

A Spirituality of Communion

“A clear awareness of the responsibility of the laity, grounded in their baptism and confirmation, does not appear in the same way in all places. In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. In others, it is because in their particular Churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making. Even if many are now involved in the lay ministries, this involvement is not reflected in a greater penetration of Christian values in the social, political and economic sectors. It often remains tied to tasks within the Church, without a real commitment to applying the Gospel to the transformation of society. The formation of the laity and the evangelization of professional and intellectual life represent a significant pastoral challenge.”

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 102

- The Trinitarian Foundation
- Covenant - Communion
- Baptism – Priest: Prophet: King
- The Holy Spirit
- Sunday
- Full, conscious and active participation
- Lex orandi: Lex credendi: Lex agendi
- Rehearsing kingdom values
- “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

“The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God is a community of loving fellowship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a community of holy love. The purpose of creation was that God would create a people to share this loving community. God’s love, by his free decision, is self-giving and other-centered so that it seeks to share the joy of the divine communion with others.”

John Mark Hicks, *Come to the Table*, ps. 14-16

“I believe a deeper appropriation of the Trinitarian foundation of worship provides a way to speak to the hunger and thirst for a Eucharistic spirituality in these times, especially acute among many young people today who long for the mystery seemingly so apparent in former ages... I suggest that our age requires a fresh Eucharistic spirituality and piety for the new reality unfolding in this twenty-first century.”

Paul A. Janowiak, s.j. *Standing Together in the Community of God*, p.x.

“The Christian preacher must focus on Jesus Christ who was sent by God, accomplished the work of God, and sought the glory of God. Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might save us from our sins, *‘according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for evermore’* (Gal 1:4-5). The bible is a God-guided redemption story. Preachers should preach the character and mighty acts of God the Trinity, not just the second person of the Godhead.”

Kyeongmin Kaleb Seo, *Christomonism*, preachingsource.com, August 9, 2019

“We must be willing to admit that, should the doctrine of the Trinity have to be dropped as false, the major part of religious literature would remain virtually unchanged.” Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, ps. 10-11

The Gospel of John and A Spirituality of Communion.

Chiara Lubich (1920-2008) was an Italian teacher and author who founded the Focolare Movement, which aims to bring unity to people and promote universal fraternity. Lubich is known for her commitment to build bridges of peace and unity between individuals, generations, social classes, cultures and beliefs. She built her movement on the prayer of Jesus before he died: “Father... that they may all be one” (John 17:11).

John 15:9-17 stresses some key ideas very valuable for preaching and pastoral guidance. First, love (*agapē*) is expressed in affection, modeled by the relationship between God and Jesus. And that love is transformed into a joyous existence, bearing good fruits and dwelling in a loving community of friends. Second, community is built as the body of Christ, a living organism. For the New Testament, communion (*koinōnia*) is present in the life of Jesus, the Spirit, and the Father. It is a hope of glory and eternal life in a coming kingdom, manifested here and now in praxis of solidarity in suffering, and in sharing spiritual gifts. It leads to a reconciling dimension confronting conflicting—and even violent—relationships and situations. Love becomes a transforming power more than a superficial and emotional expression.

Carmelo Álvarez, *Feasting on the Word, Feasting on the Word, Year B, Volume 2: Lent through Eastertide*.

A Spirituality of Communion “stresses that the love which is the core of Christian revelation is generated through the intimate connection of Jesus with the Father and is sustained through the sending of the Holy Spirit; the growth of the Church is the spread of this divine love within Christian communities. To live in Christian community is to share in the life and love of the three persons in one God.”

Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, p. 13

Communion (koinonia) can be understood as partnership from biblical and theological perspectives. It includes the sharing of human resources, material goods, and communal fellowship. Koinonia as a central concept in the New Testament provides key elements in the development of an integral model in which liturgy, preaching, service, and the pursuit of justice come together. *Koinōnia* means that the church is called to a commitment of solidarity toward unity as a witness in a broken and divided world. Sharing in God's mission requires the proclamation of a liberating word as a concrete manifestation of a communal fellowship in worship and the caring for God's creation. It should be no surprise that faith, life, and testimony in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) are directly related to the God who is Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Carmelo Álvarez, *Feasting on the Word – Year B, Volume 2: Lent through Eastertide*.

Lex orandi

Lex credendi

Lex agenda

Prosper of Aquitaine (390-455 AD)

“But the deeper question is not whether faith controls worship or vice versa, but whether either of them can be verified in the absence of a *lex Agendi*, a rule of action or behavior, an ethical imperative that flows from the Christian’s encounter with God.”

Nathan Mitchell,
Meeting Mystery, p. 223

The prayers of the Liturgy are a rich source of inspiration and instruction when spoken and heard with reverence and attention.

Fr Michael

“The Eucharist evangelizes when the texts of the ordinary of the Mass teach us in its orations how to praise the Lord and how to ask him for the help we need to live as his sons and daughters.”

Edouard Cardinal Gagnon
Eucharist and Evangelization

Thursday of the Octave of Easter – Earlier Translation

COLLECT

Father,
you gather the nations to praise your name.
May all who are reborn in baptism
be one in faith and love.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

Thursday in the Octave of Easter – New Translation

COLLECT

O God, who have united the many nations
in confessing your name,
grant that those reborn in the font of Baptism
may be one in the faith of their hearts
and the homage of their deeds.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, for ever and ever.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR USE IN MASSES FOR VARIOUS NEEDS III

“By our partaking of this mystery,
almighty Father, give us life through
your Spirit, grant that we may be
conformed to the image of your Son,
and confirm us in the bond of
communion..”

Prayer after Communion, 5th Sunday of Lent

We pray, almighty God,
That we may always be counted among
The members of Christ,
In whose Body and Blood we have
communion.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen

The covenant between God and his people is the principal interpretive key to the Scriptures (Pope Benedict XVI). God draws us into a relationship of communion as a direct consequence of his creative act. We are made for communion.

Baptism

The foundation of all ministry in the church

- Priest
- Prophet
- King

“The Blessed Trinity is invoked over those who are to be baptized. Signed in this name, they are consecrated to the Trinity and enter into fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It means adopted into the divine family.”
(Christian Initiation, 5)

“Ceaselessly, without loss or diminution the persons of the Trinity give themselves to each other and in the love they communicate to one another they enfold the baptized Christian who is thus able to participate in that creative love.”

J.D. Crichton, Christian Celebration: The Sacraments, p.37

“Most parishes have still not acknowledged the demands of baptismal discipleship, a way of life that necessitates a spirit of mission to the world.”

Timothy P. O’Malley, Ph.D. Director of the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy, *Church Life*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Fall 2014

“Within our dioceses and parishes in the United States, much is being done to help adults come to the mature faith required of evangelists. This is truly important for the New Evangelization, but it is a retroactive response, a stopgap measure that is required because our initiation practices have not been bearing the fruit of mature Christians, ready to evangelize.”

Colleen Reiss Vermeulen, M.Div. *Church Life*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, Fall 2014, p.17

The Eucharist

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life’ (LG 11). ‘The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented to it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch’” (PO 5).
Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 1324

“For a renewed Church we need authentic Christian communities, authentic liturgies, and an authentic spirituality.”

David Bird, OSB, *The Royal Road to Joy*, p. 10

“For many of our contemporaries the Eucharistic celebration appears irrelevant, unconnected to real life.”

Frank Andersen, M.S.C., *Making the Eucharist Matter*, p. 51

Some of the Things People Say

“I can pray better on my own.”

“I can still be a good Catholic and not go to Mass.”

“I don’t go to Church because they’re all hypocrites.”

“I don’t go to Mass because I get nothing out of it.”

“I love Jesus, but not his Church.”

- The Mass is boring if you arrive anticipating being a spectator!
- Spectators expect to be impressed, entertained, moved or excited.
- The mindset of a spectator is different from that of a participant.
- A participant wants to contribute, be engaged, take part in the action.

MASS IS BORING!

Letter and book from a Parishioner

Its Repetitious

“How we apply our attention to different tasks depends very much on what an individual brings to it.”

Dr. Gemma Briggs, Lecturer in Psychology, Open University.

Linda Stone, a technologist, in a talk she gave at a conference on Emerging Technologies, said that “the disease of the internet age is continuous partial attention.”

Recorded in Nate Torkington's Blog

“The real problems of pastoral liturgy are out in the parishes, where in some instances, thousands of people worship very Sunday. Such worship has its own special problems in need of their own solutions. What ordinary people in ordinary parishes need is familiarity, sameness, the stability of a ritual tradition that can only be achieved by **repetition**, and that will not tolerate change every time the pastor reads a new article. The only way people are going to perceive liturgy as their own, and therefore participate in it, is when they know what is going to happen next.”

Robert F. Taft, SJ, Response to the Berakah Award, in *Beyond East and West*, p.297.

“We come to know who we are by the stories we tell. We celebrate who we are by the rituals we perform. As a series of appropriate, set, repetitive objects, actions and words, ritual provides structure and meaning to a gathered community. These object, actions and words, serve to unite the community; they draw us together. We all do and say the same things in the same way when we gather together. Repetition allows the community to enter into deeper and deeper levels of meaning because we do not have to concentrate intently on what we are doing. Repetition draws us in.”

Susan S. Jorgensen, *Rekindling the Passion*, p. 38

“Religious rituals are the *primary* means of shaping and reshaping a person of faith.”

Donna Eschenauer, Ph.D., *Liturgical Catechesis*,
Professor of Pastoral Theology, St. Joseph's Seminary

“We humans cannot live without ritual; our religious life is expressed through symbolic narratives (sacred stories) and symbolic actions (rituals and ceremonies). Perhaps no aspect of our life is more important than our ceremonial life. We humans are made for ritual, and rituals make us. No community exists without a shared story and shared repetitive symbolic actions.”

John H. Westerhoff, *A Pilgrim People: Learning Through the Church Year*, ps. 7-8

“In our time there is a deep concern for the continuing reality of decreased attendance at Sunday Mass. Surveys depict multiple reasons for this decline. However, it is likely that far too many people experience Mass as irrelevant to lived experience. The catechetical ministry of the Church has a unique opportunity to show adults and children that liturgy, particularly the celebration of the Eucharist, has everything to do with the struggles, fears, hopes, and dreams of the human person.”

Donna Eschenauer, Ph.D., *Liturgical Catechesis*,
Professor of Pastoral Theology, St. Joseph’s Seminary

“Despite the best of intentions and the hard work of many, the majority of people in Sunday congregations are not particularly involved in the ritual that is going on around them. It is as if they are no longer sure of what it is the ritual is trying to achieve – as if they are not quite sure why they are there, that somehow they have managed to lose the *connection to mystery* that lies at the heart of the sacrament.”

Frank Andersen, M.S.C., *Making the Eucharist Matter*, p.8

“The Mass is constant and commonplace. Yet it is also rich and complex. Every word and gesture has a history, a significance, a meaning. What is commonplace we often treat as unimportant, as something done unthinkingly. We go through the motions. We must not allow this to happen to the Mass. Yet too often we do. Thus, as long as the Church has celebrated the Mass, there has been the necessity to explain and unveil its deepest meanings. The fathers of the ancient Church called this type of reflection by its Greek name, *mystagogia*, or liturgical catechesis.”

Archbishop J. Augustine Di Noia, O.P., Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Foreword to *The Mass*, by Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina, p.10.

“Recent statistics reveal that comparatively few Catholics appreciate the gift which the Lord gives us in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.”

Edouard Cardinal Gagnon, Prefect of the Pontifical Council of the Family in,
Eucharist and Evangelization

“Many people, especially children and young adults claim that they find the Mass boring. Perhaps this is because their experience is too often that of a poorly celebrated ritual? Maybe they do not understand, as they have never really been taught, the rich significance of celebrating the Eucharist. The words and actions may be familiar, but perhaps not the meaning.”

Fainche Ryan,
The Eucharist, p.27

“The liturgy is the ordinary school of the development of the true Christian and the very qualities and outlook it develops in him are those that make for the best realization of a genuine Christian culture.”

Virgil Michel, *Orate Fratres*, May 1939, p.299

Eucharist, a school of Love

Liturgy is “ an all-embracing vision of life, a power meant to judge, inform and transform the whole of existence, a ‘philosophy of life’ shaping and challenging all our ideas, attitudes and actions... an *icon* of that new life which is to challenge and renew the ‘old life’ in us and around us.”

Thomas Fisch, ed., *Liturgy and Tradition: Theological Reflections of Alexander Schmemmann*, pp. 51-52

“The Eucharist is ‘the source of love for the life of the Church and a school of charity and solidarity.’”

Pope Francis, *Angelus Message, Solemnity of Corpus Christi*,
June 4th, 2015

“It is most of all through the experience provided by the liturgy, rather than by doctrine and discipline, that the church has developed its people in Christian faith and life.”

Philip H. Pfatteicher, *Liturgical Spirituality*, p. x

In the restoration and promotion of the Sacred Liturgy the full and active participation of all the people *is the aim to be considered before all else*, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit.

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 14

“No Christian community is built up unless it has its basis and center in the celebration of the Eucharist; from this all education for community living must begin.”

Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, No 6.

“God is at the heart of our human desire and our religious hunger. God acts first and we respond. Our ‘full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the nature of the liturgy’ (SC 14) is in response to the Trinity’s own communion of mutual love and self-gift that, in the liturgy, we are invited to share.”

Paul A. Janowiak, S.J., *Standing Together in the Community of God*, p. x.

“in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the *Mystical Body of Jesus Christ*, that is, by the Head and his members.”

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 7.

Fourfold presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic liturgy

- Community
- Priest
- Word of God
- Bread and Wine

A Journey through the Mass

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Gathering | - | Introductory Rites |
| 2 | Story Telling | - | Liturgy of the Word |
| 3 | Setting the Table | - | Presentation of the Gifts |
| 4 | Giving Thanks | - | Eucharistic Prayer |
| 5 | Meal Sharing | - | Communion Rite |
| 6 | Going Forth | - | Dismissal Rite |

Table Manners

- Welcome Hospitality
- Be present Bring something
- The others Community
- Be thankful All is gift
- Wash up Mission

The Eucharistic Celebration

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The Introductory Rites of the Mass foster a sense of union and community.
- We gather as individuals to form the Catholic Community of... ..
- “When the priest is ready”
“When the people are gathered”

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- First Reading (Hebrew Scriptures or Acts of the Apostles)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading (Always New Testament)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel
- Homily
- Creed
- Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful, General Intercessions)

The Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of God's Word and Christ's Body. (Dei Verbum 21.)

The Liturgy of the Word

“I have a question for you, brothers and sisters.

Which do you think more important - the Word of God or the Body of Christ? If you want to answer correctly, you must tell me that the Word of God is not less important than the Body of Christ. How careful we are, when the Body of Christ is distributed to us, not to let any bit of it to fall to the ground from our hand! But we should be just as careful not to let slip from our hearts the Word of God.”

Caesarius of Arles, d.542 A.D. Sermo 78,2

“During the consecration a perceptible stillness comes over the Congregation. Movement and crowd noises cease. If the ushers are standing at the back, they will kneel at this moment. It is a different story during the Scripture readings. People are still arriving and walking down the aisle to their seats; few would do this during the Consecration! The priest himself may be leaning over whispering instructions to the servers. We haven’t yet emphasized this part of the Mass enough.”

Bishop Kenneth E. Untener, *Sunday Liturgy*, ps. 41/42.

“It may be admitted that the Church has restored the Liturgy of the Word at a time when people are becoming less capable of listening than at any time in the history of mankind.”

J.D.Crichton, *Christian Celebration: The Mass*, p.73

“The best way to discover what all this involves is to listen with a yearning heart and a welcoming heart to the scripture readings at Mass and to check-out our lifestyle in the light of the Word of God.”

Sean Swayne, *Gather Around the Lord*, p.48

Sh'ma Isra'eil Adonai Eloheinu Adonai ehad.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. (Deut. 6:4)

One of two prayers specifically commanded in Torah, (the other is Birkat Ha-Mazon- grace after meals). It is the oldest fixed daily prayer in Judaism, recited morning and night since ancient times.

“Sh'ma Yis'reil Adonai
Elohein, Adonai Echad.”

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is
our God, the Lord alone.

“The question we have to ask ourselves is if and how we too are open to being challenged by the Gospel; whether the Gospel is truly the ‘manual’ for our daily living and the decisions we are called to make. The Gospel is demanding: it demands to be lived radically and sincerely. It is not enough to read it (even though the reading and study of Scripture is essential) nor is it enough to meditate on it (which we do joyfully each day). Jesus asks us to practice it, to put his words into effect in our lives.”

-Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis to all Consecrated People, Vatican, November 21, 2014

The importance of Words

- Les Miserables

“But remember this my brother,
see in this some higher plan
you must use this precious silver
to become an honest man.
By the witness of the martyrs
by the passion and the blood,
God has raised you out of darkness
I have saved your soul for God.”

Bishop in Les Miserables