

SOURCE & SUMMIT

A Quarterly Newsletter for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
in the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon



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1

Pope Francis and the Holy Eucharist

*A reader recently asked if we could write about the Eucharistic teaching in Pope Francis' writings, we take a look at Pope Francis two encyclicals, *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Si*.*

In the final chapter of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* he states: "I do not intend to offer a synthesis of Christian spirituality, or to explore great themes like prayer, Eucharistic adoration or the liturgical celebration of the faith. For all these we already have valuable texts of the magisterium and celebrated writings by great authors. I do not claim to replace or improve upon these treasures. I simply wish to offer some thoughts about the spirit of the new evangelization." [260]

With regard to the Holy Eucharist he makes an important point, that the magisterium has already provided a wealth of teaching and a depth of doctrine that he does not wish to replace or try to improve upon. However let us take a brief survey of the Holy Eucharist as detailed in the writings of Pope Francis. As Pope Benedict is often

described as the liturgical pope perhaps Pope Francis will be known as the environmental pope.

In the first year of his pontificate Pope Francis issued an encyclical letter entitled *Lumen Fidei*, which would set the course for his major themes of his pontificate. It is interesting to note that this encyclical was started by Pope Benedict and completed under the pontificate of Pope Francis and is hailed as the first encyclical in the history of the Catholic Church to be written by two popes.

The Holy Eucharist is mentioned only five times in this sixty paragraph letter each time in paragraph forty-four. Here we quote this paragraph: “The sacramental character of faith finds its highest expression in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a precious nourishment for faith: an encounter with Christ truly present in the supreme act of his love, the life-giving gift of himself. In the Eucharist we find the intersection of faith’s two dimensions. On the one hand, there is the dimension of history: the Eucharist is an act of remembrance, a making present of the mystery in which the past, as an event of death and resurrection, demonstrates its ability to open up a future, to foreshadow ultimate fulfillment. The liturgy reminds us of this by its repetition of the word

hodie, the “today” of the mysteries of salvation. On the other hand, we also find the dimension which leads from the visible world to the invisible. In the Eucharist we learn to see the heights and depths of reality. The bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, who becomes present in his passover to the Father: this movement draws us, body and soul, into the movement of all creation towards its fulfillment in God.” [*Lumen Fidei* 44]

In his second encyclical *Laudato Si*, (24 May 2005) Pope Francis addresses the care for our ‘common home’. In it, the pope critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, laments environmental degradation and global warming, and calls all people of the world to take swift and unified global action. In this document consisting of two hundred and forty six paragraphs the Eucharist is mentioned eleven times. He states: “It is in the Eucharist that all that has been created finds its greatest exaltation. Grace, which tends to manifest itself tangibly, found unsurpassable expression when God himself became man and gave himself as food for his creatures. The Lord, in the culmination of the mystery of the Incarnation, chose to reach our intimate depths through a fragment of matter. He comes not from above, but from within,

he comes that we might find him in this world of ours. In the Eucharist, fullness is already achieved; it is the living centre of the universe, the overflowing core of love and of inexhaustible life. Joined to the incarnate Son, present in the Eucharist, the whole cosmos gives thanks to God. Indeed the Eucharist is itself an act of cosmic love: “Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world”. [*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*] The Eucharist joins heaven and earth; it embraces and penetrates all creation. The world which came forth from God’s hands returns to him in blessed and undivided adoration: in the bread of the Eucharist, “creation is projected towards divinization, towards the holy wedding feast, towards unification with the Creator himself”. [Pope Benedict Homily] Thus, the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation.” [236]

“On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the “first day” of the new

creation, whose first fruits are the Lord’s risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality. It also proclaims “man’s eternal rest in God”. [Catechism of the Catholic Church]

“In this way, Christian spirituality incorporates the value of relaxation and festivity. We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning. We are called to include in our work a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is quite different from mere inactivity. Rather, it is another way of working, which forms part of our very essence. It protects human action from becoming empty activism; it also prevents that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else. The law of weekly rest forbade work on the seventh day, “so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your maidservant, and the stranger, may be refreshed” (Ex 23:12). Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centered on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor.” [237]



2

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy

Sacrosanctum Concilium is the title of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy issued by the Second Vatican Council. It was approved by the assembled bishops by a vote of 2,147 to 4 and promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 4 December 1963. In this series we will look at certain aspects of the document, specially with regard to the Holy Eucharist and the celebration of Holy Mass.

The document begins by explains its aims: “This sacred Council has several aims in view: it desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church. The Council therefore sees particularly cogent reasons for undertaking the reform and promotion of the liturgy.”

It should be remembered at this point that the document that came from the Council was a strategic document which in broad terms expressed the desires of the Fathers but in no way yet gave any specific details of how the

document would be implemented. This would be left to a series of instructions that would be issued by the Holy See over in the subsequent thirty-four years.

One of the first issues considered by the council, and the matter that had the most immediate effect on the lives of individual Catholics, was the renewal of the liturgy. The central idea was that there ought to be greater lay participation in the liturgy.

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people (1 Peter 2:9; cf. 2:4–5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. [SC 14]

Popes Pius X, Pius XI, and Pius XII consistently asked that the people be taught how to chant the responses at Mass and that they learn the prayers of the Mass in order to participate intelligently. Now the bishops decreed that: “To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs.” [SC 30] Composers should “produce compositions which

provide for the active participation of the entire assembly of the faithful.” [SC 121]

After centuries when, with the Mass in Latin, Catholic piety centered around popular devotions, the bishops decreed that “Popular devotions ... should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.” [SC 13]

On 24 August 2017 Pope Francis emphasized that “the reform of the liturgy is irreversible” and called for continued efforts to implement the reforms, repeating what Pope Paul VI had said one year before he died: “The time has come, now, to definitely leave aside the disruptive ferments, equally pernicious in one sense or the other, and to implement fully, according to its right inspiring criteria, the reform approved by us in application of the decisions of the council.”

There is of course today a debate as to whether the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council were implemented following the mind of the Council Fathers. Many would say that the reforms are still being implemented, others would say that they need to be re-evaluated in light of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

The Council Fathers established guidelines to govern the renewal of the liturgy, which included, allowed, and encouraged greater use of the vernacular (native language) in addition to Latin, particularly for the biblical readings and other prayers. Implementation of the council's directives on the liturgy was to be carried out under the authority of Pope Paul VI by a special papal commission, [*Consilium*] later incorporated in the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and, in the areas entrusted to them, by national conferences of bishops, which, if they had a shared language, were expected to collaborate in producing a common translations.

The call for use of the vernacular was nothing new to the Church, back at the Council of Trent this was a major issue of the day, whether to allow the vernacular into the Sacred Liturgy. In those days the Church reacted very quickly and strongly to deny the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, but obviously the debate did not go away.

However we must remember that the Second Vatican Council wanted to maintain the use of Latin and Gregorian Chant in the celebration of Holy Mass [SC 36; 116], but the reality is that in most places throughout the Latin Rite the use

of the Latin language and Gregorian Chant has been, let us say, neglected.

In these articles we will look at the document of the Second Vatican Council on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and discuss its main themes and directives. After an overview of the document we will survey the subsequent instructions which related to the proper implementation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

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3

New Document on Adoration

The Office of Divine Worship of the Archdiocese of Portland has been approached in recent times to provide some clear direction to parishes wishing to implement Eucharistic Adoration, either perpetual or partial. Therefore, this document is intended to provide parishes with the necessary information, not necessarily at a practical level, as this can be found easily from the various associations which promote Adoration, but at the level of doctrine, tradition and current legislation regarding the worship of the Holy Eucharist outside Mass. In recent years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued various observations regarding Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, some of which are quoted in this document; it is recommended that those leading parish Adoration programs familiarize themselves with these documents.

The Most Holy Eucharist, “stands at the center of the Church’s life,” since it truly “contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ Himself, our Passover and Living

Bread.” “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.” That surpassing gift of the Eucharist is where the Church draws her life, the dynamic force of all her activity and her whole sense of purpose and direction. As the Second Vatican Council proclaimed, the Eucharistic sacrifice is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”

From the earliest times, the Holy Eucharist has been reserved after the celebration of Holy Mass to be taken to those who cannot be present, primarily to those who are sick or homebound. A joyous consequence of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is the ability to venerate this most august Sacrament in the practice of Eucharistic Adoration.

We can recall that the Blessed Sacrament is traditionally reserved only under the species of bread, in the form of the sacred host, a practice laid down in our own day by the law of the Church and expressed in the liturgical books. Only as exceptions in certain defined cases is the priest permitted to reserve the Blessed Sacrament under the species of wine, as

the Precious Blood of Our Lord. He is allowed to do this solely for the purpose of bringing Holy Communion to a sick person who cannot receive even a fragment of the sacred host.

All Catholics know that the constant teaching of the Church is that in the Blessed Sacrament, the Savior is present, truly, really and substantially in His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

This new document contains all the current teaching and legislation of the Church regarding the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. It also contains some helpful guidance from the United States conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

This new document entitled *Information Regarding Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament* is available for download from the Office of Divine Worship webpage [HERE](#).

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4

*Melchizedek,
King of Salem*
by
Juanes, Juan
de (Vicente
Juan Masip)
c.1545

Museo del Prado



Three works by artist Juan de Juanes painted (oil on canvas) between 1545 and 1550 clearly convey a Eucharistic meaning. They depict Christ holding up the chalice and the Host flanked by two Old Testament figures: King Melchizedek, bearing bread and wine and the priest Aaron with a jar of incense. The three panels were part of the tabernacle of the high altar in the church of the Birth of the Virgin in Fuente de la Higuera (Valencia), hence the elaborate use of gold in the backgrounds and on the back of the panels, which are polychrome and deploy the sgraffito technique.

Melchizedek (also spelled Melchisedech) appears in the Book of Genesis (14:18-20). Abraham had defeated King Chedorlaomer and the other three allied kings, and then was met by Melchizedek, the Canaanite King of Salem and “a priest of God Most High.” (Interestingly, the word Melchizedek means, “my king is righteousness,” and Salem, “peace.”) Melchizedek presented bread and wine to Abraham, and blessed him with these words: “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, the creator of Heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your foes into your hand” (Genesis 14:19-20). Keep in mind that bread and wine were customarily offered in sacrifice among the “first fruits” of the earth in thanksgiving to the Creator. Although Melchizedek is

technically a pagan priest, he recognizes the one supreme deity, using the title, “God Most High,” just as the Jewish people would. Accepting this blessing and offering, Abraham gives to Melchizedek a tithe of one-tenth the booty from his campaign. After this encounter, however, Melchizedek disappears from the Genesis story.

Melchizedek is mentioned again in Psalm 110: “The Lord has sworn, and he will not repent: ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek’” (110:4). This psalm is considered one of the most important of the Messianic psalms, identifying the forthcoming Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, as King, Priest, and Conqueror.

Perhaps St. Paul, the traditional author of the Letter to the Hebrews, was the greatest promoter of Melchizedek. (See Chapters 5-9.) St. Paul used the person of Melchizedek to illustrate the doctrine of the sacrificial priesthood as established by Christ. St. Paul begins, “Every high priest is taken from among men and made their representative before God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Hebrews 5:1). Despite human weakness, a man is called by God to be a priest.

St. Paul then compares and contrasts the priesthood of Melchizedek with that of

Aaron, the Levitical Priesthood: The priesthood of Aaron was based on his ancestry from Abraham. The priests following Aaron were of his family, the House of Levi, and appointed priests because of their heredity. Also, these priests offered the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.

In contrast to the Levitical Priesthood is the Priesthood of our Lord, which Melchizedek foreshadows. First, Melchizedek has no genealogy in the Old Testament, and his priesthood is not based on heredity. Christ, like Melchizedek, is a priest by divine appointment and His priesthood does not depend upon hereditary ties.

Second, Abraham recognized the priest-king Melchizedek by receiving his blessing and offering him tithes. An act of such humility signified that the priesthood which would descend from Abraham is of lesser stature than that of Melchizedek. This act also foretold that the Levitical Priesthood would be replaced by the greater, perfect, and royal priesthood of Christ.

Third, Melchizedek offered bread and wine in thanksgiving to God, prefiguring what our Lord did at the Last Supper.

Fourth, Melchizedek was a “member of the nations.” Christ came to save not just the House of Israel, but the people of all nations. Moreover, Melchizedek’s very name and title mean “King of Justice, King of Peace”; Jesus entered the world to bring justice and peace.

Finally, Melchizedek was not a priest of the Old Covenant. Christ as a priest offered the perfect sacrifice for sin and made the new, perfect, and everlasting covenant with His own blood. In all, the Letter to the Hebrews elaborates upon the historical Melchizedek and weaves an image which foreshadows our Lord, who would fulfill the Old Testament covenant and priesthood.

The early Church Fathers clearly understood and accepted this imagery. St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) in his Letter to Cecil, taught, “Also in the priest Melchizedek we see the Sacrament of the Sacrifice of the Lord prefigured, in accord with that to which the Divine Scriptures testify, where it says: ‘And Melchizedek, the King of Salem, brought out bread and wine, for he was a priest of the Most High God; and he blessed Abraham.’ That Melchizedek is in fact a type of Christ is declared in the psalms by the Holy Spirit, saying to the Son, as it were from the Father: ‘Before the daystar I begot You.

You are a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.’ The order certainly is that which comes from his sacrifice and which comes down from it: because Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God; because he offered bread; and because he blessed Abraham. And who is more a priest of the Most High God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who, when He offered sacrifice to God the Father, offered the very same which Melchizedek had offered, namely bread and wine, which is in fact His Body and Blood.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures (*Mystagogia* 5) also referenced Melchizedek’s sacrifice as a “type” which prefigured the Holy Eucharist.

The Church honors this image of Melchizedek. The Catechism teaches, “The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, ‘priest of God Most High,’ as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique ‘high priest after the order of Melchizedek’; ‘holy, blameless, unstained,’ ‘by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified,’ that is, by the unique sacrifice of the cross” (#1544, cf. 50). Moreover, “the Church sees in the gesture of the king-priest Melchizedek, who ‘brought out bread and wine,’ a prefiguring of her own offering” (#1333). For this reason, the

priest in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I), prays after the consecration, “Be pleased to look upon these offerings with a serene and kindly countenance, and to accept them, as once you were pleased to accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.”

Juan de Juanes was one of the most important painters of the Spanish Renaissance. He dominated Valencian circles in the mid 16th century, although there is still some discussion as to whether certain works were painted by him or by his father, Juan Vicente Masip, who was already active in 1493 and was unquestionably one of the great Valencian painters of the early sixteenth century.

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5

Redemptionis Sacramentum

Redemptionis Sacramentum (On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist) is the title of an instruction on the proper way to celebrate Mass in the Roman Rite and, with the necessary adjustments, in other Latin liturgical rites. It was issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 25 March 2004 to aid bishops in implementing the Roman Missal, issued in 2002. It follows Pope John Paul II's 2003 encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (featured in the last issue of this publication), calling for an Instruction on the liturgical norms.

As its reason for issuing the document, the Congregation stated: "It is not possible to be silent about the abuses, even quite grave ones, against the nature of the Liturgy and the Sacraments as well as the tradition and the authority of the Church, which in our day not infrequently plague liturgical celebrations in one ecclesial environment or another. In some places the perpetration of liturgical abuses has become almost habitual, a fact which obviously cannot be allowed and must cease."

The instruction discusses, among other things, the roles of the clergy and laity, distribution of communion, and Eucharistic adoration outside of Mass. It relies heavily on *Sacrosanctum Concilium* the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council.

The Instruction states: “The Mystery of the Eucharist 'is too great for anyone to permit himself to treat it according to his own whim, so that its sacredness and its universal ordering would be obscured'. On the contrary, anyone who acts thus by giving free rein to his own inclinations, even if he is a Priest, injures the substantial unity of the Roman Rite, which ought to be vigorously preserved, and becomes responsible for actions that are in no way consistent with the hunger and thirst for the living God that is experienced by the people today. Nor do such actions serve authentic pastoral care or proper liturgical renewal; instead, they deprive Christ's faithful of their patrimony and their heritage. For arbitrary actions are not conducive to true renewal, but are detrimental to the right of Christ's faithful to a liturgical celebration that is an expression of the Church's life in accordance with her tradition and discipline. In the end, they introduce elements of distortion and disharmony into the very celebration of the Eucharist,

which is oriented in its own lofty way and by its very nature to signifying and wondrously bringing about the communion of divine life and the unity of the People of God.”

The instruction urges that efforts be made to encourage an appreciation of the sense of deep wonder before the mystery of faith which is at the heart of an interior participation [in the Liturgy,] best fostered by a regular participation in the Liturgy of the Hours, sacramentals, and popular devotions. The instruction also points out that there is a pressing need for the biblical and liturgical formation of the People of God.

The instruction was developed after consultation among Bishops and experts throughout the world. The abuses of liturgical law addressed by the instruction occur in many parts of the world and may not all be present in the dioceses of the United States of America. The instruction provides an opportunity for all Bishops, priests, and liturgical experts to conduct an examination of conscience on how faithfully we have implemented the revised Eucharistic rites.

Read the full instruction [HERE](#).

