

Alter Christus

*“As an **alter Christus** (another Christ) the priest is in Christ, for Christ and with Christ... Because he belongs to Christ, the priest is radically at the service of all people: he is the minister of their salvation” (Pope Benedict XVI)*

Monthly bulletin dedicated to all the Priests of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

This Month's Reading:

Saint John Paul II

Dear Father,

Without hesitation, St. John Paul II was not only one of the greatest Popes of the last decades, but also one of the greatest of all times. Many of us had the grace to live his whole pontificate, in which he showed us his deep love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

This month I would like to share with you some extracts of his Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, written in April 2003. It's a long text, and for this reason I only chose some paragraphs. Without any doubt, we will obtain more profit if we read the whole text, which is available on many websites.

I chose the texts that will be more useful for us, priests. He underlines the importance of having always in mind that the sacrifice of Calvary and the sacrifice of the Mass are the very same sacrifice, so when we celebrate the Mass, we are present at Calvary. The very same Jesus who was nailed to the Cross is present in our unworthy hands, and all the graces which poured out 2,000 years ago on Calvary are poured out again every single time we celebrate the Mass. The same Jesus, the same sacrifice, the same graces. This mystery is so sublime that we will never be able to understand it fully!

In this Encyclical, he also talks about the necessity of Eucharistic Adoration and the necessity of being in the grace of God in order to celebrate the Mass properly.

At the end, the Holy Father gives us the example of the person who loved

the Holy Eucharist the most: Our Lady, from whom Jesus took flesh. She is the "Eucharist woman" at whose school we should learn how to love the Eucharist!

God bless you!

Fr. Tomás Ravaioli, IVE

LCI Director

Author: Saint John Paul II

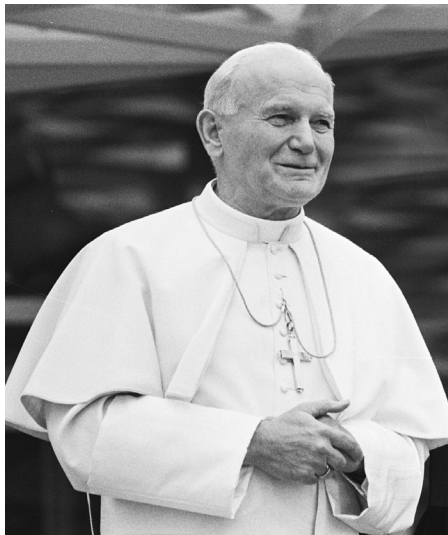
Karol J. Wojtyła, known as John Paul II since his October 1978 election to the papacy, was born in Wadowice, a small city 50 kilometres from Cracow, on May 18, 1920.

On July 4, 1958, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Cracow by Pope Pius XII, and was consecrated on September 28, 1958. On January 13, 1964, he was nominated Archbishop of Cracow by Pope Paul VI, who made him a cardinal June 26, 1967.

Since the start of his Pontificate on October 16, 1978, Pope John Paul II has completed 95 pastoral visits outside of Italy and 142 within Italy. As Bishop of Rome he has visited 301 of the 334 parishes.

His principal documents include 14 encyclicals, 13 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions and 42 apostolic letters.

On April 28, 2005, Pope Benedict XVI announced that the normal five-year waiting period before beginning the cause of beatification and canonization would be waived for John Paul II. On May 1, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI beatified Pope John Paul II, and Pope Francis canonized Saint John Paul II alongside Saint John XXIII on April 27, 2014.



"Everyone knows John Paul II: his face, his characteristic way of moving and speaking; his immersion in prayer and his spontaneous cheerfulness. Many of his words have become indelibly engraved in our memories, starting with the passionate cry with which he introduced himself to the people at the beginning of his pontificate: 'Open wide the doors to Christ, and be not afraid of him!' Or this saying: 'No one can live a trial life; no one can love experimentally.' An entire pontificate is condensed in words like these. It is as though he would like to open the doors for Christ everywhere and wishes to open up to people the gate that leads to true life, to true love." (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI)

From the Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*

By Saint John Paul II

The Mass and the Calvary

“The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed” (1 Cor 11:23) instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his body and his blood. The words of the Apostle Paul bring us back to the dramatic setting in which the Eucharist was born. The Eucharist is indelibly marked by the event of the Lord’s passion and death, of which it is not only a reminder but the sacramental re-presentation. It is the sacrifice of the Cross perpetuated down the ages. This truth is well expressed by the words with which the assembly in the Latin rite responds to the priest’s proclamation of the “Mystery of Faith”: “We announce your death, O Lord”.

The Church has received the Eucharist from Christ her Lord not as one gift – however precious – among so many others, but as the gift par excellence, for it is the gift of himself, of his person in his sacred humanity, as well as the gift

of his saving work. Nor does it remain confined to the past, since “all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times”. (CCC 1085)

When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the memorial of her Lord’s death and resurrection, this central event of salvation becomes really present and “the work of our redemption is carried out”. (LG 3) This sacrifice is so decisive for the salvation of the human race that Jesus Christ offered it and returned to the Father only after he had left us a means of sharing in it as if we had been present there.

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down the ages*

Each member of the faithful can thus take part in it and inexhaustibly gain its fruits. This is the faith from which generations of Christians down the ages have lived. The Church’s Magisterium has constantly reaffirmed this faith with joyful gratitude for its inestimable gift. I wish once more to

recall this truth and to join you, my dear brothers and sisters, in adoration before this mystery: a great mystery, a mystery of mercy. What more could Jesus have done for us? Truly, in the Eucharist, he shows us a love which goes “to the end” (cf. Jn 13:1), a love which knows no measure.

This aspect of the universal charity of the Eucharistic Sacrifice is based on the words of the Saviour himself. In instituting it, he did not merely say: “*This is my body*”, “*this is my blood*”, but went on to add: “*which is given for you*”, “*which is poured out for you*” (Lk 22:19-20). Jesus did not simply state that what he was giving them to eat and drink was his body and his blood; he also expressed its sacrificial meaning and made sacramentally present his sacrifice which would soon be offered on the Cross for the salvation of all. “The Mass is at the same time, and inseparably, the sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated and the sacred banquet of communion with the Lord’s body and blood”. (CCC 1382)

The Church constantly draws her life from the redeeming sacrifice; she approaches it not only through faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since this sacrifice is

made present ever anew, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister. The Eucharist thus applies to men and women today the reconciliation won once for all by Christ for mankind in every age. “The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice”.

(CCC 1367) Saint John Chrysostom put it well: “We always offer the same Lamb, not one today and another tomorrow, but always the same one. For this reason the sacrifice is always only one...”

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(CCC 1367)

Even now we offer that victim who was once offered and who will never be consumed”.

The Mass makes present the sacrifice of the Cross; it does not add to that sacrifice nor does it multiply it. What is repeated is its memorial celebration, its “commemorative representation” (*memorialis demonstratio*), which makes Christ’s one, definitive redemptive sacrifice always present in time. The sacrificial nature of the Eucharistic mystery cannot therefore be understood as something separate, independent of the Cross or only indirectly referring to the sacrifice of Calvary.

By virtue of its close relationship to the sacrifice of Golgotha, the

Eucharist is a sacrifice in the strict sense, and not only in a general way, as if it were simply a matter of Christ's offering himself to the faithful as their spiritual food. The gift of his love and obedience to the point of giving his life (cf. Jn 10:17-18) is in the first place a gift to his Father. Certainly it is a gift given for our sake, and indeed that of all humanity (cf. Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; Jn 10:15), yet it is first and foremost a gift to the Father.

The sacramental re-presentation of Christ's sacrifice, crowned by the resurrection, in the Mass involves a most special presence which – in the words of Paul VI – “is called ‘real’ not as a way of excluding all other types of presence as if they were ‘not real’, but because it is a presence in the fullest sense: a substantial presence whereby Christ, the God-Man, is wholly and entirely present”. This sets forth once more the perennially valid teaching of the Council of Trent: “the consecration

of the bread and wine effects the change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. And the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called this change transubstantiation”. Truly the Eucharist is a *mysterium fidei*, a mystery which surpasses our understanding and can only be received in faith, as is often brought out in the catechesis of the Church Fathers regarding this divine sacrament: “Do not see – Saint Cyril of Jerusalem exhorts – in the bread and wine merely natural elements, because the Lord has expressly said that they are his body and his blood: faith assures you of this, though your senses suggest otherwise”.

The saving efficacy of the sacrifice is fully realized when the Lord's body and blood are received in communion. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is intrinsically



directed to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through communion; we receive the very One who offered himself for us, we receive his body which he gave up for us on the Cross and his blood which he *“poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”* (Mt 26:28). We are reminded of his words: *“As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me”* (Jn 6:57). Jesus himself reassures us that this union, which he compares to that of the life of the Trinity, is truly realized. The Eucharist is a true banquet, in which Christ offers himself as our nourishment. When for the first time Jesus spoke of this food, his listeners were astonished and bewildered, which forced the Master to emphasize the objective truth of his words: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life within you”* (Jn 6:53). This is no metaphorical food: *“My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed”* (Jn 6:55).

Proclaiming the death of the Lord “until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26) entails that all who take part in the Eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely “Eucharistic”.

Necessity of Eucharistic Adoration

The worship of the Eucharist outside of the Mass is of inestimable value for the life of the Church. This worship is strictly linked to the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The presence of Christ under the sacred species reserved after Mass – a presence which lasts as long as the species of bread and of wine remain – derives from the celebration of the sacrifice and is directed towards communion, both sacramental and spiritual. It is the responsibility of Pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species.

It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the Beloved Disciple (cf. Jn 13:25) and to feel the infinite love present in his heart. If in our time Christians must be distinguished above all by the “art of prayer”, how can we not feel a renewed need to spend time in spiritual converse, in silent adoration, in heartfelt love before Christ present in the Most Holy Sacrament? How often, dear brother and sisters, have I

The Mass makes present the sacrifice of the Cross; it does not add to that sacrifice nor does it multiply it

experienced this, and drawn from it strength, consolation and support!

This practice, repeatedly praised and recommended by the Magisterium, is supported by the example of many saints. Particularly outstanding in this regard was Saint Alphonsus Liguori, who wrote: “Of all devotions, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the greatest after the sacraments, the one dearest to God and the one most helpful to us”. The Eucharist

is a priceless treasure: by not only celebrating it but also by praying before it outside of Mass we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace. A Christian community desirous of contemplating the face of Christ cannot fail also to develop this aspect of Eucharistic worship, which prolongs and increases the fruits of our communion in the body and blood of the Lord.

The Eucharist, Summit of Priestly Ministry

If the Eucharist is the centre and summit of the Church’s life, it is likewise

the centre and summit of priestly ministry. For this reason, with a heart filled with gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ, I repeat that the Eucharist is the

principal and central reason and purpose of the sacrament of priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist.

Priests are engaged in a wide variety of pastoral activities. If we also consider the social and cultural conditions of the modern world it is easy to understand

how priests face the very real risk of losing their focus amid such a great number of different tasks. The Second Vatican Council saw in pastoral charity the bond which gives unity to the priest’s life and work. This, the Council adds, “flows mainly from the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which is therefore the centre and root of the whole priestly life”. (PO 14) We can understand, then, how important it is for the spiritual life of the priest, as well as for the good of the Church and the world, that priests follow the Council’s recommendation to celebrate the Eucharist daily: “for even if the faithful are unable to be present,

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it is an act of Christ and the Church". (PO 13) In this way priests will be able to counteract the daily tensions which lead to a lack of focus and they will find in the Eucharistic Sacrifice – the true centre of their lives and ministry – the spiritual strength needed to deal with their different pastoral responsibilities. Their daily activity will thus become truly Eucharistic.

The centrality of the Eucharist in the life and ministry of priests is the basis of its centrality in the pastoral promotion of priestly vocations. It is in the Eucharist that prayer for vocations

is most closely united to the prayer of Christ the Eternal High Priest. At the same time the diligence of priests in carrying out their Eucharistic ministry, together with the conscious,

active and fruitful participation of the faithful in the Eucharist, provides young men with a powerful example and incentive for responding generously to God's call. Often it is the example of a priest's fervent pastoral charity which the Lord uses to sow and to bring to fruition in a young

man's heart the seed of a priestly calling.

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Priests Should Be in Grace of God When They Celebrate the Mass

Keeping these invisible bonds intact is a specific moral duty incumbent upon Christians who wish to participate fully in the Eucharist by receiving the body and blood of Christ. The Apostle Paul appeals to this duty when he warns: “Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor 11:28). Saint John Chrysostom, with his stirring eloquence, exhorted the faithful:

“I too raise my voice, I beseech, beg and implore that no one draw near to this sacred table with a sullied and corrupt conscience. Such an act, in fact, can never be called ‘communion’, not even were we to touch the Lord’s body a thousand times over, but ‘condemnation’, ‘torment’ and ‘increase of punishment’”.

Along these same lines, the Catechism of the Catholic Church rightly stipulates that “anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion”. (1385) Therefore I desire to reaffirm that in the Church there remains in force, now and in the future,

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the rule by which the Council of Trent gave concrete expression to the Apostle Paul’s stern warning when it affirmed that, in order to receive the Eucharist in a worthy manner, “one must first confess one’s sins, when one is aware of mortal sin”.

The two sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance are very closely connected. Because the Eucharist makes present the redeeming sacrifice of the Cross, perpetuating it sacramentally, it naturally gives rise to a continuous need for conversion, for a personal response to the appeal made by Saint Paul to the Christians of Corinth: “We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). If a Christian’s conscience is burdened by serious sin, then the path of penance through the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes necessary for full participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

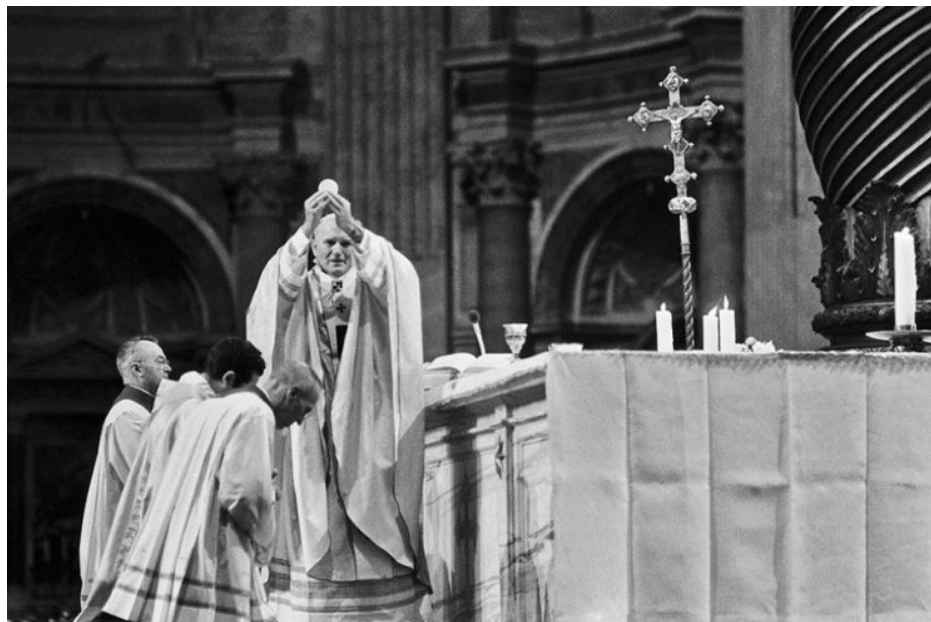
The Dignity of the Eucharistic Celebration

Reading the account of the institution of the Eucharist in the Synoptic Gospels, we are struck by the simplicity and the “solemnity” with which Jesus,

on the evening of the Last Supper, instituted this great sacrament. There is an episode which in some way serves as its prelude: the anointing at Bethany. A woman, whom John identifies as Mary the sister of Lazarus, pours a flask of costly ointment over Jesus' head, which provokes from the disciples – and from Judas in particular (cf. Mt 26:8; Mk 14:4; Jn 12:4) – an indignant response, as if this act, in light of the needs of the poor, represented an intolerable “waste”. But Jesus' own reaction is completely different. While in no way detracting from the duty of charity towards the needy, for whom the disciples must always show special care – “*the poor you will always have with you*” (Mt 26, 11; Mk 14:7; cf. Jn 12:8) – he looks towards his imminent death and burial,

and sees this act of anointing as an anticipation of the honour which his body will continue to merit even after his death, indissolubly bound as it is to the mystery of his person.

The account continues, in the Synoptic Gospels, with Jesus' charge to the disciples to prepare carefully the “*large upper room*” needed for the Passover meal (cf. Mk 14:15; Lk 22:12) and with the narration of the institution of the Eucharist. Reflecting at least in part the Jewish rites of the Passover meal leading up to the singing of the Hallel (cf. Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26), the story presents with sobriety and solemnity, even in the variants of the different traditions, the words spoken by Christ over the bread and wine, which he made into concrete expressions of the handing



over of his body and the shedding of his blood. All these details are recorded by the Evangelists in the light of a praxis of the “*breaking of the bread*” already well-established in the early Church. But certainly from the time of Jesus on, the event of Holy Thursday has shown visible traces of a liturgical “sensibility” shaped by Old Testament tradition and open to being reshaped in Christian celebrations in a way consonant with the new content of Easter.

Like the woman who anointed Jesus in Bethany, the Church has feared no “extravagance”, devoting the best of her resources to expressing her wonder and adoration before the unsurpassable gift of the Eucharist. No less than the first disciples charged with preparing the “*large upper room*”, she has felt the need, down the centuries and in her encounters with different cultures, to celebrate the Eucharist in a setting worthy of so great a mystery. In the wake of Jesus’ own words and actions, and building upon the ritual heritage of Judaism, the Christian liturgy was born. Could there ever be an adequate means of expressing the acceptance of that self-gift which the divine Bridegroom continually makes to his Bride, the Church, by bringing the Sacrifice offered once and for all on the Cross to successive generations of believers and thus becoming nourishment for all the faithful? Though the idea of a “banquet” naturally suggests familiarity,

the Church has never yielded to the temptation to trivialize this “intimacy” with her Spouse by forgetting that he is also her Lord and that the “banquet” always remains a sacrificial banquet marked by the blood shed on Golgotha. The Eucharistic Banquet is truly a “sacred” banquet, in which the simplicity of the signs conceals the unfathomable holiness of God: *O sacrum convivium, in quo Christus sumitur!* The bread which is broken on our altars, offered to us as wayfarers along the paths of the world, is *panis angelorum*, the bread of angels, which cannot be approached except with the humility of the centurion in the Gospel: “*Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof*” (Mt 8:8; Lk 7:6).

The Mass and the Inculturation

The development of sacred art and liturgical discipline which took place in lands of ancient Christian heritage is also taking place on continents where Christianity is younger. This was precisely the approach supported by the Second Vatican Council on the need for sound and proper “inculturation”. In my numerous Pastoral Visits I have seen, throughout the world, the great vitality which the celebration of the Eucharist can have when marked by the forms, styles and sensibilities of different cultures. By adaptation to the changing conditions of time and

place, the Eucharist offers sustenance not only to individuals but to entire peoples, and it shapes cultures inspired by Christianity.

It is necessary, however, that this important work of adaptation be carried out with a constant awareness of the ineffable mystery against which every generation is called to measure itself. The “treasure” is too important and precious to risk impoverishment or compromise through forms of experimentation or practices introduced without a careful review on the part of the competent ecclesiastical authorities. Furthermore, the centrality

of the Eucharistic mystery demands that any such review must be undertaken in close association with the Holy See. As I wrote in my Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia*, “such cooperation is essential because the Sacred Liturgy expresses and celebrates the one faith professed by all and, being the heritage of the whole

Church, cannot be determined by local Churches in isolation from the universal Church”. (22)

All of this makes clear the great responsibility which belongs to priests

in particular for the celebration of the Eucharist. It is their responsibility to preside at the Eucharist *in persona Christi* and to provide a witness to and a service of communion not only for the community directly taking part in the celebration, but also for the universal Church, which is a part of every Eucharist. It must be lamented that, especially in the years following the post-conciliar liturgical reform, as a result of a misguided sense of creativity and adaptation there have been a number of abuses which have been a source of suffering for many. A certain reaction against “formalism”

has led some, especially in certain regions, to consider the “forms” chosen by the Church’s great liturgical tradition and her Magisterium as non-binding and to introduce unauthorized innovations which are often completely inappropriate.

I consider it my duty, therefore to appeal urgently that the liturgical norms for the celebration of the

Eucharist be observed with great fidelity. These norms are a concrete expression of the authentically ecclesial nature of the Eucharist; this is their deepest meaning. Liturgy is never anyone’s private

Liturgy is never anyone’s private property. No one is permitted to undervalue the mystery entrusted to our hands: it is too great for anyone to feel free to treat it lightly

property, be it of the celebrant or of the community in which the mysteries are celebrated. The Apostle Paul had to address fiery words to the community of Corinth because of grave shortcomings in their celebration of the Eucharist resulting in divisions (schismata) and the emergence of factions (haireseis) (cf. 1 Cor 11:17-34). Our time, too, calls for a renewed awareness and appreciation of liturgical norms as a reflection of, and a witness to, the one universal Church made present in every celebration of the Eucharist. Priests who faithfully celebrate Mass according to the liturgical norms, and communities which conform to those norms, quietly but eloquently demonstrate their love for the Church. No one is permitted to undervalue the mystery entrusted to our hands: it is too great for anyone to feel free to treat it lightly and with disregard for its sacredness and its universality.

At the School of Mary

If we wish to rediscover in all its richness the profound relationship between the Church and the Eucharist, we cannot neglect Mary, Mother and model of the Church.

At first glance, the Gospel is silent on this subject. The account of the institution of the Eucharist on the night of Holy Thursday makes no mention of Mary. Yet we know that she was present among the Apostles who prayed “*with one accord*”

(cf. Acts 1:14) in the first community which gathered after the Ascension in expectation of Pentecost. Certainly Mary must have been present at the Eucharistic celebrations of the first generation of Christians, who were devoted to “*the breaking of bread*” (Acts 2:42).

But in addition to her sharing in the Eucharistic banquet, an indirect picture of Mary’s relationship with the Eucharist can be had, beginning with her interior disposition. Mary is a “woman of the Eucharist” in her whole life. The Church, which looks to Mary as a model, is also called to imitate her in her relationship with this most holy mystery.

Mysterium fidei! If the Eucharist is a mystery of faith which so greatly transcends our understanding as to call for sheer abandonment to the word of God, then there can be no one like Mary to act as our support and guide in acquiring this disposition. In repeating what Christ did at the Last Supper in obedience to his command: “*Do this in memory of me!*”, we also accept Mary’s invitation to obey him without hesitation: “*Do whatever he tells you*” (Jn 2:5). With the same maternal concern which she showed at the wedding feast of Cana, 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’”.

In a certain sense Mary lived her Eucharistic faith even before the institution of the Eucharist, by the very fact that she offered her virginal womb for the Incarnation of God’s Word. The

Eucharist, while commemorating the passion and resurrection, is also in continuity with the incarnation. At the Annunciation Mary conceived the Son of God in the physical reality of his body and blood, thus anticipating within herself what to some degree

happens sacramentally in every believer who receives, under the signs of bread and wine, the Lord’s body and blood.

As a result, there is a profound analogy between the Fiat which Mary said in reply to the angel, and the Amen which every believer says when receiving the body of the Lord. Mary was asked to believe that the One whom she conceived “*through the Holy Spirit*” was “*the Son of God*” (Lk 1:30-35). In continuity with the Virgin’s faith, in the Eucharistic mystery we are asked to believe that the same Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, becomes present in his full humanity and divinity under the signs of bread and wine.

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“*Blessed is she who believed*” (Lk 1:45).

Mary also anticipated, in the mystery of the incarnation, the Church’s Eucharistic faith. When, at the Visitation, she bore in her womb the Word made flesh, she became in some way a “tabernacle” – the first “tabernacle” in history – in

which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed himself to be adored by Elizabeth, radiating his light as it were through the eyes and the voice of Mary. And is not the enraptured gaze of Mary as she contemplated the face of the newborn Christ and cradled

him in her arms that unparalleled model of love which should inspire us every time we receive Eucharistic communion?

What must Mary have felt as she heard from the mouth of Peter, John, James and the other Apostles the words spoken at the Last Supper: “*This is my body which is given for you*” (Lk 22:19)? The body given up for us and made present under sacramental signs was the same body which she had conceived in her womb! For Mary, receiving the Eucharist must have somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that heart which had beat in unison

with hers and reliving what she had experienced at the foot of the Cross.

In the Eucharist the Church is completely united to Christ and his sacrifice, and makes her own the spirit of Mary. This truth can be understood more deeply by re-reading the Magnificat in a Eucharistic key. The Eucharist, like the Canticle of Mary, is first and foremost praise and thanksgiving. When Mary exclaims: *“My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour”*, she already bears Jesus in her womb. She praises God “through” Jesus, but she also praises him “in” Jesus and “with” Jesus. This is itself the true “Eucharistic attitude”.

Every commitment to holiness, every activity aimed at carrying out the Church’s mission, every work of pastoral planning, must draw the strength it needs from the Eucharistic mystery and in turn be directed to that mystery as its culmination. In the Eucharist we have Jesus, we have his redemptive sacrifice, we have his resurrection, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, we have adoration, obedience and love of the Father. Were we to disregard the Eucharist, how could we overcome our own deficiency?

Let us take our place, dear brothers and sisters, at the school of the saints, who are the great interpreters of true Eucharistic piety. In them the theology of the Eucharist takes on all the



splendour of a lived reality; it becomes “contagious” and, in a manner of speaking, it “warms our hearts”. Above all, let us listen to Mary Most Holy, in whom the mystery of the Eucharist appears, more than in anyone else, as a mystery of light. Gazing upon Mary, we come to know the transforming power present in the Eucharist. In

her we see the world renewed in love. Contemplating her, assumed body and soul into heaven, we see opening up before us those “*new heavens*” and that “*new earth*” which will appear at the second coming of Christ. Here below, the Eucharist represents their pledge, and in a certain way, their anticipation: “*Come, Lord Jesus!*” (Rev 22:20).

Pope John Paul II: Prayer for Priests
(May 11, 2003)

**Mary, Woman of the Eucharist,
Mother and Model of Every Priest**

And, you, Mary, “Woman of the Eucharist,” Mother and model of every priest, be close to these sons of yours today and throughout the years of their pastoral ministry. Like the Apostle John, they too welcome you “into their home.” Help them to conform their lives to the divine Teacher who has chosen them as His ministers. May their “present,” just spoken by each one with youthful enthusiasm, be expressed every day in generous adherence to the task of the ministry and blossom in the joy the “magnificat” for the “great things” that God’s mercy will, to work through their hands.
Amen.



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