

## *From the Bishop - Synod Implementation*

### **5. WHAT DOES CHRIST OFFER THROUGH THE EUCHARIST: THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE (2)**

The climax of Christ's ministry was his death and Resurrection. By sacrificing himself on the cross, he freed from sin – that is, the consequences of the Fall of our first parents.

#### ***Freedom from 'sin'***

Sin was understood in two senses. There was sin 'which existed in the world before the law' (or Commandments).<sup>1</sup> Jesus revealed his power to free people of this by his miracles, for example, of healing; freeing from what cripples their capacity to live as Jesus taught; conquering evil in their lives; and renewing life by raising the dead.

Then there was sin after the law – behaviours which broke God's Commandments. Jesus revealed his power to free from sins by forgiving sinners and instituting the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.

#### ***The new life of Christ***

At his Resurrection, the divine life of Jesus was revealed to all who saw him. This is the life which empowers his followers 'to walk in newness of life'.<sup>2</sup> It empowers to live and love more like him; to think, feel, see and hear others and to respond to them increasingly like him.

It empowers his followers to live his teachings. They can grow increasingly to love, forgive, be merciful and compassionate like him, enriching their lives and relationships. They grow in inner peace.

#### ***The Ritual***

The Eucharistic Sacrifice begins with the Preface which thanks God for the blessings of creation, redemption or salvation.<sup>3</sup> Before the Preface, the celebrant may invite all to pause to name in their hearts what they are thanking God for in the Mass.

The Preface is followed by the Eucharistic Prayer, which asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit; the Consecration, when the words of Christ and the Holy Spirit convert the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Risen Jesus who is offering himself on the Altar in sacrifice; the Prayer of Offering, when the self-sacrificing Christ is presented to God the Father; and the petitions. It concludes when all consent to everything prayed for by proclaiming the 'Great Amen'.

#### ***The 'Real Presence'***

During the Consecration, Christ becomes present in a different way from all others. He becomes really present fully – body and blood, divine and human as Redeemer and Saviour. He is offering his power to all offering their lives to the Father.

Jesus told the Apostles: 'Do this in memory of me'. In the Jewish religious culture, this meant making present in past *experience* of God. The Passover made present the God who redeemed the children of Abraham from slavery in Egypt.

The Eucharist makes present the self-sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. It is the same sacrifice: 'only the manner of offering it is different'.<sup>4</sup>

*Question: Do I open myself to Christ by uniting my self offering with him in the Eucharistic Sacrifice?*

Next week: the Communion Rite

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 5:13

<sup>2</sup> Romans 6:4

<sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church 1352

<sup>4</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church 1367