that over 420,000 priests in the world offer over 300 Masses each per year — if calculated for the average number of Masses being offered at any given time (considering the Roman Mass lasts a half-hour), there are 8 to 10 thousand Masses being offered at this present moment around the world!

For from the rising of the sun, even to its setting, my name is great among the nations; and everywhere they bring sacrifice to my name and a pure offering.

(Mal 1:11)

A “spiritual sacrifice” is made by a simple and decisive act of the will: “I offer this _____ to you, Father, in union with the sacrifice of Jesus.” Such an offering can be made even without words, or in the simplest words from the heart:

“Jesus, mercy!”

“Jesus, I trust in you!”

We can repeat this offering over and over again — each time the pain and the memory of the situation comes to mind. It seems that the Lord allows us to remember painful events and relationships so that we may continue to offer them up and so continue to transform the world. It may be good that we cannot forget some of the past hurts — because we remember to offer them. Of course, however, Our Lord wishes for us to work through such painful mem-

ories with forgiveness and love.

The offering of the pain as Eucharistic sacrifice with Christ doesn't take the pain away, but it surely gives it meaning and value.

A powerful Eucharistic offering was designed by Our Lord and taught to Sister Faustina Kowalska. He asked her to say it unceasingly: the "Chaplet of Divine Mercy". It is a Eucharistic offering that is available to all of us, at all times and places, to offer to the Eucharistic Lord. It is a continuation of the Mass. It is a "mini-Mass" as a brother priest, Father Sam Tiesi, T.O.R., at the Franciscan University of Steubenville told me. "I can't stop saying it!"

Christ told Sister Faustina that by praying in this way, her prayers would have great power for the conversion of sinners, for peace for the dying, and even for controlling nature.

We too can pray this chaplet:

Using ordinary rosary beads of five decades, begin with the *Our Father*, *Hail Mary* and the *Creed*.

Then, on the large beads we pray:

"Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your Dearly Beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world."

On the small beads we pray:

“For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us
and on the whole world.”

And at the end, we pray three times:

“Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have
mercy on us and on the whole world.” (See Diary, 476).

Again we can respond to the exhortation of St. Paul to offer spiritual
sacrifices:

I urge you ... by the Mercies of God to *offer your bodies* as
a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your *Spiritual
Worship* (Rom 12:1, emphasis added).

[The word “body or bodies” as used in sacred scripture means the one
whole person: body, soul and spirit, with the focus on the person as *created*].

Chapter 7

Eucharist As Communion

The Holy Eucharist is a communion with Christ in a very intimate way; it is a common-union-in-Christ. We consume His Body and Blood in order that we become what we eat and drink; that we become living Eucharist; that we may daily grow more fully into His mystical Body; that we may live His life:

*He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal
life ...* (Jn 6:54)

The point I want to make is that this union with Christ is not only at the moment of reception of Holy Communion, but also this union can continue throughout our day:

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me
and I in him.* (Jn 6:56)

The Lord remains with us in our hearts as we live in Him and as He does in us.

Throughout the day, we can make “spiritual communions,” uniting ourselves with His presence, living on in His love. A spiritual communion is an act of the will, an act of love uniting our hearts with His presence — a sim-

ple act, but a very loving and affectionate one.

St. Peter put it this way: Venerate the Lord, that is, Christ in your hearts (1Pt. 3::15). St. Paul describes that union with Christ as “The mystery of Christ in you, your hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

For me, the practice of spiritual communion matured during my time of solitude with the Camaldolese Hermits. The lesson I carried away and have treasured ever since my first stay of three months was a message I felt in my heart:

To please me, be present to me with your heart ... in the heart of Mary, trusting, rejoicing, giving thanks.

To be present to the Lord with my heart is what pleases Him. It is a loving, trusting and joyful awareness of His presence in my heart. It is not analyzed, nor probed, but a silent presence. It is a fire of divine love that we pray for in the Church’s prayer to the Holy Spirit:

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, enkindle in them the fire of your divine love.”

It is that fire of divine love that “*God has poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*” (Rom 5:5).

In Holy Communion and in spiritual communion, the Lord speaks to us clearly and even loudly, but His language is silence! We can commune so much in silent communion of love with the Lord. Let your heart just love Him

and let it remain in that love. Let your heart be silent in His silent presence. Let your heart glow with love for Him.

You know that the Lord is always present to us, but we are not always present to Him. In His extreme humility He will not force Himself upon us; instead, as described in the Book of Revelation, He stands at the door of our hearts and knocks and waits:

Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me. (Rev 3:20)

The Lord never refuses an invitation! If we ask Him to come in, He will come in and share the heavenly banquet with us. And more than that, as the text goes on to say:

I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne as I myself won the victory and took my seat beside my Father on his throne. (Rev 3:21)

Holy Communion is a sharing in both the eternal banquet and the throne of victory. It really is a common-union-in-Christ.

Holy Communion is also a proclamation of the death, resurrection and coming again of the Lord. In the Eucharistic prayer of the Mass our response to the priest's invitation, "Let us proclaim the mystery of faith", is:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your

death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

(Roman Liturgy, Acclamation C)

Each time we celebrate Mass and receive Holy Communion we not only proclaim His coming again, but we also hasten the day of His coming by our devotion and holy conduct.

Let us receive the Lord in Holy Communion often and continue to venerate Him in our hearts by our spiritual communions, and so hasten the Day of His coming!

In Holy Communion we receive Mercy itself, but we also want to *enter into* communion with humility. Our Blessed Mother Mary is a special help to enter into communion with her Son. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical on the Eucharist suggests we ask Mary to help us as we say with her our “Amen” — our Fiat — to the proclamation of the priest on giving us the consecrated host: “The Body of Christ.” The we continue to be present to the Lord Jesus with love, adoration, and Thanksgiving in awesome awareness and “Eucharistic Amazement” (John Paul II, *Ecclesiale de Eucharistia Vivit*)

Chapter 8

More on Spiritual Communion

St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe OFM, Conv. at his ordination to priesthood made a resolution to make a spiritual communion every quarter hour.

Now there is a challenge!

Let us reflect on Spiritual Communion: What is it?; Why should we make spiritual communions?; How do we make them?

What is it? A spiritual communion is a moment of *presence* with your heart to the *ONE* who is *present* in your heart. It is a desire, a longing, a hunger, a thirst for the awareness of the presence of the Lord Jesus within you. It is a focus on the reality of the presence: in a moment of loving attentiveness (St. Theresa of Avila). Eucharist amazement (Pope John Paul II; Encyclical on the Eucharist). It is a moment of refreshment; in silent stillness, in thanksgiving for the Lord's presence — it is a moment that refreshes more than a coffee break! — and it only takes a few minutes. Psalm 37 exhorts us: “Be still and know that I am God.”

Why should we make Spiritual Communions?

Because they are like breathing, eating and drinking in spiritual nourishment. A spiritual communion can be more grace filled than a sacramental

communion because in a sacramental communion we may be distracted by our thoughts or events around us and in a spiritual communion we must be focused on the Lord. This is the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas, a great Doctor of the Church with a great love for the Eucharist. (See Summa Theologiae III, Q 79 and 80).

Its not a question of “either — or” the sacramental communion or spiritual communion, but a question of “both — and.” The Spiritual Communion renews the grace of the Sacramental Communion. The Spiritual Communion is a positive answer to St. Paul's question to us about living our faith:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in faith.

Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless, of course, you fail the test. (2 Cor 13:5, RNAB).

A spiritual communion is a testing of ourselves. Do I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is living in me? When I make a spiritual communion the answer is a clear “yes! Amen!”

Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ! It is not only a refreshing moment but it is also a transforming moment.

The Lord Jesus invites us to be present to Him with our hearts, in the Heart of Mary, trusting, rejoicing and giving thanks. To be present to the Lord is to be in a spiritual communion which transforms us into a “Living Eucharist — so that we can be a transforming presence in and to the world

Chapter 9

The Action of the Mass

“I attended Mass today.”

These usual words describing our presence at Mass can reveal our attitude toward it. The phrase “I attended” implies a passive presence, a spectator presence. Such other phrases as “I went to Mass” or “I was at Mass”, indicate a fundamental attitude that the Mass is something the priest does by himself.

Despite the teaching of Vatican II and the changes in the liturgy, both intended to increase active participation in the Mass, our language hasn't changed much. Does that indicate that our attitude hasn't changed much either?

As a priest, I consecrate the bread and wine to be the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and the words of institution, through the power of Holy Orders. Yes, my role is to consecrate the Eucharist, to make the Lord present in a new sacramental way on this altar, at this time. But it is the role of all of the people of God, by the power of Baptism, to be active in the action of the Mass.

These three verbs of action are taken from the text of the Eucharistic prayers of the Mass:

We proclaim ...

We offer ...

We celebrate ...

“We proclaim.” As celebrant, I invite you to proclaim the *mystery of our faith*, immediately after the words of consecration. We proclaim the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ who died but now is risen, for example:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.

(Roman Liturgy, Acclamation C)

We, all of us together, priest and people, proclaim the presence of the Lord Jesus. Along with His death and resurrection, we proclaim and profess our own dying with Him in order to rise with Him.

“To proclaim” is an action that describes what we do at Mass. *“Today at Mass I proclaimed the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming again!”* Now that would be a marvellous way to express our “attendance” at Mass!

“We offer:” We offer the oblation, the sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the Cross. It is the same oblation that Jesus made on Holy Thursday night in offering His death on the Cross the next day. Now in remembrance of Him and what He did for us, *“We offer you (Father) in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice”* (Eucharistic Prayer #3). This is the prayer I (as a priest) say in the name of all of us after the proclamation of faith. But again it must be stressed that it is all of

us: **We offer** the Immaculate Victim along with our very lives. This offering of the very sacrifice of Christ is done in thanksgiving for His ultimate gift of mercy and humility.

“We celebrate.” Use of the word “celebrate” to describe what happens at Mass is somewhat more common. As a priest, I usually have said, “I celebrated Mass”, but that is not an expression the laity would commonly use to describe their own participation in the Mass. Shouldn’t the lay faithful also experience and express their part in the Mass as a celebration, as in “We celebrated Mass with Father N.?”

The word “celebrate” is used in the first Eucharistic prayer following the proclamation of faith:

Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, Your Son. We, your people and your ministers recall His passion, His death and resurrection from the dead and His ascension into glory.

It is interesting to note how explicit the text is: We, your people and your ministers” **celebrate**.

The word celebration can also refer to Holy Communion. We truly do celebrate a “common-union-in-Christ”. Prior to Communion, as celebrant of the Mass, I lift up the consecrated Host before the people and say:

*This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
Happy are they who are called to His supper.*

(Roman Liturgy)

“Happy are they who” celebrate this ultimate gift of the Lord. How could I ever be worthy? We respond in words that reflect the humility of the centurion (see Lk 7:6) in proclaiming:

*Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word
and I shall be healed.*

I would propose that we consciously try to express our role in the Mass using these active verbs:

We proclaim the presence of the Lord at Mass.

We offer the oblation of Christ Jesus at Mass.

We celebrate communion with Christ at Mass.

These active verbs may seem awkward at first, but they will mature and can become a meaningful part of our vocabulary and an accurate way to describe what we did when we “went to Mass”.

Could this kind of active expression be of help to our teenagers, who complain: “I don’t get anything out of Mass.”? Can they be taught to ask instead: “Have I **proclaimed** the Lord’s presence? Have I **offered** His sacrifice and mine? Have I **celebrated** communion with Him and with others?”

Chapter 10

Eucharist Word Mnemonics

I will describe two varieties of mnemonics:

- * **Word mnemonics** which I composed as my form of poetry as a priest biochemist hermit to describe the words associated with the Eucharist. For me they are like genes that sparkle.

- * **A unique and real mnemonic;** The Holy Eucharist itself: The Mystery of Faith; the presence of Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.

I will begin with a collection of word mnemonics, and they follow with a reflection on the Unique, and Real Mnemonic — the Holy Eucharist.

MNEMONICS (The first “N” is silent) is based on the greek word which means memory. Mnemonics are memory devices, words which help to remember the meaning of the KEY word. I use them as spiritual — biochemical formulas to explain a term. For example TRUST:

Total

Reliance

Upon

Saving

Truth — Jesus is the truth (John 14:5).

I compose these mnemonics to explain, to remember, to open up the word like a key they reveal some of the mystery hidden in the word. Besides, they are lots of fun! I often play with an audience leading them in a cheer, like at basketball games.

I ask for a “TRUST cheer”: Gim’me a “T” — and they call out “T” and I answer “Total”. Gim’me an “R” and I respond to their shout of “R” with “Reliance”. — and so the cheer goes through the letters of Trust. Then I can test them as I call out the key letters and they respond with the big words. Amazing how easily they learn the mnemonics and so the meaning of words.

The following mnemonics I composed over the years and I want to share with you. All related to the Holy Eucharist. For example the word PRESENCE:

Peaceful

Resting

Experiencing

Silence

Eternal

Never-ending

Compassionate

Eloim

Presence is the fundamental reality of the Eucharist. *Trust* is our response to the presence of the Lord Jesus as the Eucharist.

Try out these mnemonics for a “Living Eucharist”:

L ight	E ternal
	U n-ending
I ntensely	C ompassionate
	H oly
V ivifying	A wesome
I n	R edeeming
N ever-ending	I ncarnate
G ift	T hanksgiving

A “Living Eucharist” is what we are to become by our entering into Holy Communion with Jesus Christ.

Try another variation on the poetic mnemonic of the Holy Eucharist:

Eternal
Union
Common-in-Christ
Holy, Holy, Holy
Amazing, Apocolytic

Revealing

Infinite

Sacred, Silent, Sacrificial

Thanks, Truth

Already in reflecting on the *presence* of the Lord Jesus as the Eucharist I've used various key words and I will be using them again and reflecting on more of them. So I give you the mnemonic now in this chapter that you can enter into the game with new "cheers!"

The Holy Spirit, also called the Holy Ghost using an anglo-saxon word rather than the latin word "spirit," is the key operator in the Eucharist as already explained:

HOLY GHOST: Spirit of TRUTH

Humble	God	Total
Obedient	Habitually	Reality
Loving	Operating	Ultimate
Yielding	Silently	Total
	Truthfully	Holiness

To complete the persons of the most Holy Trinity:

FATHER, the Son, the Word made flesh: JESUS

Faithful **Joshua**

Always	Ever
To	Saving
His	Us
Eternal	Sinners
Riches	

Then Mary enters the scene. By the will of the father and power of the Holy Spirit *Mary* conceives and gives birth to *Jesus* — by her faith and *Fiat* to the Angel Gabriel. *Fiat* is latin for “let it be done” ... which is also like our AMEN and our YES:

Mother	Faith	Your	Always
Always	In	Eternal	More!
Responding	Absolute	Surrender	Enthusiastically
Yes	Truth		Now!

As we say our “Fiat — Amen — Yes” to the Lord with Mary at Holy Communion with Jesus and the Holy Spirit we are gradually *transformed* into a presence of Jesus — a Living eucharist with the gift of *peace*.

Total	
Renewal	Present
Awesome	Experiencing
Never-ending	Awesome

Sublime **Compassionate**
Formation **Eloim**
Of
Redeeming
Mercy

St. Faustina, “the great apostle of Divine Mercy in our time” (John Paul II, Divine Mercy Sunday, 1994) prayed:

“O Jesus, transform me into Yourself, for you can do all things (D #163).

And to complete the Holy Family: St. Joseph, whose mnemonic was given to me by Fr. Christopher Rocca, O.C.D. I give you my expanded form:

Just
Obedient
Silent
Espoused
Prayerful, Pure, Poor, Powerful
Holy, Humble, Helper

St. Joseph is the amazing guard and guide of the Holy Family and of the Church. I experienced the help of St. Joseph at the encouragement of St. Teresa of Avila, a favorite of his.

And now the mnemonic for MERCY. It took some time to come up with the key words — but then it came suddenly — realizing that Mercy is God Himself (“the second name of love”)

The Father, rich in mercy (Eph 2:4, *Dives in Misericordia*).

The Son, mercy incarnate.

The Holy Spirit, mercy in person.

Mighty

Eternal

Redeeming

Compassionate

Yahweh

The Holy Eucharist is Mercy Incarnate, Jesus dwelling among us as our Lord, as our bridegroom, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

- Mercy is Love’s second name (John Paul II Rich in Mercy, *Dives in Misericordia*).
- Mercy is God’s love poured out in creating us, redeeming us and sanctifying us.
- Mercy in latin and related languages is *miseri - cordia*” literally having a “miserable heart”. My adaptation of the definition of St. Thomas

Aquinas is: “Having a pain in your heart over someone else's pain, and taking pain to relieve that pain!”

- Mercy has been called:

forgiveness for the unforgivable, love for the unlovable

It is this mercy that we receive in the Holy Eucharist. It is the gift of the presence of Jesus that transforms us into a Living Eucharist, a merciful, humble, holy presence of Jesus.

A mnemonic for *love* was given me by Sr. Gloria Beaupré, of happy memory, who offered her sufferings for priests and a community of priests praying for priests:

Living

Our

Vocation

Eucharistically

And a mnemonic for *humility*:

Habitual

Un —

Mindfulness

In

Lowly

Imitation

Trusting

Yahweh

I needed to develop a mnemonic for mercy, humility, holiness, mystery to prepare for a reflection on the Spiritual Energy of the Eucharist and the Eucharist as a great *mystery* of faith.

Miracles

Yet

Silent

Truths

Even

Revealing

Yahweh

As a challenge to you to write and to use a mnemonics I include a mnemonic for mnemonic!

Minds

Never —

Ending

Memory

Of

Never-ending

Infinite

Combinations

Holy Eucharist: a Unique and Real MNEMONIC

In reading and studying Scott Hahn's masterful new book: **Letter and Spirit: from written text to Living Word in the Liturgy** (Doubleday, 2005). I was deeply struck by his focus on the real *presence* of the Lord in the celebration of Holy Mass, both in the sacred word of God proclaimed and in the Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist. The book of the unity and the interpretive key to understand scripture and liturgy is the Divine Covenant.

The key role of the *presence* of the Lord fortified my reflections on the *presence* of the Lord makes the past and future present. Then when Scott Hahn in the Chapter on remembering (Greek: Anamnesis) points out that no modern language has a true equivalent for the hebrew or greek: "Do this in memory of Me" (prayer of consecration of the Precious Blood, Roman Rite, based on Luke 22:19 and Cor 11:25).

A sentence of Scott Hahn's inspired this reflection on the *Holy Eucharist: a unique and real mnemonic*:

Key to the keeping of a covenant was its remembrance; and the
Mnemonic to remembrance was repetition (p. 90, chapter 6:

The Persistence of Memory: Anamnesis and Actualization).

He goes on to say that we must translate the Greek word *anamnesis* the word we used in the liturgy (“Do this in remembrance of me/or in memory of me”) and quotes several authors who give a powerful development of the key word: *anamnesis*: (see pp 91-95).

- What Jesus meant — and, fact, What rabbis meant — by “remembrance” was not a single act of memory or imagination.
- Perhaps the best definition is to recall by making *present*.
- “Liturgy is always in the present tense. The past becomes a present presence that opens a new future.

In the modern idiom these descriptions of the presence of the Lord Jesus in the Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist — “Blew my mind!” These were reflected upon, digested in prayer before the exposed Blessed Sacrament and I express it as:

“The Holy Eucharist is a Unique and Real Mnemonic!”

The Holy Eucharist makes the:

- *Past* passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the —
- *Future* promise of eternal life and the supper of the Lamb our Bridegroom,

- *Present* — sacramentally under the signs of bread and wine
Jesus is present: Body, Soul, and Divinity.

The Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist makes present, and real and unique way the proclamation of the sacred word and makes alive the tradition handed on to us through Apostles and brings to the present moment the promises of Jesus.

The celebration of Holy Mass is a renewal of our family covenant with the Lord God. We are His children and the Church is the Bride of Christ.

The celebration is the *parousia* — the now presence of the Lord Jesus among and the hope of His glorious coming.

The celebration of Holy Mass is in communion with the whole heavenly court: the Saints and Angels worshipping the living God: “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

At the end of the consecration of the Precious Blood the priest says the words of Jesus “Do this in memory of Me.”

The Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist is *the Mystery of Faith*. The priest after the consecration of the Body and Blood of the Lord, “Mysterium Fidei!” (The Mystery of Faith!). The people respond in the words that echo 1 Cor. 11:26:

When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory (Third Memorial Acclamation).

The priest then continues the Eucharistic prayer (I, II, III):

I.) Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son. We,

your people and your ministers, recall his passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory; and from the many gifts you have given us we offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice; the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.

II.) In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup.

Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

III.) Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. We recall Christ's death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand; and, looking forward to his coming in glory, we offer you his body and blood, the acceptable sacrifice which brings salvation to the whole world.

Chapter 11

Eucharist, The Ultimate Extreme Humility of God

Before me on the desk I have two icons, one of Christ crucified, with Mary and John standing beside Jesus, and the other of the torso of Jesus in the tomb with the title “Extreme Humility”. These two icons make present the extreme dimensions of Christ’s incarnation, showing how far He would go to show His merciful love for us sinners. The Word of God not only took on flesh from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, identifying Himself with our humanity in all its sin and weakness, but He went even further. He emptied Himself because He was God, even of His Godhead to become a slave condemned to death, death on a cross (Phil 2:5-11). In extreme humility He was laid in the tomb descending to the dead (Sheol).

The icon of the cross, portraying the scene of John (19:25-37), makes present the reality and grace of the totality of the gift of Jesus, giving us His very life, handing over His Spirit, giving us His mother as our mother, giving us His priesthood in the person of the beloved disciple John, and pouring forth His mercy in the blood and water from His pierced side. In His humility, could He give more?

Yes, He did give more!

The night before He died, gathering His disciples for the paschal meal,

He showed His ultimate love for them. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying, *“Take this all of you and eat it. This is my Body which will be given for you.”* Then after supper He took the cup of wine, blessed it, and gave it to His disciples saying, *“Take this, all of you, and drink from it: This is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me”* (Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Rite),

This is the gift of ultimate extreme humility. The living God not only became a man and died for us that we might die and rise with Him — but in His ultimate extreme humility, He left us Himself under the visible signs of bread and wine. In his ultimate humility, He continues to be present with us in His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, uniting our sacrifices offered with His, giving Himself to each of the faithful as a communion of merciful love *in order that we may be transformed into living Eucharist, His mystical Body.*

How humble can God be? God is humility itself. In the Eucharist we experience that humility.

This gift of the Eucharist is the countersign to our present age. This ultimate humility of God stands in confrontation to all the rebellious independence, self-fulfillment, luke-warm indifference, pleasure seeking, and pride. The Lord’s response to all of this is His humble, silent and hidden presence in the Eucharist. Here is the radiant strength to stand firm in the continual daily passion and crucifixion of the Church, His mystical Body, as we the faithful receive and adore

our crucified and risen Lord and Savior.

The ultimate extreme humility of God is the measure of the dimensions of God's merciful love for us. The greater the humility, the greater the mercy. "*There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends*" (John 15:13). The Lord Jesus did just that in giving Himself to us in the Eucharist; He loved us with the greatest love. Can we do any less than fulfill His command:

A new command I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, so you also should love one another.

(John 13:34)

More Reflections and Formulas for Humility

(based on What's it all about? Faith Publishing Out of print).

Over the years I developed not only a mnemonic for humility, but also three formulas for humility. My biochemistry background keeps coming out!

HT³ = Truth/Totality/Transparency

Humility continues to be a growing concern for me. I see its importance, and I also see my need of it.

Why humility? Because humility is the response to the need of our times and is a response that has been needed throughout the ages. The sin of Lucifer was pride, a rebellious "I will not serve!" The sin of Adam and Eve was also pride, "We can be like God!" The sin of the Jewish leaders who condemned Jesus was self-righteous pride. The great sin of our age is the rebellious independence from

God, a practical atheism that seeks self and self-fulfillment. I'm convinced of the need of humility, but questions immediately arise. What is humility?

In the novitiate of the Basilian Fathers in 1946, I strongly sensed from reading and from teachings that spiritual pride was the worst possible sin of the spiritual life, but I do not remember that spiritual pride was ever defined. I assumed it meant not talking about yourself, and as a result I fell into spiritual pride because I didn't acknowledge God's gifts in my life.

So I've decided for myself, to re-define humility as "boasting." Since not talking about myself led to spiritual pride then boasting might have the deserved effect, as long as it was a two-fold boasting. On one hand it must be a boasting of God's mighty power and on the other hand a boasting of my weakness and misery. Sounds like Mary our Blessed Mother, and St. Paul! This definition of humility is based on the traditional description of humility as truth. I am creature and sinner, but He is Lord and giver.

I've continued to search for a clearer and fuller definition of humility. These past weeks, I've come up with a chemical formula, a biochemical flashback: HT^3 ,. Humility can be described with three "T": Truth, Totality, and Transparency.

TRUTH: Humility is the truth and the truth is that we are creatures of God, made in His image and likeness. We are His children. It is a big fat lie to listen to words that would say to us that we are no good, or that we have no value. The truth is that we are made to reflect God by our reason, our freedom, our unity and

love. Of course we are sinners; but Christ Jesus is our Savior, and a bigger Savior than we are a sinner.

TOTALITY: Humility is the openness to receiving totally and giving totally. It is all a gift. We have received everything from God as gift and we pass it on to others in love, mercy and service as a way of returning it all to God. “The gift you have received, give as a gift” (Mt. 10-8). In this dimension of humility, we reflect who God is. He is humility itself, totally giving all to His Son and the Son receives all and returns it in the Holy Spirit. In Christ Jesus, the Father has given us all.

TRANSPARENCY: Humility is being transparent to God’s presence and grace; His presence radiates to others when there is no obstacle of self and sin. A humble person radiates God’s merciful love because in seeing Him, we can see the Lord. The Holy Spirit orders our lives to be like stained glass windows, letting light shine through.

This formula, HT³, can be tested against some beautiful and powerful examples: Jesus, the Eucharist, and Mary.

JESUS is truth. He said of Himself, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jn. 14:5). He is the Son of the Father and the Son of Mary, and He knows it and claims it. He is totally given, even to death on the cross for our salvation. He totally received mercy in the resurrection. He is transparent. Seeing Jesus, we see the Father (cf. Jn. 14:8).

EUCCHARIST is the Truth incarnate. It is the Body and Blood, Soul and

Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It is total gift, totally given to be received. How humble can God get? It is transparent. It radiates to those with eyes of faith.

MARY is the model of humility. Her statement to St. Bernadette at Lourdes is a perfect statement of humility. “I am the Immaculate Conception” is the truth — she is the spouse of the Holy Spirit, the eternal, uncreated Immaculate Conception. The Immaculate Conception is total gift, since she didn’t exist until it happened. Because of her Immaculate Conception, she is sinless and transparent to God. Seeing Mary, we see Jesus.

Truth, totality, transparency do give a more complete picture of humility, but the real issue is: “How do I grow in humility?”

Three actions working in consort can zero in on humility, like three points used in surveying. Surrendering to God’s will, invoking the Holy Spirit, and rejoicing in our humiliations are available to all of us, and are growth patterns in humility.

SURRENDERING TO GOD’S WILL: “Fiat!” The “Fiat” of Jesus (Heb. 10:7) and Mary (Lk. 1:38) are a model for us. They surrendered their wills, their plans to God’s, that His will be done. This is what Jesus taught us in the Our Father (Mt. 5:10). This is the prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Olives as He humbled Himself to do His Father’s will (Mt. 26:42) in entering the passion.

The surrendering of our free will to the will of the Father is the greatest exercise of our free will, and the way to reach real freedom (Jn. 8:32 and 36).

This act of the will is the foundation of all prayer. It is the greatest act of love

because we allow Him to love us by having His will accomplished in us.

INVOKING THE HOLY SPIRIT: “Veni Sancti Spiritus!” (Come, Holy Spirit) Inviting the Holy Spirit to come and take possession and control of our lives is to ask Him to purify us, to sanctify us, and so make us transparent to His radiant presence. We invite the Holy Spirit to remove every obstacle that obstructs His radiance.

REJOICING IN HUMILIATIONS: “Gaudete” Rejoicing in the Lord is probably the hardest of the three actions but it makes us grow the quickest. Jesus rejoiced in seeing Satan falling from his place of pride (cf. Lk. 10:17-23). “For the sake of the joy that lay before Him He endured the cross, heedless of its shame” (Heb. 12:2).

In his 30 day spiritual exercise, St. Ignatius of Loyola gives us the meditation on the two standards: That Satan’s way is “riches and honors that lead to pride,” and is opposed by Christ’s way of “poverty, and humiliations that lead to humility.” He points out that with the grace of God, but only under the direction of a spiritual advisor, you may even beg for humiliations in order to grow in humility! What a grace! It is a prayer that the Lord answers *immediately*, because He so loves humility.

My experience is that we have more than enough humiliations each day to practice our rejoicing. Humiliations are God’s way to make us grow:

My sons, do not disdain the discipline of the Lord nor lose heart
when He reproves you;

For whom the Lord loves, He disciplines; He scourges every son He receives.

...God does so for our true profit, that we may have His holiness ... (Heb. 12:5-13).

“Fiat, Veni, Gaudete.” (Yes, come, rejoice). A three step prayer for all circumstances. Three steps in the dance of life.

The mystic Saint Faustina Kowalska (1905-1938) left us a clear example of humility. In her diary she records the words of our Lady to her asking for humility:

I desire, my dearly beloved daughter, that you practice the three virtues that are dearest to me — and most pleasing to God. The first is humility, humility, and once again humility; the second virtue, purity [of intention]; the third virtue, love of God. As my daughter, you must especially radiate these virtues (*Diary* 1415).

Saint Faustina lived a humble life and was aware of the need of humility. She comments on the fact that there are so few saints because there are few who are deeply humble (cf. *Diary* 1306). Her advice to grow in humility is to meditate on the passion of Christ (*Diary* 267) and to rejoice at humiliations (*Diary* 270).

Rejoicing in humiliation is certainly the hardest on our self-will and pride. It hurts to live this way, but is there another way that is effective, efficient and trustworthy? This is the way the Father chose for Jesus and Mary. Who am I not to

follow the Father's way for me? Personally, I know the way, but it still hurts. It is painful — but does that really matter?

A second formula for humility would be the action verbs in latin that teach us about growing in humility:

Humility in action = **F**iat / **V**eni / **G**audete

so **H^I** = **FVG**

A third formula for humility in practice:

Humility in practice = **T**rust / **T**hanks / **T**ask

H^{II} = **T³**

Again St. Faustina is a wonderful example of Trust, Thanksgiving and Task to be done:

- *Trust*: her great virtue was complete Trust in Jesus, (eg D 1489, last two paragraphs).
- *Thanksgiving*: was her great way of praising the Lord for His great mercy. Thanksgiving combined Trust became explosive in her life (eg D 1367, 1369): **T 'NT**.
- *Task*: her humble service of cook, gardner and door-keeper was her task that put trust in God's mercy into practice.

Chapter 12

Eucharist, The Ultimate Extreme Mercy of God

In the chapter on the Ultimate Humility of God in the Eucharist, I pointed out that His humility is a measure of His mercy. This needs more reflection in order to grasp the extent of His mercy given in the Eucharist. Here He reveals the *extreme* dimensions of His loving mercy, fully carrying out the Father's plan and will to perfection: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). And so Jesus gave Himself completely in sacrifice.

The Eucharist is total gift, a complete giving to the extreme extent of His love, the ultimate gift of His mercy. Again we can consider His mercy given in three dimensions: given as presence, given as sacrifice, and given as communion.

The Eucharist is God's love given as Mercy Incarnate, mercy itself dwelling among us: **mercy present**, in the totality of His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity — hidden, silent, humble, loving — to be adored and worshiped; **mercy sacrificed**, Body broken and given, Blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins in a new and everlasting covenant of merciful love — to be offered continually in remembrance of His passion, death and resurrection along with all our sacrifices, sufferings, joys, and, **mercy to be consumed** in Holy Communion, in an intimate union of Bride and Bridegroom that all may

be one (John 17:21) — that we may be transformed into what we eat, that we may truly be loved and love in return.

This is God’s gift of mercy, so completely given that He wants to be consumed by His faithful disciples so that we may be one with Him as He is with the Father. There is no greater love given, no greater mercy poured out, than in the gift of one’s very life.

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Rich in Mercy* (#13), describes this mercy as “the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer”. He goes on to say that the Church brings us even nearer to the source of the Savior’s mercy, especially in the Eucharist which brings us even nearer to that love which is more powerful than death: “For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim not only the death of the Redeemer but also His resurrection, ’until He comes’ in glory” (1 Cor 11:26 and acclamation of the Roman Rite) He then points out that the celebration of the Eucharist attests to His inexhaustible love by which “He desires always to be united with us and present in our midst, coming to meet every human heart.”

In every Mass and before every tabernacle, we proclaim this ultimate mercy of God, mercy revealed as the love of presence, of sacrifice, of union.

This is the merciful God that dwells in your hearts at this moment. Open wide the doors of your hearts and acknowledge His loving presence, with thanks and praise and rejoicing!

Chapter 13

The Ultimate Transcendent Holiness of the Eucharist

During my vigil Holy Hour this past night, a flash of insight on the Eucharist as “holy” filled my heart and mind. The holiness of the Eucharist is in the third dimension of the Eucharist which I described earlier as the ultimate humility and ultimate mercy of the Lord. The Eucharist is the holy-humble-merciful presence of the Lord Jesus. This third dimension completes the trilogy of descriptions with His mystery — God’s total transcendence and holiness. This holy God emptied Himself in utter humility and mercy to be present among us by His Holy Spirit.

This holiness of God is proclaimed in every celebration of the Eucharist:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

After this proclamation, the priest continues in the (Second) Eucharistic prayer:

Lord, you are holy indeed,

*the fountain of all holiness,
Let your Spirit come upon these gifts
to make them holy,
so that they may become for us
the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

At each celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the Byzantine Rite, the priest proclaims at the elevation of the holy bread:

“Holy things for the Holy,”

and the people respond:

“One is Holy, one is Lord,

Jesus Christ,

to the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

(The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostum)

In this liturgy, how powerfully the Trisagion (thrice-holy hymn) is sung prior to the reading of Sacred Scripture:

“Holy God! Holy Mighty One!

Holy Immortal One!

Have mercy on us!”

(The Liturgy of St. John Chrysostum)

This holiness of the Eucharist — the living, holy Lord present to us — calls for our reverence and awe, a holy fear of God, Who is not only so holy, but so totally humble and merciful. This holiness of the Eucharist is the third dimension of the countersign to the people of our age who have lost their sense of reverence, and of the holy.

The holiness of the Eucharist is the work of the Holy Spirit. This same Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary at the Annunciation, and Jesus, the Holy One, was conceived. It is this same Holy Spirit Who transforms bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the same Holy Spirit Who will transform us into living Eucharist, radiating His mercy as we continue our “Yes” to the Father in union with the “Yes” of Jesus and Mary.

This third dimension of the Eucharist reflects the nature of Christ’s priesthood in which we all share by our Baptism, and some by Holy Orders. Expressed in terms of the Lord’s command, echoing Sacred Scripture, we are called to:

Be holy, because I am holy.

Be humble, because I am humble.

Be merciful, because I am merciful.

This three-fold dimension of the Eucharist, as the “holy-humble-merciful” presence of the Lord Jesus, also reflects the fundamental three-fold description of the Sacrament of presence/sacrifice/communion. As we are challenged to live out the Mass by “spiritual” presence, sacrifice and com-

munion, so, too, we are challenged to be holy, humble, and merciful.

The Holy Eucharist is a challenge for you and me, and for all believers, to be and live the Eucharist — to be living Eucharist and so radiate the Lord’s mercy on the whole world.

Come, Holy Spirit, transform me to be living Eucharist. Make my heart radiate with Your mercy. In union with Mary, Your beloved spouse, make my heart the throne of Jesus in His glorious coming.

In my vigil Holy Hour I also became aware that the Eucharistic presence of Jesus comes with the presence of the whole Most Holy Trinity. Jesus is never alone never separated from His heavenly Father nor from His Holy Spirit. What came in a flash of insight was that the Eucharist is the ultimate, extreme presence of:

- The *Father* who is “*rich in Mercy*” (Eph 2:4) and love itself who gave us this only Son;
- The *Son* who *humbled* Himself to the will of the Father in the Redemptive Incarnation, even to death on the cross, to become our Eucharist;
- The *Holy Spirit* who is *holiness* itself — makes Jesus present by the consecration, so that we may receive the Spirit to make us a holy living Eucharist, a living presence of Jesus to transform the world.

Chapter 14

The Radiance of the Eucharist

I would love to see the Eucharist radiate! It has been a desire of my heart for a number of years to have the Lord reign among us in resplendent glory. The radiant presence of the Lord in the Eucharist would be a marvelous sign of God's presence among us and an effective sign to evangelize. Could you imagine the surprise of a non-believer or a doubting Thomas entering into the Eucharistic presence and seeing the Lord's radiance, and being floored by His power like Saul on the road to Damascus.

Come, Lord Jesus! And please hurry up!

At the present time, the Eucharist does radiate and is seen and felt by faith. The Lord, hidden in His humility, calls forth our trust and faith. As we spend time before the Eucharistic presence, we are irradiated; our trust and faith are enlightened, and our hearts inflamed with the fire of His divine love. It is something like sun-bathing, only here we are "Son-bathing." It really is "radiation therapy"! It is **God's Radiation Therapy!**

A few years ago, at a time when I was dealing with tensions and exhaustion which were overwhelming me, I went to a retreat at Holy Trinity Retreat House in Larchmont, NY. There Father Kevin Scallon, C.M., and Sister Briege McKenna prayed over me for the Lord's direction in that situation.

Sister Briege shared this word: “Rest on the Sacred Heart. Take much time before the Blessed Sacrament. In time He will reveal His will. Trust Him.”

Over the past three years I have deliberately taken more and more time before the Blessed Sacrament. Currently, as I experiment with various prayer schedules to develop a realistic daily pattern for the Apostles of Divine Mercy, I am making three Holy Hours per day, one during the night, a second in the morning, and a third in the afternoon. The more time I spend before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, experiencing God’s radiation therapy the more I desire to live in union with Him, to be a “living Eucharist” and to radiate His mercy, drawing strength from His merciful Heart in the Eucharist.

I am becoming more aware that His Eucharistic radiance is a radiance of mercy, a radiance of His Blood and Water that gushed forth from His pierced side on the Cross. Those are rays of mercy, the blood which is the life of the soul, and the water that justifies the soul, making it righteous. The red and pale rays which Saint Faustina saw radiating from the Heart of Jesus when He appeared to her, she also saw emanating from the Eucharist on a number of occasions (*Diary*, #370, 336, 344, 346, 657, 1462); at times she saw them radiating over the whole world (*Diary* #'s 420, 441, 1046).

“Once the image [of the merciful Jesus] was being exhibited over the altar during the Corpus Christi procession [June 20, 1935]. When the priest exposed the Blessed Sacrament, and the choir began to sing, the rays from the image pierced the Sacred Host and spread out all over the world. Then I heard these words: “These rays of mercy will pass through

you, just as they have passed through this Host, and they will go out through all the world.” At these words, profound joy invaded my soul.”

(*Diary*, #1046)

Shouldn't all the faithful be irradiated with His mercy in order that we may radiate His mercy to others? Then we would truly live the command of our Lord: “*Be merciful even as your Father is merciful*” (Lk 6:36).

I was excited when I read an account of the apparitions in Akita, Japan:

“On June 12, 1973, when Sister Agnes Sasagawa, to whom Our Lady entrusted the messages, opened the tabernacle for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a very strong light came from it and filled the entire chapel. This lasted for three days.”

(Notes of Father Michael Scanlan, T.O.R.)

The Eucharist radiates! What a sign to the world if all could see it.

Father Stefano Gobbi records locutions from Mary speaking of the radiance of the Lord's coming reign. The locution of August 21, 1987, is especially clear and strong on the radiance of the Eucharist to come:

“Because in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is really present, and this presence will become increasingly stronger, will shine over the earth like a sun and will mark the beginning of a new era. The coming of the glorious reign of Christ will coincide with the greatest splendor of the Eucharist. Christ

will restore His glorious reign in the universal triumph of His Eucharistic reign which will unfold in all its power and will have the capacity to change hearts, souls, individuals, families, society and the very structure of the world” (To the priests, Our Lady’s Beloved Sons).

This radiant reign of the Eucharistic Lord is what I long for and pray for. Come, Lord Jesus! I realize that the glorious reign will come, but only after we have passed through the purification of a corporate Calvary. But if we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we, too, will endure the travail for the sake of the joy that lies ahead.

The radiant reign of Jesus is already prefigured for us in the event of Mt. Tabor, a preview of what is to come. Also, we are told of the radiance of the Lamb of God who will be the light of the New Jerusalem, replacing the sun and moon (see Rev 21:11; 22:5):

All of us, gazing on the Lord’s glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit. (II Cor 3:18)

Chapter 15

An Equation for the Eucharist

I've been searching for a "spiritual-biochemical" equation for the Eucharist. Of course, I'm aware that you can't describe the Eucharist by an equation, but I've had an inner urge to keep searching for an equation that would help describe the various dimensions of the Eucharist and help us to remember them. This week, in prayer, I've come up with an equation for the spiritual energy of the Eucharist! It has been an exciting insight for me and so I want to share it.

As you may know, the great equation for physical energy was the product of the insight of Albert Einstein. He proposed that energy and matter are interconvertible, and when matter is converted into energy, there is a tremendous release of energy. He described this conversion in the simple equation:

$$e = mc^2$$

That is, energy (e) is equal to the mass of matter (m), multiplied by the speed of light (c) twice. His theoretical equation was proved to be correct in the first explosion of an atomic bomb: matter was converted into explosive energy! This is physical energy.

Is there a spiritual energy?

In regard to God's omnipotence, St. Thomas Aquinas said that the mercy of God: "forgiving men, taking pity on them, is a greater work than the creation of the world" (Summa Theologiae, Treatise on Grace, II-II. 113.9). He is saying that God's spiritual energy is greater than His physical energy of creation. So the search for an equation of spiritual energy became even more significant for me.

And Eureka, I think I've found such an equation! It describes the conversion of God's mercy into energy of the Eucharist:

$$E = mh^2$$

That is, the spiritual energy of the Eucharist (E) is equal to God's mercy (m), multiplied by his Humility (h), and multiplied a second time by His Holiness (h).

God's spiritual energy is greater than His physical energy expressed in creation. God's spiritual energy is given to us in the holy, humble, merciful presence of the Eucharist.

It radiates spiritual energy!

I would refer you back to the reflection on the "Radiance of the Eucharist" (Chapter 14). The source of the radiant spiritual energy is God's mercy transformed by His holiness and humility. It comes forth from the Eucharist as rays of mercy.

Recall how Saint Faustina Kowalska saw the Eucharist radiate with the same red and pale rays as in the image representing the Blood and water that gushed forth from the

pierced Heart of Jesus. At times she saw these rays radiate out upon the whole world. (Diary #420, 441, 1046).

This is radiant spiritual energy. We need to be irradiated by these rays of mercy, by His precious Blood and water which gushed forth from His pierced, merciful Heart as a fount of mercy for us. We need to take extended time before the Eucharist for “God’s Radiation Therapy”. We need to be irradiated by His mercy, so that we may in turn radiate His mercy to the world.

“O Blood and water which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of mercy for us, I trust in you.” (Diary, #309)

Another way that we can be transformed by the spiritual energy of the Eucharist is by “gazing” upon the radiant presence of the Lord. This gazing is perceiving with the eyes of faith, the true spiritual beauty before us. Again it is good to remind ourselves of the words of St. Paul:

All of us, gazing on the Lord’s glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from the glory to glory into his very image by the Lord who is the Spirit. (II Cor 3:18)

As we gaze upon the Eucharist with eyes of faith, with “unveiled faces”, we are gradually transformed into what we see — a living Eucharist, holy, humble, and merciful.

The great moment of transformation takes place when we receive the

Eucharist, this spiritual radiant energy, in Holy Communion. We enter into Holy Communion when we receive the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine, but transformed by the Holy Spirit. It is the same Holy Spirit that came upon Mary; it is the same Holy Spirit that came upon Jesus in the Jordan River; it is the same Holy Spirit by which Jesus performed the works of the Father and by which Jesus was resurrected; it is the same Holy Spirit that came upon the disciples in the Cenacle on Pentecost, transforming them, and the Church was born.

It is this same Holy Spirit that the priest asks after the consecration to transform us into living Eucharist:

*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.*

(Third Eucharistic Prayer, Roman Rite)

By this same Holy Spirit, we are divinized, transformed, “mercified” (if I may coin a word), to be living Eucharistic, members of the Body of Christ. By this transformation we radiate His mercy.

This transformation is a gradual process as we are nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord and “become what we eat”! (St. Augustine, and a good biochemical principle). This transformation takes time and repeated reception of Holy Eucharist, and repeated and extended times of “God’s radiation

therapy” and gazing upon Him. Gradually, we begin to radiate the mercy of the Father as Jesus did, and live the Eucharist.

We are challenged and called to be living Eucharist, so that all who see our light (Mt 5:14-17) may give glory to God; that seeing the radiance of God’s mercy in us, all may be confronted by the sign of contradiction to our age and see the answer to our crisis in the Church and world.

Lord fill me with Your mercy, irradiate me with Your mercy, transform me by Your mercy, that I may radiate your mercy to the world as a living Eucharist!

Over the years I’ve repeatedly explained to pilgrims who came to my Divine Mercy Hermitage the meaning of the equation of the Eucharist. It is written at the base of the icon of “Extreme Humility” which portrays the torso of Jesus rising from the tomb. It is like a picture of the Shroud of Turin; the Holy Saturday icon:

“E” is the energy of the radiation of the Eucharist

“m” is the infinite *mercy* of God, that is the infinite distance
between

“h” which is the Lord’s transcendent, infinite *holiness* of
God and

“h” which is the infinite *humility* of God, lowering Himself
to the “humus” (latin for ground), the earth, the flesh of

man, born of the Virgin Mary — and I lower my hand from the heavens to the floor, to illustrate the humility of Jesus.

The equation for Eucharist also reflects the Holy Trinity: Three persons that are one:

The *Father* who is “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4).

The *Son*, who humbled Himself in obedience even to death on the cross (Phil 2:8).

The *Holy Spirit* who is love and holiness in person.

And we, you and I, are to become and be a living Eucharist in response to invitation of Jesus Christ our Lord. We are to be a merciful, holy, humble presence of Jesus and radiate His presence. We are to become what He is! By yielding to the Holy Spirit and eating His flesh and drinking His Blood we are transformed from glory to glory into His very image (2 Cor 3:18)!

We are to be a “Living Eucharist!” — a living radiant, transparent presence of Jesus: merciful, holy, humble!

Chapter 16

Mary, Mother of the Eucharist

On the solemnity of the Annunciation of our Lord's conception in the womb of Mary approaches, my thoughts have been on the role of Mary in the Incarnation and the Eucharist.

Mary's response to the Angel Gabriel's announcement of the plan of the Lord was:

Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: Let it be done to me according to your word. (Lk 1:38)

Mary said "Yes" to the plan of God and "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1:14) by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also said "Yes" to the plan of the Father.

When he came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, and it is written of me in the roll of the book.' " (Heb 10:5-8)

By saying "Yes" to the will of the Father, Mary, Jesus, and the Holy

Spirit cooperated with the will and plan of the Father, and **we** *by that will, have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all* (Heb 10:10). We have been sanctified by the body of Jesus Christ and by our “Yes” to the will of the Father.

Our willed “Yes” to the will of the Father continues as we say “Yes” to the cooperative action of Mary, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, thereby becoming the living, mystical Body of Christ, being transformed into “living Eucharist”. “How can this be ...?” we ask, echoing the words of Mary. “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you*” (Lk 1:35), was the response, just as the celebrant of the Mass invokes the Holy Spirit upon the faithful.

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.

(Third Eucharistic Prayer, Roman Rite)

The Second Vatican Council teaches that “the faithful, already marked with the sacred seal of baptism and confirmation, are through the reception of the Eucharist, fully joined to the Body of Christ” (*Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests*, #5).

How are we prepared for this full union, to be “fully joined to the Body of Christ”? I see this as Mary’s role. We allow her to fulfill her role in the Father’s plan of salvation, by our willed “Yes” to her. This is what consecration to Mary means. It allows her to bring us to the cross of Jesus, to incorporate us into His

one sacrifice, in order that we become the Body of Christ, living Eucharist.

The dying words of Jesus are Eucharistic. By saying to Mary, “*Woman, behold your son*”, and to the disciple, “*Behold your mother*”, Jesus is telling His mother and the disciple whom He loves, who represents each of us, that we are now, like Jesus, children of the Mother of God and therefore, members of His Body — living Eucharist. He then “*gave up his spirit*” (Jn 19:30), and it was accomplished.

The Gospel of St. John does not record the words of institution of the Eucharist as such, but John does give us the discourse of Jesus on the Eucharist (Jn 6:25-70), as well as Jesus’ description of the effects of the Eucharist, at the Last Supper (Jn 14-17). In his mystical way, John does give us a deeper meaning of the words of institution of the Eucharist, however, in the dying words of Jesus from the Cross: “*Woman, behold your son*” (Jn 19:26). In a profoundly mystical sense, Jesus was pronouncing the words of institution over us (“*This is My Body*”), by also making us children of Mary. We are His body, and so we become living Eucharist, sons and daughters of the Mother of God. Through consecration to Mary, we allow her to prepare the living bread, to prepare us to live a total “*Yes*” and to be this living Eucharist, the Body of Christ.

So we, too, say, “*Behold the handmaid of the Lord,*” and since God provided a body for us, we say as well, “*I have come to do your will*”, and we “*offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God*” (see Rom 12:1). So, as a priestly people we “*take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, which is the fount*

and apex of the whole Christian life, and offer the divine victim to God, and offer ourselves along with it” (*Lumen Gentium*, #11).

Throughout each day, we can continue to offer the divine victim and ourselves as well, in the Eucharistic words of Jesus, and of Mary at the Annunciation:

Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to your word (Lk 1:38).

or

Behold you have provided a body for me ... I have come to do your will (Heb 10:8).

We can offer ourselves, our families, others, the world situation, everything, in words that echo the Eucharistic proclamation of John the Baptist:

Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
(Jn 1:30).

When we see the brokenness of the Body of Christ in the world around us we can cry to the Father:

Father, behold, the pierced lamb of God, and have mercy on us and on the whole world!

At each occasion of pain, we can cry to the Father:

Father, behold, the broken Body of Your Son, and have mercy on us and on the whole world.

We can live the Mass from moment to moment as we live our Yes” to be living Eucharist — chosen, blessed, and broken, to be given for the sake of many.

Chapter 17

Consecration to Mary is Eucharistic and the Desire of Jesus

Have you ever considered what Jesus wants our relationship with Mary to be? He told us at the solemn moment of His death on the cross, when He pronounced His “last will and testament”:

“Woman, behold your son!”

The He said to the disciple,

“Behold your mother!”

(Jn 19:26-27)

“This last will and testament” of the dying Jesus established a new family relationship called the New Covenant — a family bond, instituted and sealed by His Blood. From the cross, He solemnly pronounced His beloved disciple to be a blood member of His family, with Mary as his mother.

The Church has consistently taught that John represented all of us at the foot of the cross. Jesus, then, was not simply making John a member of His family. He wants all of His “beloved disciples” to be blood members of His family — with Mary as our mother.

The amazing thing is that we really can be made spiritually present at the

cross, become members of His family, and share in the redeeming and atoning work of Jesus and Mary. How is this possible? By “consecration to Jesus through Mary,” thus fulfilling the dying desire of Jesus.

What is Consecration?

Let us investigate the meaning of “consecration.” The root meaning of the Latin word is “to make holy, to sanctify, to set aside as sacrifice.”

In the gospel according to John, Jesus uses this word “consecrate” several times. He describes Himself as the One “whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world” (Jn 10:36). At the Last Supper He prays to the Father for His disciples: “Consecrate them by means of the truth” (Jn 17:17). He then declares “I consecrate myself for their sake now, that they may be consecrated in truth” (Jn 17:19).

On the cross, Jesus consecrated Himself in order that *we* might be consecrated. The desire of Jesus in consecrating us is that we would be made holy by offering ourselves as He offered Himself.

To Jesus through Mary

Consecration to Mary is a short-hand way of expressing our consecration to *Jesus* through Mary. By this consecration, by giving of ourselves totally as gift to Mary, we fulfill the desire Jesus expressed in proclaiming Mary as our mother. By this consecration we also follow the way Jesus Himself came when He was totally entrusted to the woman Mary and to her nurturing. By this consecration to Mary we share in the consecration of Christ Himself. This means we enter into

both the family of God and the mission of Christ.

Pope John Paul II is clear in his teaching that our consecration to Mary is a participation in the very consecration of Christ (John Paul II, Fatima Consecration, 1982). In the words of St. Paul, we are “given the ministry of reconciliation ... this makes us ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:18-21).

Our consecration is also a renewal of our baptismal consecration by which we are made children of God, members of His family. And this is the express desire and mandate of Jesus: that we all be baptized (Mt 28:19).

Consecration to Mary is Eucharistic

The gospel of John does not record the words of Eucharistic consecration (transubstantiation) as do the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John does, however, develop the promise of the Eucharist (Jn 6) and the effect of the Eucharist (Jn 13-15). And, in his mystical way, he describes a “transubstantiation” at the cross.

At the cross, the words “Woman, behold your son” and “Son, behold your mother” produce a “mystical transubstantiation”.

By these words of the dying Jesus, the beloved disciple (and us with him) becomes the son of the mother of God! (John Paul II, homily, Fatima, May 13, 1982).

What Jesus is saying to Mary in this mystical way is “This is My Body. This is My Blood.” By the dying words of Jesus, we who are represented by the

beloved disciple *become* the mystical Body and Blood of Christ. We become blood members of the family of God.

This is a bold interpretation of both the meaning of consecration and the desire of Jesus, but it echoes the very bold words of Pope John Paul II in his reflection on the words of Jesus.

The solemnity of that act of entrustment (“Woman, behold your son!”), its situation at the very heart of the drama of the cross, the sobriety and pithiness of the words ... could be described as proper to an almost sacramental formula ... (John Paul II, Nov. 23, 1988).

A “Sacramental formula!” That insight of John Paul II readily stirred my biochemical mind — a formula for Eucharistic consecration to Mary. That is a bold statement and I love it!

By our consecration to Mary, we give her permission to do what she does best — that is, by the Holy Spirit, to form us into the Body of her Son, to form us into a living Eucharist. So, then, consecration to Mary is a Eucharistic Consecration.

How beautifully the Church prays in the Third Eucharistic prayer that we may all experience this transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit:

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.

This prayer reflects the desire of Jesus that we will freely accept His entrustment of us to Mary ("Behold your Mother") and then permit the Holy Spirit to form us into the Body of Christ.

As Fr. Arthur Calkins writes in *Totus Tuus*: "To go to Jesus, then, through Mary, is not to take a roundabout route, but the one that He has ordained. To consecrate ourselves to her is to consecrate ourselves to Him by the means which He has designated."

An Act of Consecration to Mary

Mary, Mother of Jesus

and Mother of Mercy,

since Jesus from the Cross

gave you to me,

I take you as my own.

and since Jesus gave me to you,

take me as your own.

Make me docile like Jesus on the Cross,

obedient to the Father.

trusting in humility and in love.

Mary, my Mother,

in imitation of the Father,

who gave his Son to you,

I too give my all to you,

to you I entrust all that I am,
all that I have and all that I do.
Help me to surrender
even more fully to the Spirit.
Lead me deeper into the Mystery
of the Cross, the Cenacle
and the fullness of Church.
As you formed the heart of Jesus
by the Spirit, form my heart
to be the throne of Jesus
in his glorious coming.

–Fr. George Kosicki, CSB

† IMPRIMATUR: Bishop John C. Reiss, JDC, Trenton, NJ - 1981

The use of the word “Cenacle” in the consecration is my way of saying what took place in the Cenacle, the upper room: on *Holy Thursday* Jesus washed the feet of His apostles out of loving, humble service, instituted the Holy Eucharist and spoke of his love for us; on *Easter Sunday* night he appeared in the Cenacle to the Apostles as the Risen Lord, breathed on them the Holy Spirit and gave them the power to forgive sins; on the octave day, *Mercy Sunday* He again appeared to them in the Cenacle and confronted St. Thomas who then professed “My Lord and My God; on *Pentecost* He sent His Holy Spirit as tongues of fire on the Apostles, disciples and Mary in the *Cenacle*.

Chapter 18

The Three-fold Consecration of John 17:17-19

I've continued to wonder over the years why St. John does not give the words of the Eucharistic consecration nor describe the institution of the Holy Eucharist in his gospel account. However, a recent insight that started with my brother, Father Bohdan, a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, ordained in 1950. Father Bohdan loves to comment on and preach on the description of St. Faustina's visit to the upper room when Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist:

Holy Hour — Thursday. During this hour of prayer, Jesus allowed me to enter the Cenacle, and I was a witness to what happened there. However, I was most deeply moved when, before the Consecration, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and entered into a mysterious conversation with His Father. It is only in eternity that we shall really understand that moment. His eyes were like two flames; His face was radiant, white as snow; His whole personage full of majesty, His soul full of longing. At the moment of Consecration, love rested satiated — the sacrifice fully consummated. Now only the external ceremony of death will be carried out — external

destruction; the essence [of it] is in the Cenacle. Never in my whole life had I understood this mystery so profoundly as during that hour of adoration. Oh how ardently I desire that the whole world come to know this unfathomable mystery!
[of the Cenacle]

That description of the institution of the Holy Eucharist by St. Faustina then led my brother to the insight that the consecration of the Eucharist *is described* in the gospel of St. John Chapter 17:17-19!

His insight of John 17 then sparked a further insight for me! The consecration is three-fold in John 17:17-19 and each of the three consecrations has a unique meaning. Listen to the prayer of Jesus to the Father as He prays the three-fold consecration:

- 1) *Consecrate* them [apostles] in *the* [in the Greek text] *truth*. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world.
- 2) And I *consecrate* myself for them,
- 3) so that they also may be *consecrated* in truth. (Jn 17:17-19, RNAB).

Now my experience as a biochemist and hermit slipped into gear with an insight that uniquely identified each of the three consecrations with distinctions and mystical interpretations:

- 1) “*Consecrate* them in *the* TRUTH,” namely in Jesus who is the *WORD* (logos) of God and is *The* TRUTH (see Jn 14:6, I am the way, and the truth, and the life). This is the consecration to priesthood in Jesus, the eternal High-Priest! This is the *consecration of ordination* to priestly ministry of the Holy Eucharist. The Apostles are ordained to confect and offer the Sacrifice of the Mass — and are sent into the world.
- 2) “And I *consecrate* myself for them,” is the description of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Out of love for us He gave Himself to us under the signs of bread and wine. a gift of love to the utmost (see Jn 13:1) even to death on the cross (see Phil 2:8).
- 3) ... “so that they may be consecrated in truth.” This is the consecration of Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus which transforms us into what we eat (St. Augustine). Each Holy Eucharist transforms us more and more into a presence of Jesus, into a “Living Eucharist”.

The first consecration #1) ordains priest to be sent into the world and make Jesus present by the second #2) consecration, so that we may be transformed by the third #3) consecration into a living presence of Jesus.

This is the mystical teaching of St. John in John 17:17-19 and the interpretation of priest, biochemist, hermit. It’s the “mystery of faith, a great mys-

tery, a mystery of mercy” (John Paul II, *The Church Lives by the Eucharist*, Chapter 1).

This is also the interpretation of Father Ranero Contalamessa OFM cap., the papal household retreat master who described the two-fold role of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist:

- at the *consecration* of Mass the Holy Spirit gives us Jesus,
- In *Holy Communion* Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit that consecrates us to be a present of Jesus (*Come Creator Spirit*, the Liturgical Press, 2003).

Chapter 19 : Part A

The Encyclical on the Eucharist

by John Paul II

The final Encyclical of John Paul II on the Eucharist is a summation and pinnacle of his 26 year pontificate. It's very title describes the broad sweep of his writing:

- The Latin title comes from the opening sentence: *Ecclesia De Eucharistia Vivit* (The Church draws her life from the Eucharist)
- English title: *The Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church*
- * Polish title (The language it was written in) gives a personal touch: *Kosciot zyje dzieki Eucharstii* [The Church lives thanks to the Eucharist]

This final encyclical is personal and even poetic, not only moving but challenging us with his desire that this encyclical would “**Rekindle Eucharistic Amazement!**”

I have read and re-read the encyclical a number of times and wrote out a *Study Guide* (summary of each entry) to serve as a basis of a 8-part TV series discussion with Tracy McManaman at Catholic Familyland TV. It was an exciting series and we experienced “Eucharistic Amazement.”

I recommend that if you want to read the encyclical begin with the *Introduction* and then read the final chapter six *The School of Mary, Woman of the Eucharist*” and the *Conclusion* — then return to the beginning and read the chapters in sequence. Chapter six on Mary blew my mind with spiritual, scripture, poetic insights and challenges. Please see my commentary of Chapter six: *At the School of Mary: The woman of the Eucharist* — that follows in Part B of this chapter.

From my study of the encyclical I would summarize its impact on me by my definition of the Eucharist as described by Pope John Paul:

- **The Eucharist is the Mystery of Mercy and Mary.**

The word Mystery is key to the definition. Mystery is God’s plan for our salvation in Christ that He reveals to us. The more we contemplate the Mystery and seek God’s grace to understand and live it, “lo and behold” we find there is more, so much more to the mystery! For us mystery has a *tension* that we cannot resolve but we can admire with awesome amazement, for example consider the di-polor tension of:

- Jesus, the Word of God made flesh.
- Mary, Virgin and Mother.
- The Eucharist: the presence of the Word made flesh but invisible to our physical senses.

John Paul calls the Eucharist the Mystery of Faith” (Chapter 2), ... “a great mystery: a great mystery, a mystery of Mercy. What more could Jesus have done for us?” Then (in Chapter 6) *At the School of Mary* πwoman of faith” he says that Mary lived this

mystery of faith in her whole life. She teaches us to obey the word of Jesus (Jn 2:5): “Do whatever He tells you.” John Paul then makes an amazing statement:

Mary seems to say to us:

“Do not waver; trust in the words of my Son. If he was able to change water into wine, He can also turn bread and wine into His body and blood, and through this mystery bestow on believers the living memorial of his passover, thus becoming the ‘bread of life!’ ” (#54).

We are comforted with the Mystery of Mercy and Mary!

Chapter 19 : Part B

At the School of Mary: “Women of the Eucharist”

Chapter 6 is the most precious chapter of all the fourteen encyclicals John Paul II wrote.

It is a must read! — for understanding of his personal experience of the Eucharist and Mary. A sketch of Chapter six follows:

Mary is our teacher in contemplating the face of Jesus. Mary is “woman of the Eucharist” in her whole life (53).

This mystery of the Eucharist is a mystery of faith, a great mystery, a mystery of mercy (#11) and there can be no one like Mary to guide us in the sheer abandonment it calls for (#54). At the wedding feast of Cana she tells us “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:5). At the Last Supper Jesus said: “Do this in memory of me!” and now, Mary seems to say to us: “Do not waver; trust in the words of my Son. If he was able to change water into wine, he can also turn bread and wine into His body and blood, and through this mystery bestow on believers the living memorial of his passover, thus becoming the ‘bread of life’ ” (#54, no reference given!).

At the Annunciation by her *Fiat* — Mary became the first “tabernacle” in history, and even the “first Eucharistic procession” as suggested by my co-worker in Divine Mercy, Vinny Flynn, as she hurried to share the good news of Jesus with Elizabeth. Mary was asked to believe that the one she conceived by the Holy Spirit

was the Son of God. So we are asked to believe that it is the same Jesus Christ in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine, that we receive at Holy Communion and respond with our AMEN (fiat) together with Mary (#55). What a marvelous way to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord!

At the foot of the cross one might say that Mary experienced a kind of “spiritual communion” of desire and of oblation. What must she have felt as she heard from the mouth of Peter, John and the other apostles the words spoken at the Last Supper: This is My body which is given for you (Lk 22:19; #56).

Experiencing the “memorial” of Christ’s death in the Eucharist also means receiving the gift of Mary as Mother. Mary is present *with* the Church and *as* Mother of the Church at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist (see #57).

We can understand more deeply the union of the Eucharist and the spirit of Mary , especially by *re-reading the Magnificat* in a “Eucharistic Key!” (#58) The canticle of Mary is foremost praise and thanksgiving and at the same time recalls the wonders worked by God in our redemptive incarnation and looks forward to the fulfillment of God’s plan. The Eucharist has been given to us so that our life like that of Mary, “may become completely a Magnificat!” (#58).

Conclusion of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*

In the **Conclusion** of the encyclical John Paul II quotes twice the latin Eucharistic hymn: *Ave, verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine!* (Hail to thee true body sprung from the Virgin’s womb). The latin gregorian melody is followed by the english translation that I set to a gregorian hymn to Mary.

AVE VERUM CORPUS

Ascribed to
POPE INNOCENT VI, d. 1362.

Mode 6.

A - ve ve - rum Cor - pus na - tum
de Ma - rí - a Vír - gi - ne: _____
Ve - - re pas - sum, im - mo - lá - tum
in cru - ce pro hó - mi - ne: _____
Cu - jus la - tus per - fo - rá - - tum
flu - xit _____ a - qua et _____ sán - gui - ne: _____
E - sto no - bis prae - gu - stá - - tum
mor - tis _____ in _____ ex - á - mi - ne. _____
O Je - su dul - cis! O _____ Je - su pi - e!
O _____ Je - su, fi - li _____ Ma - rí - ae. _____

HAIL TO THEE! TRUE BODY

Melody: CONCORDI LAETITIA

Words: AVE VERUM CORPUS

Ascribed to

POPE INNOCENT VI, d. 1362



1. Hail to Thee! True bo - dy sprung From the Vir - gin
2. Thou Whose side was pierced and flowed Both with wa - ter



1. Ma - ry's womb! Same that on the cross was hung
2. and with blood; Suf - fer us to taste of Thee,



1. Bore for man the bit - ter doom! Sweet Je - sus, Mary's Son.
2. In our life's last a - go - ny. Sweet Je - sus, Mary's Son.

The conclusion of the encyclical is exceptionally personal as John Paul II recalls his 50 years as priest and 25 years of ministry as pope. As he celebrated daily Mass writes:

Each day, my faith has been able to recognize in the consecrated bread and wine, the divine wayfares who joined the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and opened their eyes to the light and their hearts to a new hope” (see Lk 24:13-35; #59).

In the 3rd Millennium we are called to a renewed journey of Christian living with enthusiasm. It is not a matter of inventing a new program: The Gospel lived and centered in Christ in the Eucharist (#60).

The mystery of the Eucharist — sacrifice, presence, banquet — must be experienced and lived in its integrity. The treasure of the Eucharist impels us to the goal of unity, but it is not to be squandered (#61).

Let us take our place at the School of the Saints who interpret true Eucharistic piety. Their teachings warm our hearts! Above all in the School of Mary where the mystery of the Eucharist appears as a mystery of light! — where we learn the transforming power of the Eucharist (#62).

Chapter 20

Pope John Paul II: Living the Eucharist

A review of the life of John Paul II shows that he lived the Eucharist *intensely*. The word “intensely” is the word he used to describe the Jubilee Year 2000: It will be “intensely Eucharistic.” and especially in the Eucharistic Congress in Rome.

The life of John Paul II was centered on the Eucharist as he described in his encyclical *The Church Lives by the Eucharist* especially in the conclusion where he describes his experience of his first Mass and the celebration of Mass daily over the years. The numerous pilgrimages of John Paul II centered on celebrating Holy Mass at the major Marian Shrines in each country and prime cities.

The culmination of John Paul II’s pilgrimages and grand celebrations of the entrance into the Third Millennium pointed to the encyclical on the Eucharist and the Eucharistic year that concluded after his death by Pope Benedict XVI with the Synod Bishops on the Eucharist.

What stands out for me as his personal devotion to the Holy Eucharist. I clearly remember my seeing and being next to John Paul II, for a quarter of an hour as he prayed before the Eucharist in preparation for celebrating Holy Mass in his private chapel. This type of intense prayer was an amazement to

me and to the news media as he would interrupt the schedule of a pilgrimage with a pause for a quarter hour before the Eucharist. He who be led to the kneeler totally exhausted from the grueling schedule and kneel down, supporting his head with his hands. A quarter of an hour later he “jumped” up, refreshed and ready to go again! An intensely Eucharistic moment!

You might ask: “Was John Paul II a ‘Living Eucharist’ ”? I would say, “Yes”, as evidenced by his radiant presence. Being a “Living Eucharist” can be described by the equation for the Eucharist: “Eucharistic Energy equals mercy times humility times holiness ($E=mh^2$):

- He radiates God’s mercy in his writings, in his preaching, and in his practice of asking forgiveness and giving forgiveness.
- He radiates humility in his total gift of himself in service of the Church and world. He gives thanks to God that all he has and does as he repeatedly proclaims that all is the gift of God; “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever” (Ps 89:2). He did not hide his infirmities but offered them for the salvation of souls.
- He radiates holiness and the presence of Jesus, in his meeting and celebrating with people around the world. His whole life is focused on Jesus: The Word of God made flesh.

Yes, John Paul II is a “Living Eucharist!”

Chapter 21

Saint Faustina: An Example of Living Eucharist

A very special example of being a living Eucharist is Saint Faustina Kowalska. Her full name gives us this message: Saint Maria Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament. Her example in living a Eucharistic life shows us how the Eucharist is the answer to the crisis in the Church and world.

She makes a revealing statement about her life and the significance of the Eucharist:

“The most solemn moment of my life is the moment when I receive Holy Communion. I long for each Holy Communion and every Holy Communion, I give thanks to the most Holy Trinity.”

(Diary, #1804)

Her Eucharistic life centered on the three dimensions we have written about and used as a foundation to explain the full meaning of the Eucharist: Eucharist as a sacrament of presence, sacrifice, and of communion.

Eucharist as Presence

Saint Faustina was very aware of the presence of the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. How often she would come to adore Him present in the tabernacle

and spend hours of worship and intercession for souls in need.

A regular experience for her was the vision of the Lord in the Eucharist at Mass and at Benediction. Over sixty such visions are recorded in her *Diary*, most of them involving the child Jesus, on a few occasions the Holy Infant with His blessed Mother. At other times the vision was that of Jesus during His passion, and sometimes of Him in His majesty.

Some dozen times she records seeing the rays of mercy emanating from the Holy Eucharist, as depicted in the image of the merciful Savior; at times these rays extended themselves in her vision until they covered the world. What a powerful message of the Eucharist radiating out on the world! We need God's radiation therapy!

A special gift given to Saint Faustina was the continuous presence of the Eucharist within her from the time of one Holy Communion until the next. During midnight Mass, 1935, after Holy Communion she heard these words:

“I am always in your heart, not only when you receive Me in Holy Communion but always” (*Diary*, #575).

She was aware of this gift:

“I have come to know that Holy Communion remains in me until the next Holy Communion” (*Diary*, #1302).

Throughout the day she adored Jesus present and asked for graces, especially for children. (See *Diary*, #1821)

Eucharist as Sacrifice

Sister Faustina was given a vision of the institution of the Holy Eucharist on a Holy Thursday in the Cenacle. She came to understand that the essence of the sacrifice was in Christ's offering of Himself on the night before He died: "the essence is in the Cenacle":

Holy Hour — Thursday. During this hour of prayer, Jesus allowed me to enter the Cenacle, and I was a witness to what happened there. However, I was most deeply moved when, before the Consecration, Jesus raised His eyes to heaven and entered into a mysterious conversation with His Father. It is only in eternity that we shall really understand that moment. His eyes were like two flames; His face was radiant, white as snow; His whole personage full of majesty, His soul full of longing. At the moment of Consecration, love rested satiated — the sacrifice fully consummated. Now only the external ceremony of death will be carried out — external destruction; the essence [of it] is in the Cenacle. Never in my whole life had I understood this mystery so profoundly as during that hour of adoration. *Oh, how ardently I desire that the whole world would come to know this unfathomable mystery!* (Diary, #684, see also 757, 832).

She expressed the depth of this mystery as a "miracle of mercy" and

prayed that the whole world would come to know this unfathomable mercy:

What awesome mysteries take place during Mass! ... One day we will know what God is doing for us in each Mass and what sort of gift He is preparing in it for us (*Diary*, #914).

A very special aspect of Sister's life was her desire to be transformed into a living host, a wafer, hidden and broken to be given to others:

Jesus, transform me, miserable and sinful as I am, into Your own self (for You can do all things), and give me to Your Eternal Father. I want to be a sacrificial host before You, but an ordinary wafer to people. I want the fragrance of my sacrifice to be known to You alone (*Diary*, #483).

Transform me into Yourself, O Jesus, that I may be a living sacrifice and pleasing to You. I desire to atone at each moment for poor sinners (*Diary*, #908).

Jesus answered her prayers, telling her: "*You are a living host, pleasing to the Heavenly Father*" (*Diary*, #932, 1826). Saint Faustina felt this transformation as a holy fire, present in her always:

All the good that is in me is due to Holy Communion. I owe everything to it. I feel that this holy fire has transformed me completely. Oh, how happy I am to be a dwelling for You, O Lord! My heart is a temple in which You dwell continually.

(*Diary*, #1392)

She truly lived the reality of the prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your divine love.”

The experience of being a “Living host”, hidden, broken, and given was the central experience of her life — but, this experience was based on the union of love with the living God.

Eucharist as Communion

Saint Faustina experienced union with the Lord most profoundly in conjunction with the Holy Eucharist, either during Mass and Holy Communion, or during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Lord described her union with Him as being like that of a bride:

Here, I am entirely yours, soul, body, and divinity, as your Bridegroom. You know what love demands: one thing only, reciprocity ... (*Diary*, #1770).

As a bride she prepared for Holy Communion:

I am preparing myself for Your coming as a bride does for her bridegroom. (*Diary*, #1805).

At times during Holy Communion she experienced a union with the Holy Trinity:

At that moment, I was drawn into the bosom of the most Holy Trinity, and I was immersed in the love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These moments are hard to

describe (*Diary*, #1670).

These times of union are a “mystery of love” in the words of the Lord Jesus (*Diary*, #156) and a taste of eternity.

Holy Communion was the strength and support of Sister Faustina in her day’s struggle. The Lord taught her: “In the host is your power; it will defend you” (*Diary*, #616). She added that the Eucharist was her strength, even in her tender years.

Once, when I was seven years old, at a vespers service, conducted before the Lord Jesus in the monstrance, the love of God was imparted to me for the first time and filled my little heart; and the Lord gave me understanding of divine things (*Diary*, #1404).

Throughout her Diary she constantly recorded the strength she received from the Eucharist.

The Eucharist as the Answer

The Eucharist was the answer Saint Faustina needed and wanted for her life in Christ and her mission. The Eucharist is also the answer for our needs in this time of crisis in the Church and world. The lessons our Lord taught Saint Faustina through the Eucharist are also intended for each of us, and available to each of us.

The Holy Eucharist was a precious time of teaching for Saint Faustina by Our Lord Jesus: teaching about her mission of winning souls, the way to live

a spiritual life by abiding in Him, His desire to give graces in the Eucharist, praying in union with Mary, and offering to the Father the Blood and wounds of Jesus in the Mass as an act of expiation for sins. These teachings are the great mystery of the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The Lord used the occasion of Holy Communion as a time of profound teaching, and He desires to do the same for us.

The special place of the Holy Eucharist in the life of Saint Faustina can be summed up both in her full official name, Sister Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament, and in the name she called herself after her oblation: “My name is to be ‘sacrifice’ ” (*Diary* #135). The Lord Jesus summed up her life in what He called her: “You are a living host” (*Diary*, #1826).

Her greatest desire was to be Eucharist, hidden like Jesus, blessed by her union with the Lord, broken like Jesus in the passion and totally given for the salvation of souls. Her prayer to be consecrated sums up her life:

I am a white host before You, O Divine Priest. Consecrate me Yourself, and may my transubstantiation [a mystics way of expressing her transformation] be known only to You. I stand before You each day as a sacrificial host and implore Your mercy upon the whole world (*Diary*, #1564).

For Saint Faustina of the most Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist was the answer to crisis in the Church, and in the world, and it is the answer for us now! It is Christ’s “miracle of mercy”.

Chapter 22

Transformation into a Living Eucharist

In a homily delivered August 18, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI at the World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, spoke of the Mystery of the Eucharist as transformation (given in summary):

Jesus, by making the bread into His Body and the wine into His Blood, He anticipated His death, He accepts it in His heart, and *transforms* it into an action of love.

What on the outside is simply brutal violence — the crucifixion — from within becomes an act of total self-giving love.

What was accomplished at the Last Supper set in motion a series of transformations leading ultimately to the transformation of the world when God will be all in all (1 Cor 15:28).

Here and now is the central act of transformation that alone can truly renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and death into life.

Since this act transmits death into love, death as such is

already conquered from within, the resurrection is already present in us.

The Body and Blood of Christ are given to us that we ourselves will be transformed in our turn. We are to become the Body of Christ, His own Flesh and Blood.

This is like inducing a nuclear fission in the very heart of our being — the victory of love over hatred, the victory of love over death.

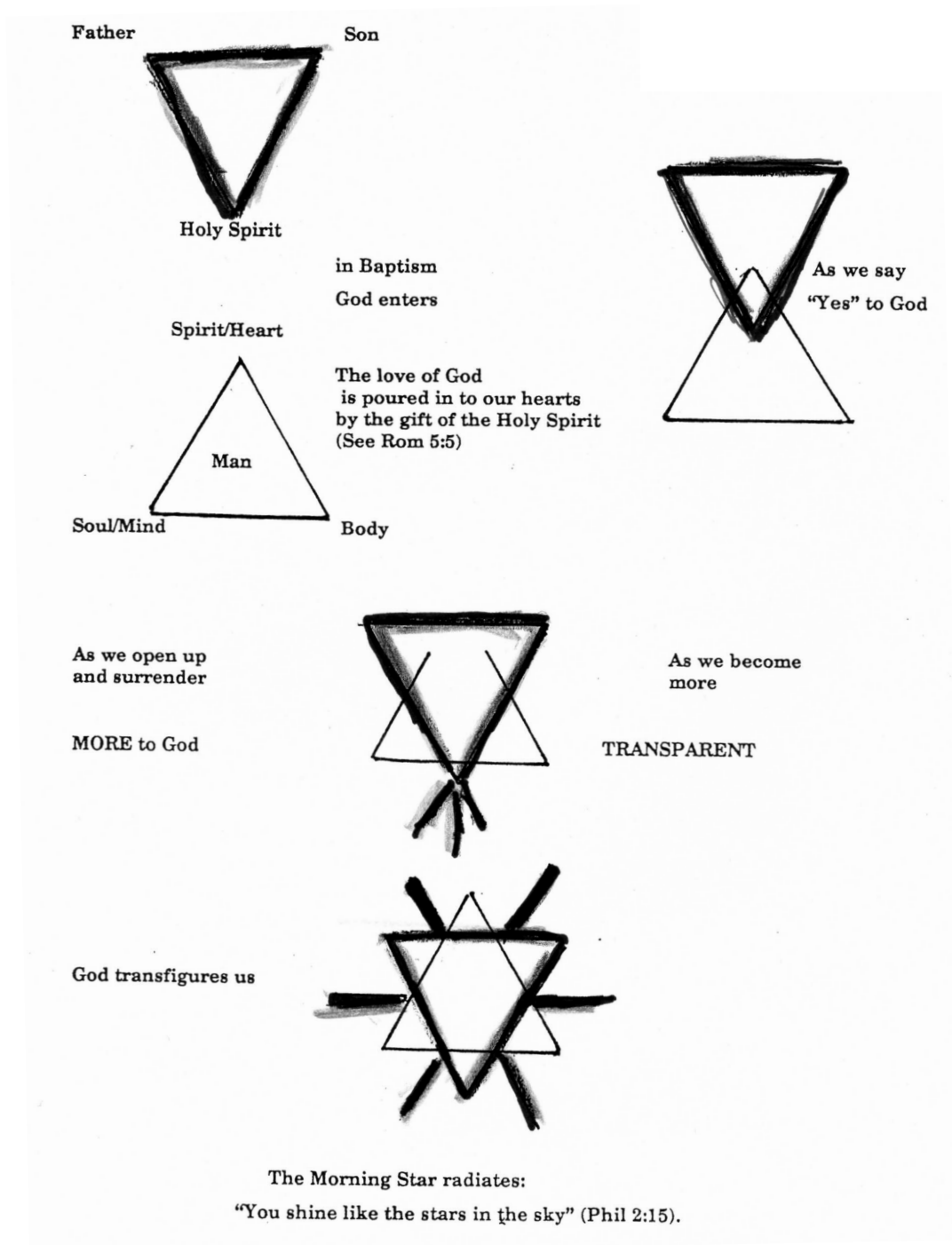
Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can trigger off a series of transformations that little by little will change the world.

An amazing transformation! Jesus gives us Himself that we may become a *Living Eucharist* — a merciful, humble, holy presence of Jesus. He wants us to radiate His presence of mercy and love to transform the world!

The Transfiguration of Jesus

The model for our transformation is the transfiguration of Jesus: The word “Transfigure” implies a transformation that glorifies (see Merriam-Webster’s dictionary) and involves our interior change: The transfiguration of Jesus is described in the Gospel of Mt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-10; Lk 9:28-36 and by St. Peter who was an eye-witness on Mount Tabor along with James and John (2 Peter 1:16-19).

Jesus radiates! Jesus is transfigured so that the three apostles see Jesus as the IMAGE [ICON in Greek] of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). The apostles are awe struck. This is the way Saint Peter describes that event on Mount Tabor:



Beloved: We did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the unique declaration came to him from the majestic glory, “This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven while we were with him on the holy mountain. Moreover, we possess the prophetic message that is altogether reliable. You will do well to be attentive to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts (2 Peter 1:16-19).

The *meaning* of the transfiguration of Jesus is a foreshadowing, a “sneak preview”, of the resurrection. The *purpose* of the transfiguration is a preparation and strengthening of the apostles for the coming passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. And more than that it is a foreshadowing of our transfiguration!

Saint Peter writes about the meaning of the transfiguration to us. He tells us that the “Morning Star”, Jesus Christ, will rise in our hearts if we say “yes” to the Lord’s plan!

Consider a series of diagrams that help to illustrate God’s plan to have the “Morning Star” rise in our hearts:

The transformation (Metamorphosis) of a Monarch butterfly is an example of the foreshadowing of our own transfiguration in our resurrection:

Monarch butterfly lays her fertilized egg. In a series of stages the egg is transformed (trans [figured]) into a Monarch butterfly! It is different, changed, brilliantly colored and it flies:

Egg ➡ larva ➡ pupa (cocoon) ➡ butterfly!

A diamond and a piece of coal can serve as an other illustration of our transfiguration to a radiant presence:

The light of a flashlight does not shine through a lump of coal but does shine brilliantly through a diamond. What is the difference between a lump of coal and a diamond? They are both only carbon! The carbon atoms in the coal are randomly distributed *but* in the diamond the atoms are arranged in a specific order that reflect the light in a brilliant radiance from its many facets. The coal atoms can be rearranged into a diamond under great pressure and heat over a long period of time. It sounds like the transformation in the spiritual life!

We Are To Be ICONS of Jesus

Jesus Christ is described by Saint Paul as “the Icon (image) of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). Jesus Christ by His incarnation makes the Father visible: “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (John 14:9).

Saint Paul tells us further that we are to be Icons of Jesus. Icons of the ICON of the Father!:

All of us, gazing on the Lord's glory with unveiled faces are being transformed from glory to glory, into His very image [icon] by the Lord who is the spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

We are to be *icons* of the icon: transformed, transfigured, divinized, deified, sanctified. This transformation is to take place through the Cross of Christ and the Holy Eucharist:

We are to be *holy*, transparent to the presence of Jesus.

We are to *radiate* the presence of Jesus Christ and so evangelize by our very presence.

We are to be *light* to the world.

We are to be a *living Eucharist*: a visible presence of the invisible God.

We have an obligation to be transfigured: it is not an option!

How Are We To Be Transformed and Transfigured Into Living Icons Of Jesus Christ?

The following different suggestions are different ways of saying the same thing: Living our "yes" to God each and every day"

- By **TRUST** in God. Trust is hope based on faith, expressed in love. It is a **Total Reliance Upon Saving Truth, Jesus Christ.**

Saint Faustina records some powerful words of our Lord about trust in her diary:

When a soul approaches me with trust, I will fill it with such an abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls (D # 1074).

Chosen souls are, in My hand, lights which I cast into the darkness of the world and illuminate it. As stars illumine the night, so chosen souls illumine the earth ... (D # 1601).

- By **Baptism** we become children of God; “Born of water and the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:5).
- By **Holy Eucharist** we enter into communion with the Lord Jesus, which is renewed by spiritual or communions. By our communion we become icons of Jesus, a living Eucharist, a transfigured and transparent presence of Jesus. By our communion with Jesus we radiate His presence.
- By **our surrender** to the Lord, freely choosing God out of love, not out of fear or need. Surrender is expressed by our repeated “yes” to the will of God and living in and by His will. It is a daily dying to our selfish self-will; it is a form of martyrdom. It is living the teaching of Saint Paul:

I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I live now is not my own: Christ is living in me. I still live my human

life, but it is a life of faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave himself for me (Galations 2:19-20).

* By our **daily prayer** by which we express our **Desires, Asking, Receiving, Thanksgiving, Sharing** — which spells out “DARTS”, a form of powerful prayer the desert fathers used according to Saint Augustine.

• By our gazing upon the glorious face of the Lord in contemplation:

All of us, gazing on the Lord’s glory with unveiled faces, are being transformed from glory into His very image by the Lord who is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18). ...For God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts, that we may make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

• By **living the ABCs of Divine Mercy**:

Ask for His mercy

Be merciful as your heavenly Father.

Completely trust in Jesus

“Transform me O Lord!” St. Faustina prayed:

I want to be completely transformed into Your mercy and to be Your living reflection, O Lord. May the greatest of all divine attributes, that of Your unfathomable mercy, pass

through my heart and soul to my neighbor

O my Jesus, transform me into Yourself, for You can do all things” (*Diary # 163*).

Lord Jesus, transform and transfigure me that I may be HOLY — a radiant, transparent presence of You — a living Eucharist!

Chapter 23

The Big Bang Begins the Eucharist

When I was reflecting on how the Holy Spirit renews us through the Eucharist, I asked the Lord if I could have a new insight; a newness of the Holy Spirit that would give an excitement to me and blow your mind! then it happened.

Certain words in the text of John 6:53 came alive in a new way. “Jesus said to them, Amen. Amen. I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood *has* Eternal Life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” What occurred to me is the necessity of actually having the essential materials for flesh and blood in order to enter into Eternal Life. How can you have the Eucharist without wine mingled with water and wheat bread? And, how can you have wine and bread unless you have all the elements that make it possible? You need not only living plants, the wheat and the grapes, but living human beings that can crush the wheat and bake it and humans who can crush the grapes and ferment and prepare them for the great banquet of the Eucharist. I realized that Eucharist goes all the way back to creation when time and matter, space and gravity ever created. In order to have Eternal Life, we’ve got to move into a whole other dimension starting from the very begin-

ning of things. To have the eucharist, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, we need flesh. The flesh of Mary; the flesh of wheat and grapes. We need to *be* flesh to receive it and eat it. This opens up a very big area of investigation of the mystery of life!

Let us begin our consideration with the three persons of the Holy Trinity: The Father creating us out of love which is His mercy. (We will look into that creation and how and why it happened., The second person is the Son redeeming us; becoming incarnate of Mary out of love for us which is mercy, a pure gift of the Father's love. The third person is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us out of love, and that sanctification is mercy. Its all gift.

As a result of the action of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, we are into a great mystery — a deep, deep mystery. Paul writes in First Corinthians 2, “What eye has not seen. What ear has not heard nor has it so much as entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him, this God has revealed to us through His Spirit.” The Father acts through the Spirit; the Son acts through the Spirit; the Spirit always acts in unison with the Father and the Son. If we want to understand the Eucharist more deeply, we have to understand creation, ourselves, and our re-creation in Christ and our sanctification. The key to this three-fold mystery of creating, redeeming, and sanctifying of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — is *flesh*. God created us, body and soul and spirit, and these three make up one human being.

The *flesh* is the key to our salvation. God created the material world and us in order that we could live. His Son took flesh of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit to redeem us so that He could be united with us. For this purpose, the Son gave Himself in the Eucharist as flesh and blood to be eaten and drank. Our very bodies of flesh and everything we eat are God's creation. We are, moreover, temples of the Holy Spirit and we wait for the resurrection of the body. When we die, the soul separates, but it waits. It is incomplete until the resurrection of the body as a spiritual body.

Let's begin this journey by looking at creation. What happened at the beginning? In the book of Genesis we read, "In the beginning God created ..." How did He do it? Physicists call it the "Big Band."

From the point of view of a scientist, let me tell you what all of this means to you and me, in terms of the Eucharist. I want to tell you of two scientific insights. The first one is of an astrophysicist, Dr. Brandon Carter of Cambridge University in England. On the 500th anniversary of the birth of Copernicus, September 1972, astronomers from all over the world gathered for an International Congress at Krakow in Poland. Nicholas Copernicus, the Polish astronomer, showed that the earth revolves around the sun; not the sun around the earth. This statement caused all sorts of problems and began the whole new investigation of astronomy. Probably the only paper that is remembered out of all the papers presented was by Dr. Carter. He pulled the rug out from under the whole scientific field. He gave a paper entitled *The Anthropic Principle*. The bottom line of this paper was that at the origin,

when everything exploded in the “Big Bang”, everything had to be pre-designed and pre-determined in order to have human life. He pointed out that if any of the constants of the atom were changed even a thousandth of a percent, such as the weight of the nucleus or the proton or the electron or the forces of interaction within it, we would not have the elements that are necessary to form life. We would not have carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, etc. We would not have water, we would not have human flesh, we would not have bread, we would not have wine.

It means that God created the whole universe with the multitude of atoms and galaxies so that mankind could live! Is all of this for you and me? Yes! God is so much bigger; so much greater than we think. God in an instant designed all of this so we would have the elements that make us who we are and have the holy Eucharist. God is magnificent! The grandeur of this plan is amazing. If we could only get this mystery into our heads and hearts and give thanks and praise to Him for His mercy.

An amazing text from the prophet Isaiah gives the scriptural foundation for this awesome reality that God designed all of creation for us to live in:

For thus says the Lord, the creator of the heavens who is God. The designer and maker of the earth who established it, not creating it to be a waste, but designing it to be lived in: I am the Lord, and there is no other (Isaiah 45:18).

The second scientific insight came from a lecture given in Germany a

few years ago by two astrophysicists from Germany on the topic of Genesis and Creation to medical doctors who were pro-life. The two doctors were brothers, Carl and Bernhart Philbert. A priest from Australia who as at the conference, took the paper to Australia, translated it into English and sent it to Fr. Gerry Farrell, M.M., a missionary in Korea — a medical doctor and co-worker of mine who sent it to me. When I received it, I flipped it over to the back to find out who these two astrophysicists were. I then realized that they were very important people. They were the first two German scientists admitted into the French Academy in the last 100 years! That honor is more than a Nobel Prize. Then I read that these two astrophysicist brothers, in their 40's were ordained Catholic Priests. That really sparked an interest!

Bernhart loves to reflect on the Holy Trinity. He believes that everything in the universe reflects the Holy Trinity — The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For example we are in a three dimensional world, a triad of space/time, matter, and gravity. As humans we are made up of spirit, soul, and body. We are in this space/time, matter, and gravity, created by God so we can have life and grow and have good things such as bread and wine. The difficulty is that we start asking questions like “Where is Heaven?” But, there is no *where* because there is no *space*. Or, “When did God ...” But there is no *time*. Questions such as these do not apply to God. He is in a different dimension, not limited by space/time, matter, and gravity.

We try very hard to understand the whole of creation, including the incarnation of Christ, the Redemption, the Eucharist, and the coming of the

Lord. We cannot put it into our “own” terms of space/time, matter, and gravity. All we can say is, “My Lord and My God!” in utter humility. This is what the Psalmists understood — the tremendous grandeur of God and what He has done (eg. Psalm 8).

The whole plan of the Father was that His son Jesus would take flesh of the woman by the Holy Spirit. Jesus took on our space/time, matter, and gravity but He did even more. By His Passion and Death, He became the true atoner for sins. The sinless one became sin. Jesus became the ultimate victim as well as well as the ultimate atoner. Then, by His Resurrection He became for us the ultimate victory. Jesus burst out of our space/time, matter, and gravity and cried out to us: Come into the new dimension of Eternal Life. We do this by becoming children of God through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. By being confirmed and strengthened in the fullness of our initiation to Christ by eating His body and drinking His blood — that we may have Eternal Life.

After the Lord broke out of our space/time, matter, and gravity, He sent His Holy Spirit to sanctify us. From the first moment of Creation, the spirit hovered over the chaos and God spoke the Word and life, light, and order came forth. So, too, the Spirit hovered over Mary and she conceived and Jesus in due time was born. The Spirit hovered over Jesus at the baptism in the Jordan. The Father was so delighted, that He cried out to the people, “He is my beloved Son ...” The Holy Spirit continues to hover over you and me in the Eucharist.

We are prepared for the great gift of the Eucharist by Baptism when the Spirit of God is poured into our hearts. Confirmation confirms, seals, and strengthens this gift. At Holy Mass there are two invocations of the Holy Spirit: at the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, as priest, I invoke the Holy Spirit to come upon the bread and wine and that they become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The second invocation of the Holy Spirit is after the consecration. I ask 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” (Third Eucharistic Prayer, Latin rite). The Holy Spirit is the transforming agent. He hovers over us. He transforms us. He continues the redemptive incarnation.

Now the question is, What do we do in response to this great gift? Every Eucharist is a new *revelation* and a new *communion* in Christ. Revelation is a lifting of the veil. It comes from the Greek word *apocolypses*. It is the lifting of the veil in our three dimensional world, in order that we may see the eyes of the heart (Eph 1:18). Saint Faustina, the great apostle of Divine Mercy writes: “O King of Glory, through You hide Your beauty, yet the eye of my soul rends the veil. I see the angelic choirs giving You honor without cease, and all the heavenly Powers praising You without cease, and without cease they are saying: “Holy, Holy, Holy” (*Diary*, #80).

This is revelation, but there is also communion, a common-union-in-Christ. We’re all called into God’s family. That is what the heavenly kingdom is all about. God is our Father, Jesus is our brother, the Spirit is poured into

our hearts. Mary our mother, and all the holy angels and saints are in the family of God. So when we enter into communion, we enter in to the whole heavenly court. Every communion should be a greater union than before. Every communion should be a greater revelation, a lifting of the veil, because as the veil lifts, we see what is happening in heaven, and hear the angels and saints singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” This is going on all the time. This is what’s going on at the throne of God. This is Christ’s one eternal sacrifice — the eternal Eucharist.

So what can we do to live this eternal sacrifice? We live the eternal sacrifice by frequent Holy Communion and Spiritual Communion. Pray the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy as an extension of this eucharistic sacrifice: “Eternal Father, I offer you the body and blood, soul and divinity of your dearly beloved Son our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world,” concluding with the song of the angels and saints, Holy, Holy, Holy. The Eucharist is the sum, the apex and the focal point, the key of our whole faith. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Right from the beginning of creation when God formed the elements, He planned it all so that we could have the Eucharist and Eternal Life

Let me give you one word that describes what I am trying to get across to you: Wow! — a mnemonic for **Wonder of Wonders!** Praise God for what he has planned and done — it is awesome! At the last supper Jesus prayed to His Father that all may be one as He and the Father are one (cf. Jn 17:22). Let us pray that Jesus comes again and makes us one in the family of God.

Two key elements in preparation for the coming of the Lord are the message of The Divine Mercy and the Holy Eucharist. The mission of Saint Faustina, the great apostle of Divine Mercy was to prepare the world for the coming of the Lord (see Diary, #429, #625, and #782). And St. Paul tells us that “Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until [so that] he comes!” (1 Cor 11:26). Each Eucharist we celebrate is the presence of Christ — the merciful one, the humble one, the holy one.

The Eucharist that we receive transforms us to be a living Eucharist, like Christ, merciful, humble and holy. The transforming work of the Holy Spirit to make us a radiant presence of Christ in preparation for the coming of the Lord in glory.

Listen to the words of our Lord to Saint Faustina who became a radiant living Eucharist:

“Tell all aching mankind to snuggle close to My merciful Heart, and I will fill it with peace. Tell [all people], My daughter, that I am Love and Mercy itself. When a soul approaches Me with trust, I fill it with such abundance of graces that it cannot contain them within itself, but radiates them to other souls” (*Diary*, 1074).

And further Blessed Faustina writes:

Oh , what awesome mysteries take place during Mass! a

great mystery is accomplished in the Holy Mass. With what great devotion should we listen to and take part in this death of Jesus. One day we will know what God is doing for us in each Mass, and what sort of gift he provided for us. Only His divine love could permit that such a gift be provided for us (*Diary*, 914).

What a gift God has given to us in the Eucharist. It is an explosive gift. In our times we found out what happens when matter is changed into energy: it explodes! Einstein got a breakthrough insight into what happens when matter is changed into energy. He expressed it in a now famous equation: $e = mc^2$ [e (energy) equals m (matter) times c^2 (the speed of light times the speed of light)]. It took a quarter of a century to prove in the explosion of atom bomb. Is there energy in the Eucharist? Is there ever! To the eyes of faith the Eucharist radiates! The equation for Eucharistic energy: $E = mH^2$ (for Eucharist) equals M (mercy) times H squared (that is His Holiness times His Humility) If you surrender to the Lord in *humility* and ask for His *Holy Spirit*, He embraces you with love and mercy so that you begin to radiate. This is God's mighty plan, His awesome plan from the moment of creation when everything was planned, even to the moment of incarnation, giving us the Eucharist. Everything was planned, so that all may be one in Christ to the glory of the Father. The Eucharist is *God's Radiation Therapy!*

My great desire is that the Lord lift the veil over the Holy Eucharist and let it radiate as a sign of His glorious presence — that all may see and expe-

rience and believe and worship the Holy, Humble, Merciful presence of Jesus.

Oh, that St. Faustina would continue her mission in heaven:

I feel certain that my mission will not come to an end upon my death, but will begin. O doubting souls, I will draw aside for you the veils of heaven to convince you of God's goodness. So that you will no longer continue to wound with your distrust the sweetest heart of Jesus. God is love and mercy (*Diary # 281*).

Chapter 24

Be a Living Eucharist

When I walked through the content of these reflections on the Eucharist with my brother Fr. Bohdan (ordained in 1950) who said “they are a summary of your life!” As I come to this final chapter I realize that I need to write on the challenge “Be a Living Eucharist” which is also a summary of my reflections as a priest, biochemist, hermit.

Earlier this morning as I awoke for my 2:00 AM Holy Hour I was aware of a desire to write on *my great desire to be a Living Eucharist!* After renewing my consecration to Mary, exposing the Blessed Sacrament, taking spiritual authority, praying the joyful mysteries of the Rosary and a chaplet of the Divine Mercy, I jotted down my desire to be a Living Eucharist. My desire expanded to four pages of notes in my log-book over the next hour rather than the usual time of silent presence to the Eucharist Lord. I want to reflect on and share with you these notes and insights that summarize this book of reflections on the Eucharist which also summarizes my life.

Lord, I *desire* to be a Living Eucharist, to be chosen, blessed, broken, given. Lord only you can do it by your grace, by your Holy Spirit, by your words: “*This is my Body!*” I *desire* to be a:

- Living Eucharist, a living presence of you.

- So I *ask*: Make me a Living Eucharist!
- Help me to *Recognize* and *Receive* your gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Help me to *thank* You for the gift of Your presence.
- Help me to *share* this gift with others.

This prayer spells out a mnemonic of D.A.R.T.S., **D**esire, **A**sk, **R**eceive, **T**hank, **S**hare. “Darts is my word for what St. Augustine described as the prayers of the desert fathers that prayed short, sharp javelin prayers (Letter to Proba on the Lord’s Prayer) D.A.R.T.S. are my way of asking for special grace, always beginning with a clear, strong desire.

Other insights continued. To be a Living Eucharist is:

- To live my consecration to Mary which is Eucharistic: “... as you formed the Heart of Jesus by the Spirit, form my heart to be the throne of Jesus in His glorious coming.”
- To be merciful, humble, holy; $E = mh^2$
- To repeatedly to invoke the Holy Spirit; a repeated *invokation* like at Mass.
- To live in spiritual communion with Jesus in my heart.
- To live in the presence of God: present to the ONE who is present.
- To be a presence of Jesus.
- To “vibrate at the touch of the Spirit” (John Paul II, on Entering the

Third Millennium).

- To be mother, brother, sister to Jesus [see Lk 8:21; 11:28; Mk 3:35].
- To be consecrated both in *The Truth* and *in Truth* (see John 17:17-18)
- To be a mystical incarnation of Jesus.
- To live the π“Our Father”, praising Him, present to His reign, doing His will, nourished by His “Daily Bread”.
- To live inspired by St. Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament who desired to be a living “host,” transformed, hidden, but present to the Lord. (see *Diary* # 483, #575, #641, #1298, #1622, #1826).
- To be transformed, hidden, humble, and merciful, like St. Faustina.
- To radiate the presence of Jesus.
- To rejoice always; since mercy plus love equals joy!
- To rejoice always; because *suffering* plus *humility* equals joy!
- To live I Thessalonians 5:16-18: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in all things give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus regarding you all!
- Is for me ,to live the word I received in my first hermitage time with the Comaldolese hermits: “To please Me, be present to Me with your heart in the Heart of Mary, trusting, rejoicing, giving thanks.”

And more insights came:

- “*Be Holy*, because I am Holy (Lev 19:2,; 1 Peter 1:16; 2 Peter 3:11).
- *Be Holy*: be transparent to the presence of Jesus.
- *Be Holy*: Be present to the presence of the Lord.
- *Be Holy*: “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship (Rom 12:1).
- *Be Holy*: be in communion with Jesus living in you.
- *Be Holy*: “The Mystery: Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).

And still more insights come: The Holy Eucharist is not only to be adored but it is to be eaten. The very purpose of the Holy Eucharist is to be our “Daily Bread” that transforms us to be a “Living Eucharist.” It is the real living parable given in the first chapter: We are transformed into a Living Eucharist by what we eat. And so the sub-title of these reflections of a Priest, Biochemist, Hermit is “Be a Living Eucharist!”

Then I was reminded of the description of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* of the fruit of Holy Communion. It is a beautiful description of a “Living Eucharist”

The principle fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an *intimate union with Christ Jesus*. Indeed, the Lord said: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him (CCC, #1391, emphasis added).

The Catechism continues with a wonderful biochemical illustration:

What material food produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the Risen Christ, a flesh “given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit,” preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism (ibid # 1392).

St Ignatius, successor to St. Peter as the second bishop of Antioch, wrote to the Romans of his pending martyrdom, that of being fed to the wild beasts (107 A.D.):

I am God’s wheat and shall be ground by their teeth so that I may become Christ’s pure bread. Pray to Christ for me that the animals will be the means of making me a sacrificial victim to God (see the feast of St. Ignatius, Liturgy of the Hours, Oct. 17).

His great desire was to be a “Living Eucharist”.

A number of Sacred Scripture texts are clear and strong about the presence of Christ Jesus in us. I understand these texts as a description of a “Living Eucharist” (NAMB):

- You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within-the Spirit you have received from God. You are not your own (1 Cor 4:19).
- The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me (Gal 2:20).

- ... The mystery of Christ in you, your hope of glory ^aCol 1:27),
- Test yourselves to see whether you are living in faith; examine yourselves. Perhaps you yourself do not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless of course, you have failed the challenge (1 Cor 13:5).
- Venerate the Lord — that is, Christ in you (1 Pt 3:15).

A powerful description of our transformation into a “Living Eucharist” is in the dying mandate of Jesus to His Mother, and to His beloved disciple. Each of us as beloved disciples represented by the apostle John are consecrated to be sons and daughters of the Mother of God. We become brothers to Jesus, a presence of Jesus, a “Living Eucharist:”

Jesus said to his [the Greek is “the”] mother: “Woman, behold your son.” In turn he said to the disciple, “Behold your mother” (Jn 19:26-27).

At communion time of Mass this morning I had a sense of a word, so I took out my pen and wrote it down:

I want my people to be Living Eucharists, radiating My presence in the world. This is my desire and plan.

St. Hilary, Bishop and Doctor of the Church explains what I call a “Living Eucharist” in his reflection on sacred scripture describing the effect of receiving the Holy Eucharist (died 367 AD):

We believe that the Word became flesh and that we receive

his flesh in the Lord's Supper. How then can we fail to believe that he really dwells within us? When he became man, he actually clothed himself in our flesh, uniting it to himself for ever. In the sacrament of his body he actually gives us his own flesh, which he has united to his divinity. This is why we are all one, because the Father is in Christ, and Christ is in us. He is in us through his flesh and we are in him. With him we form a unity which is in God.

The manner of our indwelling in him through the sacrament of his body and blood is evident from the Lord's own words: *This world will see me no longer but you shall see me. Because I live you shall live also, for I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you* (Jn 14:19-20).

... He had already explained the mystery of this perfect unity when he said: *As the living Father sent me and I draw life from the Father, so he who eats my flesh will draw life from me.* We draw life from his flesh just as he draws life from the Father (Jn 6:57). (Treatise on the Holy Trinity, St. Hilary, office of Readings, Wednesday, Fourth week of Easter).

Epilogue

So what's it all about?

Our free and humble submission to the Lord! It is to trust Him because He is mercy and humility itself. It is to thank Him for everything, because all is a gift given in love.

I see more and more clearly that our humble submission to the Lord is THE counter-sign to our age.

In essence this means that I must live like Mary, live her “yes” her “Fiat,” and live her “Magnificat.” It means that I must give thanks to the Lord for the mighty things He does in and through His lowly servants, and it means I cooperate with Him and give Him all glory and honor in proclaiming His kingdom.

Yes, THE counter-sign to our age is humble submission and rejoicing with thanksgiving in all things. This is the sign of Mary, the sign that appears in the Book of Revelation, the great sign in the heavens (Rev 12:1).

The ultimate victory is given to the “woman and her seed.” (Gen 3:15), Jesus Christ, and the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's Commandments and bear witness to Jesus (Rev 12:17).

Lord, in this our age, send Your Holy Spirit that we may live

the Fiat of Mary and rejoice in thanksgiving as we live her
Magnificat.

This way of living a Marian life would be a transparent life — transparent to the Lord's mercy and thus radiating His mercy to others. It would be a way of living the Eucharist, the proof of God's love, blessed by Him, but hidden, then broken in order to be given to others for their salvation.

Mary, intercede with your son as you did at Cana, that we may receive the gift of the Spirit and be transformed into living Eucharist, radiating His mercy, and truly be THE counter-sign to our age.

What's it all about?

To be a living Eucharist!

To radiate His mercy!

To live the Magnificat

Appendix

Part I

The Eucharist — A Radiance Of God's Mercy and Humility — The Answer to the Crisis in the Church

I want to write in close union with the Eucharistic Lord. What is uppermost on my heart and mind? *The Eucharist is the ultimate and extreme humility and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ present among us, radiating His merciful love to all who come in humble and obedient faith.* He radiates His mercy by His **presence** — as we come to adore and worship Him, through His **sacrifice** — as we offer ourselves and the whole world in union with Him to the heavenly Father, and in **communion** with Him as we are united and transformed by Him, so transform the world.

I ask you to read that again because it is the statement of my thesis. There is so much in those two sentences that I need to take many a chapter to explain and explore the meaning and truth of what the Eucharist really is — especially in our present times of Eucharistic crisis, primarily in our continent.

How would I characterize our present generation? As one whose concern is for independence and a popularized, so-called democracy. There is great

value on a person's freedom to do what he wants and think and express what he feels. I call it the "spirit of 1776", a rebellious independence and a claiming of personal infallibility, so that we have a "plurality of infallibility". The result is confusion in the teaching of some theologians on the nature of the authority of the Church's magisterium, and consequent confusion in loyalty and obedience to the magisterial and even the infallible teaching of the Church.

How does this express itself in terms of the Eucharist? I would describe the current situation in the Church as a "crisis of the Eucharist". Some theologies and practices do not acknowledge the presence of the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no need to list the many practices and attitudes that have become prevalent since the Second Vatican Council, because we are already aware of them. But what is necessary, is to point out the drastic effect that various theological teachings and practices have had in so many of our seminaries since the end of Vatican II, 1965. The Eucharistic presence is not prominent; it is not worshiped and revered; it is not integrated into the spiritual formation of priests.

The results are obvious. Priestly vocations have bottomed out. The people of God are confused and are suffering.

If all three of the essential aspects of the Eucharist — the sacrament of presence, sacrifice, and communion (John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*), are not integrated into the teaching and practice of the priest, then what is our

Catholic ministerial priesthood about? What is our baptismal priesthood of the lay faithful about? How can we consecrate the world to God? (See *Lumen Gentium*, #34)

I see that the answer to the crisis within the Church is in a new and renewed Eucharistic life, a life renewed by the radiance of the Eucharistic Lord that will penetrate our indifference, confusion and lack of faith. One that will confront our sinfulness, breaking down the opaque barriers of our “rebellious independence” and “plurality of personal infallibility”. It will be His extreme humility in the Eucharist that will confront our pride; it will be His extreme mercy that will penetrate our self-sufficient independence and radiate through us out to the whole world, so desperately in need of His mercy.

Appendix

Part II

The Crisis Over “This Is My Body”: Abortion

This is a rebellious age. The cry of rebellion is against God. It is a cry of independence and self-determination, mostly poignantly heard in support of the stance over the issue of abortion. How often we hear the assertion that “I have a right over my body!” This rebellious cry is a cry against the Lord; it is a cry in contradiction to the Eucharist. The Lord says over us: “This is My Body.” But so many are rejecting His sovereign reign over us and say, “No, this is my body!” And so we are in a crisis of Eucharist.

The Lord made His attitude and position very clear in regard to sexual immorality in St. Paul’s first letter to the Church of Corinth. How much more His words apply to abortion! St. Paul speaks in words that have an ironic resonance in our present crisis:

Everything is lawful for me — but does not mean that everything is good for me ... The body is not for immorality; it is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God who raised up the Lord will raise up by this power : Do you not see that your bodies are members of Christ? (1 Cor 6:12-15)

What St. Paul goes on to say of the sin of fornication as a sin against the

body is even more true of abortion:

Shun lewd conduct. Every other sin a man commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body.

(1 Cor 6:18)

Finally St. Paul makes clear the holy nature of our bodies:

You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within — the Spirit you received from God. You are not your own. You have been purchased at a great price! So glorify God in your body.

(1 Cor 6:19-20)

“So glorify God in your body!” What a clear and contradictory statement to the present crisis of world-wide abuse of the woman’s body. And the abuse is world-wide and staggering in its proportions.

The present world-wide number of abortions each year is conservatively reported as forty million (*Review of Inducted Abortions*, Vol. 6), and is possibly as high as sixty million. The impact of this number of abortions was impressed upon me while visiting Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp outside of Cracow, Poland.

It was the Monday after the celebration of Mercy Sunday at the Shrine of Divine Mercy at Lagiewniki, where St. Faustina Kowalska is buried. We drove an hour through freezing rain to the town of Auschwitz and entered the camp, now a historic museum, passing under the arch over the entrance. On the arch, a sign in German greeted us: “Arbeit macht frei!” (Work makes for

Freedom!. As we gazed at the stockpiles of shoes, suitcases, eyeglasses, women's hair and the reconstructed rooms, I kept praying the words of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy: "Have mercy on us and on the whole world." As I gazed in amazement at the execution wall, at the cell where St. Maximilian Kolbe was starved and finally killed by an injection of phenol, and then at the gas chambers, I didn't know whether to pray or cry.

Then the realization of our present age impressed itself on my mind. Which is worse? Hitler's age in which some four million were killed at Auschwitz and another six million at other camps over a decade — or the decade under Stalin in which he killed, according to Zbigniew Brzezinski (in *The Grand Failure of Communism*), some thirty to fifty million ? In the past decade we have surpassed that age by ten-fold: four hundred to six hundred million! More than the population of all of North America, that is, Canada, The United States and Mexico, with Australia and New Zealand added in.

This means that some 125,000 abortions are performed each day! This is one-half the number of conceptions in the world! We are annihilating the human race. We have broken the body of Christ on earth again!

We are in a crisis of Eucharist!

The answer to the crisis is the Eucharist — the ultimate humility and mercy of God.

St. Paul in his letter to the Romans begs us to offer our bodies. "Our bodies" in the biblical sense are our whole person (spirit, soul, and body) from

the perspective of being created. He describes this offering in such strong words that it carries with it a Eucharistic offering of ourselves:

I appeal to you ... by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship (Rom 12:1 RSV).

This is echoed in Rom 6:13 where St. Paul exhorts us to use our bodies as weapons for righteousness.

Appendix

Part III

How Do I Make A Holy Hour?

There are a great variety of ways to make a Holy Hour. So what I want to do is to lay out before you what I personally do, like a buffet dinner, in order that you can choose your way. A Holy Hour is your personal time with the Lord:

- It is a daily time of person to person presence and communication.
- It is a unique, flexible and varied.
- It is a precious time before the Eucharist.

Over the 16 years of giving retreats to priests I challenged them to a Holy Hour a day. And if they didn't have the time to spend 60 minutes daily with the "Boss" they they were too busy! B.U.S.Y. (**B**ound **U**nder **S**atan's **Y**oke). An hour a day multiplies time! and two hours a day are a marvel for what it does for your spiritual life and your ministry!

What is most important about a Holy Hour? To be before the Lord on a regular and daily basis. You need to desire it, ask the Lord for the grace to do it, receive the grace, give thanks for it and share it with others — to actually spend a daily hour before the Lord in the way the Lord leads you, is fundamen-

tal.

What is most important for me? The most important thing for me is to just *be present before the exposed Blessed Sacrament*. I've arranged my life around three Holy Hours a day, one at night, another in the morning and a third hour in the afternoon, and a fourth hour centered on the celebration of Holy Mass. This type of schedule is my schedule, and not yours. It is personal, unique, flexible and varied but it has elements that you can adapt and use to your own benefit.

I've lived this pattern of life for seven years and a modified pattern for six years prior to that. I want to share with you my experience and the fruit of the prayer in order that it may inspire, encourage and benefit you.

What is central to my Holy Hour? *To be present*.

It means to me:

- To be present to the ONE who is present with my heart in the Heart of Mary, trusting, rejoicing, giving thanks.
- *To just Be*: Be present, to the Presence of the Lord; Be aware, Be attentive, Be amazed, Be awed.
- To Be silent, Be still. (Ps 46)
- To Be with Jesus at the Throne of the Father

And further it means to me:

- To let God love me and love Him in return.

- To listen to Him with the ear of my heart to His powerful language of Silence.
- To contemplate the face of the Lord — to gaze upon Him (see 2 Cor 3:18) with Mary (John Paul II, *Entering the Third Millennium*, and the document on the Rosary).
- To SMILE in response to the Lord’s presence.
- To contemplate “Simply to realize the tender love of God and His constant presence” (Blessed Mother Teresa).
- To ADORE Him by verbal *praise* — and song and singing in the Spirit (Rom 8:26) that leads into *worship* — profound adoration, prostration and awesome, Eucharistic amazement that leads into *Glory* — the profound presence of God! He takes over the Holy Hour!

Not every Holy Hour follows all that I’ve listed, because every Holy Hour is unique and precious. At times I write in my log book afterwards:

No obvious movement of the spirit

or:

an attack of the “Sleepies!”

But the key issue is — that I am at least physically present.

An analogy to the Holy Hour is sun bathing. What is essential to sun bathing? Exposure to the radiance of the sun. But the danger is excess ultra-

violet radiation that causes sun burn!

But “Son Bathing” only brings transformation and the presence of the Lord! You can’t get too much Son-Bathing! I take lots of time for “God’s Radiation Therapy!”

Another example comes from the jubilation of the Jewish people (eg. look at the psalm of jubilation that describes rejoicing, dancing, singing, and clapping of hands! (eg. see Psalms 147, 148, 149, 150). I love to sing short songs of praise to the Lord and dance in jubilation. Try it when you are alone — you’ll love praising the Lord — even when your driving a car.

How do I start my Holy Hour?

I invoke the Holy Spirit by song to make sure I am “plugged” into the source of spiritual power. I sing a hymn to Mary like the beginning of her Magnificat followed by my consecration to Mary. I find it important to be present to the *One* who is present and listen with my heart on where He is leading me.

After exposing the Blessed Sacrament and singing a song of adoration, I especially like the hymn *Ave Vere Corpus Natum* (*Hail to Thee True Body — spring from the virgin womb ...*). and *Oh Sacrament Most Holy ...*

There are a variety of ways that follow the time of *presence* such as the rosary of the Blessed Mother, the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, Intercession, *Lecti Divina* (Divine Reading) of personal private devotion). That I use as the Lord leads. I divide up the various prayers of obligation and personal devo-

tion over the four hours: namely, celebration of Holy Mass, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, *Lectio Divina* which includes Sacred Scripture and spiritual reading. The four mysteries of the rosary of the Blessed Mother, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy after each of the mysteries of the Rosary which I offer for our Holy Father, Bishops, priests and the world, in a continuous Novena to the Divine Mercy, and the prayers and litanies especially for deacons, priests and bishops and members of my community (Basilian Fathers) and the Companions of Christ the Lamb.

But the foundation of all the prayers is *presence*: Being present with my heart to one who is present in my heart.

But what do I do with distractions?

I use them! and try not to waste them. I have distractions like everyone else: flashes of memory, thoughts, judgements, anxieties, temptations, imaginings, etc., etc. What do I do with them? At times I ignore them or “throw” them out of my mind by turning back to the presence of the Lord. But most of all I pray for the people and situations in the distractions. I consider a distraction like a knock on the door of my heart asking for help. Someone in some situation is crying out for “Mercy!” So I simply pray for the need of the distraction: “Jesus Mercy!” At times I may let the distraction come to mind, like a slide show, flashing new pictures, one after another as I pray a “litany” of Jesus, Mercy! And soon the slide show ends and I have interceded for all those crying out for mercy!

Interceding by praying “Jesus Mercy” for the needs of others is as simple as clicking the mouse of your computer on to a new icon! As you pray “Jesus Mercy” you click on to another icon, one after another. We can pray this simple prayer of intercession, not only for our distractions, but even as we drive along the roads and highways — praying “Jesus Mercy” for those we pass and those who pass us — especially for those who cut us off!

The simple prayer of “Jesus Mercy” can be used any time and so you will be praying always as the Lord asked us to:

”Jesus Mercy” has many meanings for me, it means:

- Jesus you are Mercy (praise).
- Jesus have Mercy (petition).
- Jesus come in Mercy (desire).

But there are other forms of “distractions” in my prayer, namely graces and insights into the mysteries of God, or insights into a homily or an article or a book. What do I do with those kind of distractions? I jot them down on post-it-notes next to my chair in the chapel. Later I can record them or develop them. Sometimes the “distraction” of those graces and insights come like a gentle whisper in my heart — and if I respond to them, more and more of them follow — as fast as I can record them in my log book. These “jewels” become the new material for articles, homilies, talks, and books. I thank God for them when they come, even though the hour of silent presence has evaporated, or better, hour has “sublimated,” by the Lord having his way.

Again I would point out that each Holy Hour is your personal time to be present to the Lord. It is a unique, flexible and varied gift.

I end my night Holy Hour with a question to the Lord: What is your word for me today? An immediate sense of a word or phrase comes to mind and I jot it down and try to live by it that day, for example: “Be present to Me”, “Rejoice and be glad”, “Be still and know that I am God”. I call it my daily Q & A.

I end all the Holy Hours with a Eucharist hymn of adoration eg. “O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine”.

Appendix

Part IV

The books that influenced and developed my Eucharistic devotion, I list in chronological order below so that they may be an influence on you as well:

- *Abbot Anegor Vonier O.S.B. Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist: on the presence of the Lord Jesus in the Eucharist*, Ignatius Press.
- *Fr. Louis Bouyer: Liturgical Piety*, University of Notre Dame Press, IN, 1955.
- *To the Priests: Our Lady's Beloved Sons*, Marian Movement of Priests, Fr. Stefane Gobbi: P.O. Box 8, St. Frances, ME 04774.
- *The Diary of St. Faustina*: Marian Press, 1987 Stockbridge, MA 01263
- *The Eucharist:: Our Sanctification*, Fr. Raviero Centalamessa, O.F.M cap. Liturgical Press, Revised 1955.
- *The Lambs Supper*, Scott Hahn, Doubleday, 1999.
- *Letter and Spirit*, Scott Hahn, Doubleday, 2005.
- *Ecclessia de Eucharistia Vivit*, encyclical by Pope John Paul II, Holy Thursday, 2003.
- *7 Secrets of the Eucharist*, Vinny Flynn, Ignatius Press, Jan. 2007

The books I've written on the Holy Eucharist or are related to it have been a rich source of graces and insights for me. May they be an inspiration to you:

- *Like a Cedar of Lebanon: A Biochemist Looks at Images of Life and Light*, Sheed and Ward, NY, NY 1966. (out of print)
- *Icons of Mercy: Letters to priests from a hermitage*, 1990, Faith Publishing. (out of print, out of business), Milford, OH 41510
- *Living Eucharist*, 1991, Faith Publishing (out of business).
- *Intercession: Moving Mountains by Living Eucharistically*, Faith Publishing, 1996 (out of print).
- *O Blessed Host: The Holy Eucharist in the Diary of St. Faustina*, Marian Press, 2004, Stockbridge, MA 01263.
- *Be Holy: The Legacy of John Paul the Great*, Submitted to Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN, 2006.