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Thoughts Along the Way

The Question of Communion

This article was first published on 15 July 2018.

It may be even more pertinent now.

Five hundred years after it began, the Protestant Reformation made its presence felt this spring in the land of its birth when the Catholic bishops of Germany proposed to admit Protestant spouses in mixed marriages to receive Holy Communion at Mass.

The significance of their decision did not go unnoticed. “Who can receive the Eucharist, and when, and why, are not merely German questions,” Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia pointed out. “If, as Vatican II said, the Eucharist is the . . . seal of our Catholic unity, then the answers to these questions . . . concern all of us.” Pope Francis agreed and declined to approve the proposal.

The debate the German bishops provoked reminded me of a respectful letter I received ten years ago from a Protestant disappointed at not being invited to come forward for Communion at a funeral Mass for his friend. I wrote back as follows.

“I take it from your letter, Frank, that you are not Catholic; so I certainly do not expect you to believe as Catholics do. Therefore, out of respect for your right to believe differently, I did not ask you to come forward for Communion—that is, I did not invite you to profess yourself in public to be a Catholic.”

“For we Catholics consider the reception of Holy Communion to be the public profession of Catholic faith. When the Body and Blood of Christ is handed to us, we say ‘Amen.’ That’s shorthand for ‘I believe Jesus Christ is really present here as the Catholic Church says He is.’ Pry our ‘Amen’ open a bit further and you find an even fuller confession: ‘I believe in the Catholic Church, which makes this intimate Communion with Jesus possible. I accept the Christ-given authority of the pope and of the bishops, who send us priests to forgive our sins in Confession and gather us into Communion at Mass. I believe what the Catholic

Church teaches about the Virgin Mary and the saints (whom we always remember in the Eucharistic prayer) and about the need to pray for the dead (which we do at every Mass).’ In short, the simple public action of receiving Communion at Mass ‘speaks’ this confession: ‘I am a Catholic.’”



Bishop/Obispo Liam Cary

In sharp contrast, intercommunion with Protestants would quickly blur these Church-defining differences, because, in the words of Archbishop Chaput, the German proposal envisions “a sharing in Holy Communion even when there is not true Church unity.”

The German bishops would open the Communion line to centuries-old, mutually contradictory Protestant understandings of the Eucharist on an equal footing with millennia-old Catholic reverence for the Bread of Life really present. But such a change would, in Archbishop Chaput’s phrase, “insert a falsehood” into the heart of the Sacrament of Unity: “to say by one’s actions, ‘I am in communion with this community,’ when one is demonstrably not in communion with that community.” The Way to the fullness of Life in Christ passes through the Truth of His promise to be with His Church to the end of time.

Thinking through these clearly foreseeable consequences of intercommunion takes me back to the closing words of my ten-year-old letter. They have not gone out of date. “Frank, you and I find ourselves caught up in the sad legacy of Protestant-Catholic separation. The best way I know to overcome the distance between us is to recognize differences where they exist and respect each other’s right to maintain them as we think we must. That’s what I meant to do at Jack’s funeral Mass.”

La Pregunta sobre Comunión

Este artículo se publicó por primera vez el 15 de Julio, 2018.

Puede ser aún más pertinente ahora.

Quinientos años después de que comenzara, la Reforma Protestante hizo sentir su presencia esta primavera en la tierra de su nacimiento cuando los obispos Católicos de Alemania propusieron admitir a cónyuges Protestantes en matrimonios mixtos para recibir la Sagrada Comunión en la Misa.

El significado de su decisión no pasó desapercibida. “Quien pueda recibir la Eucaristía, y cuándo, y por qué, no son meramente preguntas alemanas”, señaló el Arzobispo Charles Chaput de Philadelphia. “Si . . . la Eucaristía es . . . el sello de nuestra unidad Católica, entonces las respuestas a estas preguntas . . . nos conciernen a todos”. El Papa Francisco estuvo de acuerdo y se negó a aprobar la propuesta.

El debate que provocaron los obispos Alemanes me recordó de una carta respetuosa que recibí hace diez años de un Protestante decepcionado al no ser invitado a pasar para la Comunión en una Misa de funeral para su amigo. Yo le contesté lo siguiente.

“Entiendo por su carta, Frank, que usted no es Católico; así que ciertamente no espero que usted crea como lo hacen los Católicos. Por lo tanto, por respeto a su derecho a creer de forma diferente, no le pedí que pasara hacia la Comunión—es decir, no lo invité a profesar en público que es Católico”.

“Para nosotros los Católicos la recepción de la Sagrada Comunión es la profesión máxima de la fe Católica. Cuando el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo nos son entregados, decimos ‘Amén’. Es la abreviatura de ‘Yo creo que Jesucristo está verdaderamente presente aquí, como dice la Iglesia Católica que lo está’. Abra un poco más nuestro ‘Amén’ y encontrará una confesión aún más completa: ‘Yo creo en la Iglesia Católica, que hace posible esta íntima Comunión con Jesucristo. Yo acepto la autoridad dada por Cristo al Papa y a los obispos, que nos envían sacerdotes para que perdonen nuestros pecados en la Confesión y nos reúnan para la Comunión en la Misa. Yo creo lo que la Iglesia Católica nos enseña sobre la Virgen María y los santos (a quienes siempre recordamos en la plegaria Eucarística) y sobre la necesidad de rezar por los difuntos (lo que hacemos en cada Misa)’. En resumen, la simple acción pública de recibir la Comunión en Misa ‘habla’ esta confesión: ‘Yo soy Católico’”.

En agudo contraste, la inter-comunión con los Protestantes rápidamente empañaría éstas diferencias definitorias de la Iglesia, porque, en las palabras del Arzobispo Chaput, la propuesta Alemán imagina “un intercambio en la Sagrada Comunión incluso cuando no haya una verdadera unidad de la Iglesia”.

Los obispos Alemanes abrirían la fila de Comunión a entendimientos Protestantes de la Eucaristía de siglos atrás, mutuamente contradictorios, en pie de igualdad con la reverencia Católica milenaria por el Pan de Vida realmente presente. Pero tal cambio, en palabras del Arzobispo Chaput, “introduciría una falsedad” en el corazón del Sacramento de la Unidad: “decir por nuestras propias acciones, ‘Yo estoy en comunión con esta comunidad’, cuando uno ciertamente no está en comunión con esa comunidad”. El Camino a la plenitud de la Vida en Cristo pasa por la Verdad de Su promesa de estar con Su Iglesia hasta el final de los tiempos.

Pensando de estas consecuencias claramente previsibles de la inter-comunión me lleva de vuelta a las palabras finales de mi carta de hace diez años. Todavía tienen que ver a nuestra situación actual. “Frank, usted y yo nos encontramos atrapados en el triste legado de la separación Protestante-Católica. La mejor manera que conozco de superar la distancia entre nosotros es reconocer la diferencias donde existen y respetar el derecho uno al otro de mantenerlas como creemos que debemos hacerlo. Eso es lo que quise hacer en la Misa fúnebre de Jack”.

Priestly Ordination Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following as they celebrate their ordination anniversaries in July.

Reverend Dennis Homes

Retired July 01, 1972

Very Reverend Camillus Fernando

St. Patrick, Vale July 12, 1980

Reverend Arturo Juan Jeronimo-Cisneros

Our Lady of Angels, Hermiston July 13, 2019

Reverend Christie Tiserra

St. Elizabeth, Enterprise July 22, 1989

Reverend Francis Obijeckwu

St. Augustine, Merrill July 22, 2006

We are most grateful for the years of service of all our priests and bishop. Please keep them in your daily prayers.



Confirmation 2022

In April and May, Bishop Cary traveled throughout the diocese, bringing the Gift of the Holy Spirit to the young people being Confirmed.

We wish to congratulate the young men and women of our diocese who celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation and were sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the presence of their sponsors, family, friends, teachers, and catechists this year. As you continue your journey of faith, may you use the gifts given to you to love and serve your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Confirmación 2022

En Abril y Mayo, el Obispo Cary viajó por la diócesis, trayendo el Don del Espíritu Santo a los jóvenes siendo confirmados.

Deseamos felicitar a los jóvenes de nuestra diócesis que celebraron el Sacramento de Confirmación y fueron sellados con los dones del Espíritu Santo en presencia de sus padrinos, familia, amigos, maestros, y catequistas este año. A medida que continúen su camino de fe, que puedan usar los dones dados a ustedes para amar y servir a sus hermanos y hermanas en Cristo.



SVdP Announces Opening of St. Vincent's Place in Bend

St. Vincent de Paul of Bend is proud to announce the opening of St. Vincent's Place in July 2022. This 10-unit housing village will offer a pathway from homelessness into permanent housing.

Residents will participate in a structured two-year program. The goal is to tailor an action plan addressing the specific obstacles faced by each resident. Each resident's journey will be unique. We will have an on-site manager and counselor who will work with volunteers who will then mentor each of our residents, setting weekly and monthly goals for their success. Residents will participate in a matching funds program ensuring that they are financially prepared for the move upon completion of the program. It is our goal to find permanent housing for each graduate.



We are grateful to all the contributions that have made this project possible including donations from private donors, churches, and community businesses and partners!



Please scan this QR code or visit our website to see the complete list or for ways to contribute or volunteer:
www.stvincentdepaulbend.org

Of course, St. Vincent's of Bend will continue its good work of providing foodboxes, sack lunches, propane, ID, and prescription drug assistance.

For nearly 200 years, members of St. Vincent de Paul have dedicated themselves to serving Christ in the person of His poor. There are six Conferences operating in the Baker Diocese, each addressing the unique needs of the less fortunate in their local community. *To inquire how to start a Conference in your parish contact Patty Christopher at 541-389-6643.*

Annual Catechetical Symposium Refreshed for Mission

Jesus, Source of Living Water, Calls, Forms, and Sends

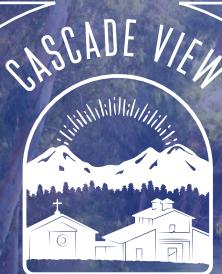
Be Inspired - Reconnect - Bring Home New Ideas

August 5-7, 2022

Inviting all Parents, Catechists, & Parish Leaders to Join Bishop Cary and his guests for this unique opportunity.

Presented in English and Spanish at the Cascade View Retreat Center in Powell Butte, OR.

*Please register by **July 22nd**:*
dioceseofbaker.org/symposium



Simposio Catequético Anual Renovado para la Misión

Jesús, Fuente de Agua Viva, Llama, Forma y Envía

Inspiráte - Reconecta - Trae a Casa Nuevas Ideas

5-7 de Agosto, 2022

Invitando a todos los Padres de Familia, Catequistas y Líderes Parroquiales a acompañar al Obispo Cary y sus invitados para esta oportunidad única.

Presentado en Inglés y en Español en el Centro de Retiros Cascade View en Powell Butte, OR.

*Regístrate antes del **22 de julio**:*
dioceseofbaker.org/symposium