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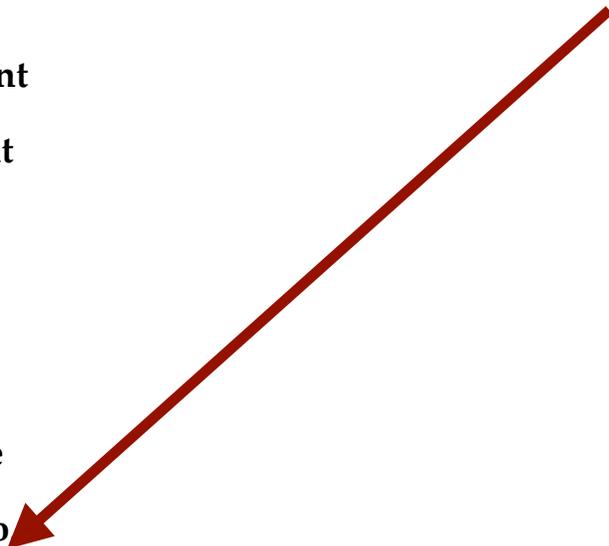
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n. II. Eucharist



‘At the Last Supper, on the night he was handed over, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood.

This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again,

and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection.’

The sacrifice of the cross



On the cross Jesus offered his life, his love, his very self to God and to us in order to draw us into communion with God.

To be in communion with God

= to be made holy : **sacrum**

facere

sacrifice

Jesus' death meant different things to Pilate, the high priest, the Pharisees and the crowd. To see what it meant to Jesus we go to the Last Supper.

‘Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks [eucharisteô], he broke it and gave it to them saying: This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me’(Luke 22:19).



I Corinthians 11:23-25

‘The Lord Jesus on the night when he was handed over took a loaf of **bread**, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my **body** that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”



‘In the same way he took the **cup** also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my **blood**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

(see Luke 22:10-20)

Jesus wants his disciples to ‘remember’ when his life is so brutally taken from him that he is not just a victim of his enemies. He has always given himself for them. On the cross this self-giving will reach its consummation (“He is loving me and giving himself for me”, Galatians 2:20).

When he breaks bread this evening, and when he pours out the blood-red wine, he invests them with a special meaning, symbolising the final offering he is about to make. When they take and eat this bread, he wants them to know that it is his body that they are taking, given as a gift of love to them to nourish them on their journey. When they take and drink this wine, he wants them to know that it is his life poured out for them that he is offering their thirsting souls.

Jesus had been teaching a large crowd of people. Evening was drawing near, and his disciples suggested that he send the people away so that they could buy for themselves something to eat. Jesus' reply was unexpected:

'You give them something to eat yourselves' (Mark 6:36).

Of course they did not have the means to do this – or so they thought. However, in a scene reminiscent of the manna in Exodus, Jesus tells them to bring to him whatever they have. Then

'Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves and continued to give them to his disciples to set before the people' (Mark 6:41).

‘The people ate as much as they wanted, and the apostles took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces’ (Mark 6:42-43).

Jesus can give us all we need to satisfy our hunger and thirst, and we have the means to meet other people’s hunger and thirst, provided we are willing to open ourselves to Jesus’ love, and to offer all we have to others, having first placed it in Jesus’ hands. It is because Jesus lives in us, that all of us (the ‘Twelve’) can continue to do what Jesus did. Jesus is continuing his mission of love in us and through us.

Experience of the senses

See, touch, taste



Surface

The intelligence asks questions to penetrate to the underlying reality. What is it?



Sub-stance

Under-standing

- not in the physical sense of ‘matter’
- in the metaphysical sense of ‘underlying reality’

Transubstantiation

Truth

Understanding enlightened by what we know-in-faith

We attain the truth when we are right in our judgment as to what something is.

‘Do not seek to understand so that you may believe. Believe so that you may understand.’

(adaequatio rei et intellectus,
Thomas A).

(Augustine).

The change is not physical and not chemical. It is metaphysical. It is a change at the level of being. We know-in-faith that Jesus is offering us himself to assuage our deepest hunger and thirst.

The Church is the Body of Christ

n. 1368

‘In the catacombs the Church is often represented as a woman in prayer, arms outstretched in the praying position. Like Christ who stretched out his arms of the cross, through him, with him, and in him, she offers herself and intercedes for all.’



Catacomb of Priscilla

‘The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a communion in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’ (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

‘If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond “Amen”(“Yes, it is true”) and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words “the Body of Christ” and you respond “Amen”. Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true’ (Augustine Sermon 272).

Forgiveness of sin

‘This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Matthew 26:28).

n.1393

‘The Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins.’

n.1394

‘By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and put our roots down into Him.’

The sacraments are not something we go to,
but something we do.

- The gathering
- The storytelling/ prophecy

‘My grandfather was paralysed. One day he was asked to tell about something that happened with his teacher. He told how the saintly man used to leap about and dance while he was at his prayers. As he went on with the story, my grandfather stood up; he was so carried away that he had to show how the master had done it, and he started to caper about and dance. From that moment he was cured. That is how stories should be told.’

(Martin Buber Story related by a Rabbi)

- The giving and receiving
- The missioning

n.I332

Called the 'Mass', from the Latin 'missa'. At the conclusion of the Eucharist, the consecrated host was sent with the deacon to those unable to be at the gathering. ('Ite, missa est').

We, too, are sent to carry on Christ's mission in the world.

‘Do this in remembrance of me’

- ‘I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done.’ (=wash one another’s feet) John 13:14-15).
- to ‘love one another as I have loved you’ (John 15:12).

To ‘eat this bread’

- to unite oneself with the ‘flesh given for the life of the world’ (John 6:51).
- to hunger for ‘every word that comes from the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4).
- to welcome God’s gift of our ‘super-substantial bread’ (Matthew 6:11).

To 'drink this wine'

- to drink the wine of Jesus, the bridegroom' (Cana - John 2).
- to drink the wine of Jesus' love 'poured into our hearts" (Romans 5:5).
- to commit oneself to say 'Yes' to Jesus: 'Can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptised with the baptism with which I am to be baptised? (Mark 10:38)

‘The Lord’s chalice is drunk whenever holy charity is preserved. Without this a person could give up his body to be burned and it would not help him. But through the gift of love we receive the grace to be in reality what we celebrate mystically in the sacrifice’(St Fulgentius of Ruspe. Against Fabian 28,19).



I am the bread of life.

James Quinn, SJ.