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**The Eucharist and Life**



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## Editorial

On October 17, 2004, the late Pope John Paul II inaugurated the year of the Eucharist. He also chose the Eucharist as the theme of the Synod of Bishops to be held in October, 2005. It is in this context that we have selected the Eucharist as the theme of this issue of *Jnanadeepa*.

There are three articles in this issue which deal with the historical development of the theology of the Eucharist. The first one, by Errol D'Lima highlights important milestones in the development of the Eucharist. It traces the history of the Eucharistic celebration during four significant periods: i) in the New Testament times, ii) during the eleventh century, iii) at the time of Council of Trent and iv) and during Vatican II. While each of these periods makes its contribution, it is the Second Vatican Council that has given us a comprehensive understanding of the Eucharist. In the second article Leonard Fernando investigates the understanding of the Eucharist to be found in the writings of the Fathers of the Church. While it is true that the Fathers rarely approached the Eucharist in a wholly comprehensive way, still they touched upon most of the important elements of the theology of the Eucharist. However, the Fathers were primarily concerned about the impact the Eucharist has on the life of Christians. They also laid stress on the demand that the Eucharist makes on them: that they foster union among themselves, that they practise equality and that they promote justice. The third article, by Isaac Padinjarekuttu, deals with the Eucharist and the Reformers especially Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. It is true that Luther's understanding of the Eucharist evolved and changed in the course of time. But in all his debates about the Eucharist the words of Jesus in the institution narratives were fundamental. For Zwingli the Eucharist is a memorial of a historical event. The celebration of the Eucharist is an occasion for the Church to remember what Jesus did for us. It is not a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. It is pure remembrance. Calvin sought to develop a theology of the Eucharist against both Luther and Zwingli. For him, the Eucharist is a sacrament where the promises of God are made manifest through earthly elements. He calls the Eucharist *verbum visibil*. The sign is visible and physical but the thing signified is invisible and spiritual. The Eucharist comprises the sign, the thing signified and the promises of God.

There is an article in this issue in which Mathew Jayanth explores the Dharma Vision of the Eucharist in the Papal Encyclicals of the post-Conciliar period. In his opinion the Eucharist as the Christian Dharma represents, at once, the Christic transformation and the consequences of this transformation for Christian existence in the world. It reveals the descriptive as well as the prescriptive dimensions of being a Christian. Closely connected with this is an article by Clemens Mendonca which

deals with the Eucharist and daily life. To her, the Eucharist is the symbol of the kenosis/self-emptying of Jesus. The Eucharist is to be understood as the Eucharist of life. Where there is self-emptying at work, there is thanksgiving, there is selfless concern for others and there is crossing of boundaries of class, caste, colour, creed and gender.

In his article on the Eucharist and mission Jacob Kavunkal discusses the relationship between the two. In his view, the Eucharistic table is the matrix of mission. It is there that the Church and the world intersect in the presence of Jesus Christ. It is the place from which we are sent forth to love and serve the world. The Eucharist is thus the well-spring of our mission to the world. Closely related to this is the article of Paul Puthanangady which deals with the inculturation of the Eucharistic celebration. He feels that in our efforts at inculturation of the Eucharistic celebration, our starting point has been the Eucharist as a cultic action and not as a community action. Such an approach to inculturation will only perpetuate the distortion of the Eucharistic celebration that took place in the Mediterranean world. Hence our approach to the inculturation of the Eucharist needs to be changed so that it brings out the authentic meaning of the Eucharist. This demands that we inculturate the Eucharistic celebration in such a way that it clearly manifests its secular, human, communitarian and socially transformative character rather than its cultic character.'

Included in this issue are two articles which were written for the last issue. The first one, by Jacob Parappally, discusses Jesus' vision of a new world order and his stand against the religion and society of his day. According to the author, Jesus did not give us the blueprint of a new social order. All the same, we can draw valid conclusions about his vision of a new society and a new order of human relationships from the New Testament witness about his dream of a new human society where God's reign is recognized, acknowledged and celebrated. In the second one, Cyril Desbruslais deals with globalization, violence and religion. In his opinion there are two gospels operative in the world today. Globalization preaches the gospel of *having more*. It affirms that all that we seek, deep down, happiness, meaning, fulfilment, is to be found in accumulating things and by limitless material gratification, even if it involves depriving a lot of people of the little they have. But there is also in us humans another capacity, equally "deep within" us and it provides the basis for the gospel of *being more*. It focuses on enhancing the quality of living for everyone, is sensitive to the environment and to the millions yet unborn. It is up to us to decide: Which is the gospel we want to build on.

It is our fond hope that the articles in this issue will enable the readers to reflect seriously on the meaning of the Eucharist in our life today.

**Kurien Kunnumpuram SJ**  
Editor

## Important Milestones in the Development of the Eucharist

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### Abstract

The all-pervasive action of the Triune God brings together the community that worships God as father, inspires the individual believers to perform their different roles in the community's surrender to God, and authorizes the ordained minister to officiate in the sacramental rite. In this way in the Eucharist, the *Memoria Christi* (strong memory) becomes alive, transforming and fulfilling. This is what the Eucharist was meant to be throughout the history of the Church so that the community of faith identified more completely with its Risen Lord. Vatican II, affirms that the Eucharist is "a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed." This essay traces the history of eucharistic celebration during four important periods in the life of the Church: (i) in the New Testament times, (ii) during the eleventh century, (iii) at the time of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century and (iv) during Vatican Council II. Its objective is to highlight theological considerations that have pastoral implications in the Church today. Finally, the author appreciates the need for inculturating the Eucharist so that the strong memory (*Memoria Christi*) can take effect in the varied cultural communities of believers.

### Keywords

Memoria Christi, Eucharist as sacrament, sacrifice, as meal, reductionism, real presence.

## Introduction

Among the sacraments, the one most linked with the *Memoria Christi* (the remembrance of Christ) is the Eucharist. In the New Testament, this sacrament is clearly referred to in the synoptic gospels as well as in the Pauline texts. The *Memoria Christi* is the presence of Christ in the believing community and which influences its way of life. Identification with Christ is the end result. The transformation effected by God's Spirit in sacramental Baptism—being “baptized into Christ”—is reaffirmed and ratified each time the Eucharist is celebrated.

When after the Last Supper, Christ commanded his disciples “Do this in remembrance of me” he was asking his disciples to celebrate a meal patterned on the one they had just shared. In doing so they would recall his presence in their midst. In the Last Supper, Jesus makes an offering that symbolizes the whole of his life. Celebrating the meal in memory of him recalls that offering. This recalling is more than merely becoming aware of a past event in the life of Jesus; it is rather the strong memory of Jesus Christ himself animating, inspiring and vivifying those who celebrate the eucharistic meal. The celebration of the Eucharist enables the believing community to encounter the Risen Lord. In fact, the strong memory of Jesus Christ is the liturgy of the Eucharist celebrated by the Church community.

The strong memory of Jesus in the Eucharist is like being enveloped in a piece of music. The listener becomes involved in the sound that arouses feelings, emotions, associations and a heightened sense of the self. This happens on account of the context, the performers, the conductor and the receptive audience. In the Eucharist, too, there is the context where praise and adoration is offered to the Triune God through the person of Jesus Christ. The all-pervasive action of the Triune God brings together the community that worships God as Father, inspires the individual believers to perform their different roles in the community's surrender to God, and authorizes the ordained minister to officiate in the sacramental rite. In this way the

*Memoria Christi* becomes alive, transforming and fulfilling. This is what the Eucharist—as sacrifice and sacrament—was meant to be throughout the history of the Church so that the community of faith identified more completely with its Risen Lord. In the words of Vatican II, the Eucharist is

a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us. (SC 47)

This essay traces the history of eucharistic celebration during four important periods in the life of the Church: (i) in the New Testament times, (ii) during the eleventh century, (iii) at the time of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century and (iv) during Vatican Council II. Its objective is to highlight theological considerations that have pastoral implications in the Church today.

## **A. The Eucharist in New Testament times**

### **1. The Meal Pattern of the Eucharist in Tradition**

The New Testament informs us that the final act of Jesus in the company of his disciples was to celebrate a meal with them and give them a mandate to continue celebrating that meal in memory of him. The act of eating together was chosen by Jesus to be the symbol of his presence in the Church of the future. But a meal is not mere eating; it is the sharing of table fellowship during which a community is built and the bonding of individuals occurs. Sharing a meal is a humanizing act in which caring for the other becomes the sign of a person's relating to him or her. The emphasis is not primarily on the food but on the relationship one builds up by eating with another person. To discount the fellowship aspect of the eucharistic meal is to cut off the primary meaning of meal. When that happens, the secondary and intended meaning of the Eucharist as sacrament of unity becomes deficient.

The Last Supper was a meal shared against the background of the Passover as described in Exodus 12. The ritual meal



commemorated a Harvest Festival, an opportunity for the people of Israel to acknowledge Yahweh's providential care of them. At the same time, the meal was also an occasion for the people of Israel to remember the mighty hand of God that brought them out of Egypt thus freeing them from their slavery. In the Last Supper, in addition to the Passover commemoration, Jesus reminded his disciples of God's providential care and liberating action that would find their fullest manifestation in his own life, death and resurrection. By identifying himself with the bread and the cup that was shared, Jesus offered himself—in sacrifice—to the Father. The institution texts that unfold Jesus' sharing and offering are found in the eucharistic prayers (*anaphora*) of practically every Individual Church so that succeeding generations of Christians may follow him in the sharing and offering.

Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples to reveal the total offering of himself to the Father, a pattern that he would want them to repeat in their own lives. This would happen not merely by repeating the meal but by identifying with Jesus' entire life—as seen in his words and works, signs and wonders. Such identification would be synonymous with believing in Jesus Christ!

The image of sharing that is so clearly seen in the institution texts of the synoptic gospels signifies the offering of Jesus' life to the Father. While all the other factors—the material food, the ambience of the meal, the garments worn by the diners—found in the Passover Meal would have had significations that came from a long tradition, the act of Jesus giving himself over to the Father must be seen as linked with the gesture of sharing the bread and cup with his apostles. In the action of sharing the bread and cup with his disciples, Jesus signified a meaning that was more than that of the Passover Meal. Traditionally, the meaning of the meal would be to recall the past action of God and to point to a future still to come. But in the course of the ceremonial meal, Jesus indicates that he is that very future itself: "Take, eat; this is my body," and "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the

covenant.” (Matt. 26/26, 27). Explaining that future would take us beyond the scope of this essay.

In the communities of Matthew and Mark, we see an account of the Eucharist that has already assumed the shape of a cultic celebration. In Luke, we also see an account of the Eucharist that is more in the nature of a testament that Jesus wants to leave to his disciples. Finally, in Paul we are confronted with the oldest account of the eucharistic celebration. In all these accounts, the community of faith is seen as entering into an act of worship through the sharing or partaking of a meal. Through the instrumentality of the meal, Christian communities make their total offering to God as Jesus did in the Last Supper. In succeeding times, whenever the Eucharist is celebrated, its pattern will be that of a meal.

## 2. A Changed Meal Pattern of the Eucharist?

Must one hold that there is only one way of celebrating a meal that would involve sharing? Is it necessary to affirm that the *Memoria Christi* is realized only when a meal includes bread and wine? When Paul speaks about the *traditio* that he has received from the Lord, is it to be understood as primarily the bread and wine—the material elements used in eucharistic celebration—in the meal? Should not the *traditio* mean more comprehensively and aptly the **sharing** that takes place during eucharistic celebration as in the early Corinthian community? If it is “sharing” that characterizes the Eucharist, then the meal signifying the *Memoria Christi* need not be restricted to one that contains the elements of bread and wine. Removal of this restriction would be of great relevance to regions where wheat bread and grape wine do not constitute the staple food of the people living there, or where the Passover tradition is not followed.

If Jesus chose to celebrate a meal in which the sacrificial sharing took place through the sharing of the bread and the cup by those present, this followed from the very nature of the Passover Meal. Should it not be said that bread and wine constitute food in

a culture proper to the people of Israel? In the past, standard sacramental theology assumed that some sacraments had their matter and form fixed by Jesus himself. Since the Eucharist in the New Testament is described as a meal that included bread and wine, it was assumed that these two elements alone constitute valid matter for celebrating the Eucharist. Is it not possible to conceive of other matter that could be valid? For instance, the percentage of alcohol in mass wine as well as the quality of wine varies from place to place. And priests who are alcoholics have been permitted to use non-fermented grape juice for celebrating the Eucharist. Here we already note that it is not grape wine alone that qualifies as valid matter for the Eucharist.

Aware of the sketchy information about the liturgy of the Eucharist in the first four centuries, Paul Bradshaw says the following:

Why should the early Christians have felt bound to follow in exact detail in their weekly community meals together the description of what Jesus did at what was allegedly the special annual event of the Passover meal? Even if they thought that Jesus had said, 'Do this in remembrance of me', they did not necessarily interpret this to mean, 'Do this, *in exactly the same order, in remembrance of me.*' It is more likely that they understood the command to mean that whenever they ate a ritual meal together, whatever form it took, they were to eat and drink in remembrance of him.<sup>1</sup>

The question of a changed pattern of meal will probably bring a new richness to eucharistic celebration. The values, meanings and practices associated with eating together or sharing a meal—the primary level of signification—could uncover new insights during eucharistic celebration—the secondary level of signification. A decision to change the pattern of the eucharistic meal will require much discussion in the area of dogma, church history and Catholic Tradition as a whole. And finally, it is for the Magisterium to decide if such a change is opportune and pastorally beneficial. However, the question raised is: given the

different cultural contexts in which the Eucharist is celebrated, could the meal include elements other than bread and wine which are shared?

## B. The Eucharist in the Eleventh Century

It is true that Berengar of Tours lived in the eleventh century and that while using the discipline of logic, he was seen to deny accepted doctrine about the Eucharist. However, he is not known to have actually denied the Real Presence nor was he excommunicated for his thinking.<sup>2</sup> What concerns us is the fact that from his times there has been an exaggerated emphasis on the eucharistic presence in the species of bread and wine. The *Totus Christus* (the whole Christ) that characterized the Eucharist during the Patristic age was now predicated primarily of the bread and wine that was shared in the celebration. This came about through a process of Reductionism. It was left to Vatican II in SC, chapter two to call attention to the various aspects of the sacrament so that the total presence of Christ in the Eucharist is recognized. In doing so, Vatican II retrieved an authentic understanding of the Eucharist: the *Totus Christus*. We shall first consider Reductionism, second, its effects on the cult of the Eucharist and then indicate how Vatican II retrieved the sense of the *Totus Christus*.

### 1. Reductionism

The word ‘reductionism’ indicates a process in which what was complete or whole is now no longer so. A part remains of the whole, yet the part is considered an adequate substitute for the whole. Reductionism may be seen as

an attempt to explain or define one set of concepts or theories in terms of another which is more basic or less complex. For example, the view that human behaviour can be ‘reduced to’ animal behaviour or animal behaviour reduced to the physical laws of matter ...<sup>3</sup>

The danger of reductionism lies in forgetting or disregarding those aspects of the whole that are essential for assessing the meaningfulness of the whole. In the quotation cited, one could understand human behaviour better by studying the behaviour of animals, but one would be demeaning the human person and also be mistaken if he or she concluded that humans behaved exactly as animals did!

In the effort to make complex reality simple, reductionism may end up doing violence to the whole and impoverish it by taking account of a part as though it were the whole. When considering reductionism, there is need to examine the intentionality present in the process. For instance a traffic policeman can decide that his main function is to find out and fine as many persons as possible who are driving without a proper licence and he can forget or decide to forget that facilitating the smooth flow of traffic, looking after the safety of pedestrians and attending to eventualities on the roads are as much a part of his job. In religion, too, reductionism can occur. Certain forms of piety and worship can be fostered in place of living out religion as a whole not so much because they bring persons into greater communion with God but because they serve the interests of a particular group. In the history of the Eucharist, reductionism has taken place.

The Eucharist as a sacramental form of worship has many aspects: it is a ritual meal during which the liturgy of the word takes place. It is also a sacrifice and it is the one sacrament among the seven where Christ is “truly, really and substantially” present. (ND 1526) The fallout of the Berengarian controversy was a progressive effort on the part of the Church to emphasize the Real Presence of Christ in the eucharistic species of bread and wine. Such an effort resulted in the faithful paying less attention to participating in the mass and being more concerned with adoration and reverence for the sacred species. Often the cult of the Eucharist outside the mass competed with the actual celebration of the mass. While the heretical opinions concerning

the Eucharist were partly responsible for the exaggerated attention to the eucharistic species, other factors too were present.

## 2. Reductionism in Celebrating the Cult of the Eucharist

### (a) Existing Patterns of Eucharistic Celebration

In Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter eleven, verses 17-22, we find that the meal and the liturgy of the Eucharist are distinct, one following the other. Before, the liturgy took place as part of the meal. However, pastoral necessity obliged the Church to separate the liturgy of the Eucharist from the meal. Still later, it was the eucharistic liturgy alone, i.e. without the meal that the community celebrated in its worship. We conclude to this from the account of Justin Martyr describing the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the eucharistic liturgy was now separated from the meal proper and celebrated alone does not make for reductionism. This is so because the intention to have the eucharistic liturgy separated from the meal was to ensure that its sacred significance be clearly expressed and recognized by those participating in the eucharistic celebration. However in the celebrations of the Eucharist down the ages we perceive reductionism.

### (b) Reductionism in the History of the Eucharist.

#### (i) The Importance of the Ordained Minister.

It is the Church community that celebrates the Eucharist. Gradually, the celebration of the Eucharist becomes the preserve of the ordained minister who—through ordination—is given the power of Holy Orders (*potestas ordinis*). The rise of the clergy in the church created an automatic divide between itself and the laity, with the clergy occupying the hierarchical offices in the Church. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the Pseudo-Dionysius, the notion of hierarchy was more easily accepted in the structures of church

government. With Holy Orders being understood as a power that is given to the priest to bring about a change in the bread and wine, the stage was set for downgrading the presence of the (lay) community even more. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the priest could be ordained even if he lacked a title.<sup>5</sup>

(ii) Obstacles to the Laity participating in the Eucharist.

Because the mass was celebrated in Latin and the singing taken over by a trained choir, the role of the people in the pews was reduced. They had to while away their time saying their beads or reciting private prayers. There was little to participate in during the Eucharist whereas the cult of the Eucharist outside the mass offered more scope for popular piety and devotion. Small wonder then that for the normal God-fearing Christian the sum and substance of the Eucharist was the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacred Bread.

(iii) The Understanding of the Eucharist mainly as Real Presence.

Because of the controversy originating with Berengar, devotion to the sacred host was insisted on. The consecrated host was to be raised at the time of the consecration so that people could see it and adore it—bells were rung to signal the occasion—and the sacred hosts were kept in a tabernacle that was placed on the main altar. Soon an expanded cult of the Eucharist made its presence felt: besides visits to the Blessed Sacrament, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was fostered and the sacred host was placed in a monstrance made of precious metals and, on occasion, taken in procession through the town. The cult of the Eucharist centred more and more on the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacred Bread. It had various manifestations: (a) individual or group visits to the Blessed Sacrament; (b) processions in which the Blessed Sacrament was taken; (c) exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to the gaze of the faithful (in mass, the raising of the host was to let people know that the consecration had taken place); (d) benediction during which the people were blessed with the

monstrance; (e) architectural changes effected in the church buildings to accommodate the eucharistic species in tabernacles on or near the main altar.

### 3. Vatican II's Retrieval of the *Totus Christus* in the Eucharist

The retrieval began with the Liturgical Movement that is traced back to the 1830s and found its crowning moment in Vatican II. The Liturgical Movement emphasized the Eucharist as commemoration of the whole Paschal Mystery and brought out its relationship to the corporate nature of the Church and the role of the laity in its celebration. This understanding was reflected in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*:

The most dramatic and visible element of the liturgical renewal of Vatican II, the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, was not a central element in the discussions of the liturgical movement. The structure of the Mass, concelebration, the role of the laity, and music were the main concerns.

What was central to the liturgical movement was a desire to make the liturgical prayer of the church more meaningful to the participants. Full, conscious, active participation led to the realization that the rite itself needed to be revised and to call for a new understanding of education, evangelization, ecclesiology and Christology, which in turn led to a rethinking of theology, religion, ecumenism, and the way Christians relate to the world.<sup>6</sup>

Reductionism would be overcome when the sacramental action was not restricted to one part or one action or one movement that was then isolated from the entire dynamic action of the community. Reductionism would be overcome when the Church understood that the sacramental action begins not with the ordained minister but with the worshipping community as a whole expressing God's saving action.<sup>7</sup> The ordained minister is the authenticating factor in the community's celebration. In this way, the ordained minister exercises his ministerial priesthood for the community.



Many of the instructions made known already in Vatican II and later on focus on the *Totus Christus* (the whole Christ) that was often lost sight of. The new norms after Vatican II regarding the place of the tabernacle in the sanctuary, the prohibition of masses in the place where the main mass is being celebrated, the importance given to the reading of the scriptures and the liturgy of the word in general, situate the Eucharist in its proper context. More help came from the encyclical of Paul VI: *Mysterium Fidei* (Encyclical of Paul VI, 1965). The encyclical allows that there are different modalities of Christ's presence and these also must be revered even though the presence of Christ in the Eucharist "surpasses all the others". (ND 1578)

Alluding to the different modes of Christ's presence which unfold during the liturgy of the Eucharist, *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (Instruction of the Congregation of Rites, 1967) says:

55. In the celebration of the Mass, the principal modes of Christ's presence to his Church are gradually revealed. First of all, Christ is seen to be present in the assembly of the faithful gathered in his name; then in his word, as the scriptures are read and explained; in the person of the minister; finally and in a unique way (*modo singulari*) under the species of the Eucharist. (ND 1585)

Reductionism and its effects help us to realize the importance of the communitarian nature of religion. Religion may have its scriptures (*norma normans non normata*), its liturgies and its priesthood (clergy) but it will be the community as a whole that celebrates religion as a whole. Reductionism tries to make out that one or other aspect in religion can substitute for the celebration of religious experience as a whole in community.

### **C. The Eucharist at the Time of the Council of Trent**

The Council of Trent in the sixteenth century took note of the Protestant Reform movements and responded in a counter-attack fashion. At the same time, groups of bishops wanted to

usher in reforms that would correct abuses in the Church.<sup>7</sup> The Council took up a key dogmatic concern: Justification. It discussed this topic in the sixth session (January 13, 1547) and in the seventh (March 3, 1547) finalized the decrees on Sacraments in General along with Baptism and Confirmation. It took up the doctrine of the Real Presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist in its thirteenth session (October 11, 1551), the instructions on communicating in the twenty-first session (July 16, 1562) and the teaching on the sacrifice of the mass at its twenty-second session (September 17, 1562).

## 1. The Emphasis on the Real Presence in the Eucharist

The doctrine of the Real Presence had begun with Pope Innocent III (1160/1-1216) who used the word “transubstantiated” (ND 1502) to describe the change in the eucharistic elements, and it found expression in the profession of faith used by the Lateran Council in 1215 (ND 21). The Council of Trent confirmed “transubstantiation” as an apt term to describe the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (ND 1527). The Protestants objected strongly to the use of this term from Aristotelian philosophy to explain a mystery of faith—it should be noted that Martin Luther (1483-1546) believed in the Real Presence—and Zwingli, among others, denied the Real Presence.

Attempts to understand the presence of Christ in the Eucharist had begun in the ninth century where efforts were made to show how Christ is present. At Trent the question was whether Christ was really present in the Eucharist. The Council affirmed that in the Eucharist Christ was “truly, really and substantially” present. (ND 1526) Unfortunately, because of the points raised by the Protestants and their insistence on the Word of God through which God’s efficacious action took place, the Council stressed the Real Presence in the eucharistic species but made no mention of the other factors that constituted the eucharistic presence of Christ, e.g. the word of God, the community celebration.

The result was that overstressing the Real Presence during and outside the mass overshadowed the dynamic and sacramental action in eucharistic celebration. Further, the one who caused the change to take place in the bread and wine was the priest. This action defined his identity. In the face of the Protestant claim asserting the priesthood of all the faithful, the council affirmed “that the power of consecrating, offering and administering his [Christ’s] body and blood...was given to the apostles and to their successors in the priesthood.” (ND 1707) As Trent saw it, even though the council did not define the essence of Christ’s sacrifice in the mass, it was Christ’s intention that “priests should offer(s) his body and blood”. It would remain for Vatican II to recognize the common priesthood of all Christians and the ministerial priesthood of the priest. In Vatican II the priesthood is not restricted to celebrating mass! It includes Christian leadership in different ministries. (Refer *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests)).

## 2. The Eucharistic Sacrifice

Against Protestant objections, Trent did say “that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice” is offered. (ND 1555) However, sacrifice is a multivalent concept if one examines its understanding in anthropology and sociology. Depending on the perspectives that a person adopts, the task of defining sacrifice takes account of the following:

...the etymological points suggesting “offering” or “transference,” the popular usage indicating deprivation and forfeiture, the notion of a gift or exchange, the various parties involved (the subject sacrificing, the “object” sacrificed, and a third recipient party—any of which could have a superhuman status), the nature of the “object” sacrificed, how the “object” is altered during the event, and the motive given for the event.<sup>8</sup>

All Christians believe that Jesus Christ offered the perfect sacrifice of himself once and for all and the scriptural foundation for this belief is found in Hebrews 9/26: “...he [Christ] has

appeared once for all at the end of this age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,” and in 10/12: “...Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins...” To claim that the mass is a sacrifice would seem to go against the words of scripture and “relativise” the infinite efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice offered once and for all. Catholic theology explains that the mass is not a repetition of what Christ did at a historical point in time but the representation of that one sacrifice. This representation takes place through the eucharistic celebration of a meal in which the species of bread and wine have a special place since they represent food to be eaten. On the other hand, the Church as the believing community celebrating the Eucharist repeats its act of offering, uniting itself to the one sacrifice of Christ.

#### 4. The Eucharist in Vatican II

In the area of sacraments, Vatican II benefited from a deeper understanding of the theological dynamics that were present in sacramental reality. Scripture was seen to be of the greatest importance in the celebration of the liturgy (SC 24 & 35); secondly, meaningful signs were to be included in sacramental celebration (SC 7); thirdly, rather than slavishly follow “the laws governing valid and lawful celebration” the ordained minister was encouraged to do more “to ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite and enriched by it.” (SC 11)

The far-reaching understanding of the People of God in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* had its effect on the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy:

In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by 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. Therefore, in all their apostolic activity, pastors of souls should energetically set about achieving it through the requisite pedagogy. (SC 14)

The scholastic or pre-Vatican II ecclesiology reflects a pyramidal understanding of sacramental activity. It envisages God, the principal cause, and the ordained minister, the instrumental cause for bringing grace to the recipient. Vatican II ecclesiology begins with God who calls all peoples to himself. The Church is the concrete community in which God is active in all the members and they constitute the People of God. It was the Liturgical Movement that stressed the peoples' participation in sacramental celebration, especially the Eucharist.

In the light of Vatican II theology, one can appreciate the need for inculturating the Eucharist so that the strong memory of Christ (*Memoria Christi*) can take effect in the varied cultural communities of believers. The norms put out by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* governing the preservation of the Blessed Sacrament correct eucharistic piety that had become exaggerated. The sacrificial aspect in the Eucharist is clearer now than in the past: Christ's sacrifice cannot be repeated, but the faithful need to repeat the offering of their sacrifice to God by identifying with the once and for all sacrifice of Christ. Finally, Vatican II stresses the communitarian aspect of religion so that the People of God participate fully and actively in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

## Notes

1. Paul Bradshaw: *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship, Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy*, Oxford University Press, 2nd Edition, 2002. "3. Worship in the New Testament," p. 71.
2. Refer J. Neuner and J. Dupuis: *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (edited by Jacques Dupuis), TPI, Seventh Revised and Enlarged Edition, Bangalore 2004, p. 609: "A Council of Rome (1059) prescribed to him a profession of faith some formulations of which St. Thomas Aquinas himself (cf. S.T. III, 71, 7 ad 3m) will later consider as ultra-realistic (cf DS 690). Another Council of Rome (1079), more sober in its wording..."
3. David Crystal: *The New Penguin Encyclopedia*, 2003, 'Reductionism', p. 1280.

4. Refer Justin Martyr: First Apology, Chapter 65 to 67, PG 6, 428-429 as quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, TPI, 1994, pp 260-1.
5. Refer Canon 6 of the Council of Chalcedon (451). A 'title' refers to revenues, which would provide maintenance to the ordained priest.
6. Peter E. Fink: The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, "The Liturgical Movement (1830-1969) by Virgil C. Funk, 1990, p. 715.
7. Norman Tanner (edit): Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, Volume II (Trent-Vatican), London/Washington, 1990, p. 657: "Following the deep division in the church which had resulted from the protestant Reformation, there was a widespread desire, which grew stronger and was expressed in a variety of ways, for an ecumenical council. Its aim would be to reject errors against faith, add strength to the official teaching, restore the unity of the church, and reform the standards of the Roman curia and of church discipline. It was only after prolonged hesitation that Pope Paul III fulfilled this desire."
8. Jeffrey Carter (editor): Understanding Religious Sacrifice, a Reader, Continuum, London/New York, 2003, p 7.

## **The Eucharist in the Writings of the Fathers of the Church**

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### **Abstract**

Christianity, a religious minority group in the Roman Empire, had to often bear the brunt of false accusations and harsh persecutions. Rumours were spread that when Christians came together for worship they practised cannibalism and were involved in immoral activities. This is the context of the apologetic writings of the patristic fathers in defence of the Eucharist. The patristic writings, in general, tended to be more pastoral than dogmatic. And in the writings on the Eucharist, the Fathers gave more importance to what happened and should happen to a Christian who received Jesus Christ in the Eucharist than to the Eucharistic bread and wine. This is their strength.

### **Keywords**

John Chrysostom, Pliny the Younger, Didache, Fathers of the Church, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ignatius of Antioch, Gregory of Nyssa

During the patristic age the Eucharist continued to play a vital role in the life of the Christian community. Sometimes people of other faiths looked at the gathering of Christians for Eucharistic celebrations with suspicion. For some of them Christian gatherings for worship brought back memories of the religious gathering of the Bacchanals, who were suppressed in 186 BC because of alleged immoralities. Rumours were spread that when Christians

came together for worship they practised cannibalism and were involved in immoral activities.<sup>1</sup>

## **An Outsider's View**

Christianity, a religious minority group in the Roman Empire, had to often bear the brunt of false accusations and harsh persecutions. Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia, was forced by circumstances<sup>2</sup> to take stringent action against the Christian community under his control. He questioned their belief system and sought reasons to punish them, but could not find any. In his Letter to Emperor Trajan he writes the information he picked up during the interrogation of two deaconesses. This document about the Christian way of worship, from a non-sympathetic if not a hostile person, portrays to us in vivid terms how the Eucharistic celebration was held during the early patristic period. From his findings Pliny wrote that the Christians “used to come together on a certain day before daylight to sing a song with responses to Christ as God, to bind themselves mutually by a solemn oath not to commit any crime, to avoid theft, robbery, adultery, not to break a trust or deny a deposit when they are called for it. After these practices it was their custom to separate and then come together again to take food but an ordinary and harmless kind.”<sup>3</sup> This letter, written about 112 AD by a Roman governor, gives us some idea of how the Eucharist was celebrated by the Christians during the beginnings of the patristic age and how the celebration was interconnected with the way they lived. Of course the account filters the reality through the perceptions of the two anonymous deaconesses and Pliny's own understanding of their testimony and what he wanted to report to the Emperor.

## **Mentioned in Passing**

A. The Eucharist had a bearing on the life of Christians. And the Fathers of the Church wrote on the Eucharist highlighting its effects on the Christians and the challenges it brought to the way they lived their lives. But it is to be noted that they wrote on the Eucharist in passing, in course of their discussion on other issues and themes. A reading of the patristic writings on the



Eucharist available to us makes it clear that “the direct concerns [of the writings] were other than a presentation of a Eucharistic theology,” as James O’Connor observed.<sup>4</sup> As Sheerin has rightly commented, “The Fathers themselves rarely approached the Eucharist in a wholly comprehensive, synthetic way.”<sup>5</sup>

B. Despite these shortcomings the patristic writings do indeed touch upon all the important elements that go to make Eucharistic theology today. In this paper we shall highlight only a few concerns of the Fathers while they speak about the Eucharist.<sup>6</sup>

### As a Suckling Child

Taking part in the Eucharist was considered to be of great importance. What was received there was seen as greater than what any human could achieve because it was God’s own doing. Aware of such a great gift the Fathers invited Christians to take part in the Eucharist with great eagerness and devotion. For example, John Chrysostom urged his fellow Christians to receive the Eucharist with great eagerness of a child sucking at her mother’s breast:

He nourishes by Himself, and putteth not out to another; by this also persuading thee again, that He had taken thy flesh. Let us not then be remiss, having been counted worthy of so much both of love and honour. See ye not the infants with how much eagerness they lay hold of the breast? With what earnest desire they fix their lips upon the nipple? With the like let us also approach this Table, and the nipple of the spiritual cup. Or rather, with much more eagerness let us, as infants at the breast, draw out the grace of the Spirit, let it be our one sorrow, not to partake of this Food. The works set before us are not of [hu] man’s power. He that then did these things at that Supper, this same now also works them.<sup>7</sup>

## Partaking of Divine Nature

The Fathers wrote often about what the Christians stood to gain when they received the Lord in the Eucharist. The transformation the human persons underwent was of great concern to them. One finds an example of this concern in the five catechetical sermons belonging to the late fourth and early fifth centuries and attributed by many scholars to Cyril of Jerusalem. In these sermons which seem to have been given to the recently baptized Christians, the preacher said that through receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ a Christian took part in the divine nature and became another Christ: "With all confidence we receive this as the Body and Blood of Christ. For in the type [Gk. *typos*] of Bread the Body is given to you, and in the type of wine the Blood is given to you, so that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, you may become one Body and one Blood with Christ. And so we become Christ-bearers, when his Body and his Blood have been diffused in our members. Thus, according to the Blessed Peter, we become 'partakers of the Divine Nature' (2 Pet 1: 4)."<sup>8</sup>

## Medicine of immortality

Ignatius of Antioch considered the Eucharist the medicine of immortality. And so he invited his fellow Christians to break "one Bread which is the medicine of immortality and the antidote against death enabling us to live forever in Jesus Christ."<sup>9</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa makes this theme of medicine and antidote still more explicit in his writings. He insisted on the necessity of receiving the Eucharist by mentioning that it worked as an antidote in human persons to remove the poisonous evil elements that had entered into their being and equipped them with immortality. He pointed out that the body of Jesus Christ, who through his resurrection had conquered death, was capable of giving immortality to the ones who received it and allowed it to have its effect in their body:

But since the human being is twofold creature, composed of soul and body, it is necessary that the saved should lay hold of the Author of the new life through both their component parts. Accordingly, the soul being fused into Him through faith derives from that the means and occasion of salvation; for the act of union with the life implies a fellowship with the life. But the body comes into fellowship and blending with the Author of our salvation in another way. For as they who owing to some act of treachery have taken poison, allay its deadly influence by means of some other drug ... in like manner we, who have tasted the solvent of our nature, necessarily need something that may combine what has been so dissolved, so that such an antidote entering within us may by its own counter-influence, undo the mischief introduced into the body by poison. What, then, is this remedy to be? Nothing else than that very Body which has been shown to be superior to death, and has been the First-fruits of our life. ... In the manner that ... a little leaven assimilates to itself the whole lump, so in like manner that Body to which immortality has been given it by God, when it is in ours, translates and transmutes the whole into itself.<sup>10</sup>

The same theme of the body of human persons becoming immortal because of the intake of the body of the Lord in the Eucharist was also discussed by Irenaeus of Lyons in his controversy with the Gnostics. He held the view that the body is created in the image of God. He insisted on the salvation of the body. According to him the human person is not saved *from* the body as the Gnostics taught, but *in* the body:

Vain in every respect are they who despise the entire dispensation of God, and disallow the salvation of the flesh, and treat with contempt its regeneration, maintaining that it is not capable of incorruption. But if this indeed do not attain salvation, then neither did the Lord redeem us with His Blood, nor is the cup of the Eucharist the communion of his Blood, nor the bread which we break the communion of his Body. For Blood can only come from veins and

flesh, and whatsoever else makes the substance of [hu]man, such as the Word of God was actually made. By his own Blood he redeemed us, as also his Apostle declares: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the remission of sins" (Col 1:14) ... and the bread ... he has established as His own Body, from which He gives increase to our bodies.<sup>11</sup>

In another place Irenaeus expressed a similar thought:

Again, how can they [the Gnostics] say that the flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood, goes to corruption and does not partake of life? ... But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion.... For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.<sup>12</sup>

## Union among Christians

A theme prevalent among many Fathers with regard to the Eucharist is the union among the Christians – the union already present and yet to be achieved. The very preparation that went to make the bread for the Eucharist is cited as an example of many becoming one, thus inviting the Christians to remain united:

That Bread which you see on the altar, consecrated by the word of God, is the Body of Christ. That chalice, or rather, what the chalice holds, consecrated by the word of God, is the Blood of Christ. Through those accidents the Lord wished to entrust to us His Body and Blood which he poured out for the remission of sins. If you have received worthily, you are what you received for the Apostle says: 'The bread is one; we though many, are one body.' So, by bread you are instructed as to how you ought to cherish unity. Was that bread made of one grain of wheat? Were there not, rather, many grains? However, before they be-

came bread, these grains were separate; they were joined together in water after a certain amount of crushing. For, unless the grain is ground and moistened with water,<sup>13</sup> it cannot arrive at that form which is called bread.

Lack of unity among the participants was condemned as defiling the Eucharistic sacrifice. In one of the earliest writings of the Apostolic Fathers the author of Didache gave expression to that view in his instruction to the Christians. He wrote: "And on the Lord's day, after you have come together, break bread and offer the Eucharist, having first confessed your offences, so that your sacrifice may be pure. But let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbour join you until he is reconciled, lest your sacrifice be defiled."<sup>14</sup>

In his desire to keep his people together, another writer belonging to the group of Apostolic Fathers, Ignatius of Antioch, beleaguered with the problem of a persecuted Church and internal dissensions, invited the Christian community to celebrate the Eucharist as a sign of unity: "Be zealous, then, in the observance of one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and one chalice that brings union is His blood. There is one altar, as there is one bishop with the priests and deacons and my fellow workers."<sup>15</sup>

## **Eucharist and Equality**

In his homilies on the Gospel of John, St John Chrysostom explained the greed and avarice of the rich as the origin of social inequalities and citing the participation in the one chalice during the Eucharist he challenged his Christians to individual and social transformation:

God hath given to us but one habitation, this earth, hath distributed all things equally. hath lighted one sun for us all, hath spread above us one roof, the sky, made one table, the earth, bear food for us. And another table [the Eucharist] hath He given far better than this, yet that too is one, (those who share our

mysteries understand my words,) one manner of Birth He hath bestowed on all, the spiritual, we all have one country, that in the heavens, of the same cup drink we all. He hath not bestowed on the rich man a gift more abundant and more honourable, and on the poor one more mean and small, but He hath called all alike. He hath given carnal things with equal regard to all, and spiritual in like manner. Whence then proceeds the great inequality of conditions in life? From the avarice and pride of the wealthy. But let not, brethren, let not this any longer be; and when matters of universal interest and more pressing necessity bring us together, let us not be divided by things earthly and insignificant: I mean, by wealth and poverty, by bodily relationship, by enmity and friendship; for all these things are a shadow, nay less substantial than a shadow,<sup>16</sup> to those who possess the bond of charity from above.

## Eucharist and Justice

In his reflections on the Eucharist, John Chrysostom the champion of justice and the voice of the poor and the marginalised, brought up once again the issue of equality. He was rightly convinced that liturgy and justice should go together. He compared those who approached the table after being unjust to the orphans and widows to Judas and Simon who suffered condemnation because of their covetousness:

Let no Judas ... then approach this Table, no Simon; nay, for both these perished through covetousness. Let us flee then from this gulf; neither let us account it enough for our salvation, if after we have stripped widows and orphans, we offer for this Table a gold and jewelled cup. Nay, if thou desire to honour the Sacrifice, offer thy soul, for which also It was slain; cause them to become golden; but if that remain worse than lead or potter's clay, while the vessel is of gold, what is the profit?<sup>17</sup>

The churches in Constantinople, the capital city of the Roman Empire, would have abounded in gold and silver vessels. They

belonged to a rich church peopled by many elite members of the aristocracy. Rich people would have donated them to the rich. But their archbishop Chrysostom did not set a high score on this show of wealth. He was ruthless in his condemnation of the distortion of things. He said:

The Church is not a gold foundry nor a workshop for silver, but an assembly of Angels. Wherefore it is souls which we require, since in fact God accepts these for the soul's sake. That Table at that time was not of silver, nor that Cup of gold, out of which Christ gave His disciples His own blood; but precious was everything there, and awful, for that they were full of the Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

He continued:

God hath no need at all of golden vessels, but of golden souls. And these things I say, not forbidding such offerings to be provided; but requiring you, together with them, and before them, to give alms. For He accepts indeed the former, but much more the latter. For in the one the offerer alone is profited, but in the other the receiver also. Here the act seems to be a ground even of ostentation; but there all is mercifulness, and love to man.<sup>19</sup>

Constantinople abounded in wealthy people who had the least concern for the poor. Chrysostom insisted that the Eucharistic celebration should have its consequences on the way a person led his or her life. Christians should have concern for the poor and work for their benefit. Otherwise what they donated to the church is of no value. We listen again to Archbishop Chrysostom:

Wouldst thou do honour to Christ's Body? Neglect Him not when naked; do not, while here thou honourest Him with silken garments, neglect Him perishing without of cold and nakedness. For He that said, *This is My Body*, and by His word confirmed the fact, This Same said, *Ye saw Me an hungered, and fed Me not*; and, *Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me...*

For what is the profit, when His table indeed is full

of golden cups, but He perishes with hunger? First fill Him, being a hungered, and then abundantly deck out His table also. Dost thou make Him a cup of gold, while thou givest Him not a cup of cold water? And what is the profit? Dost thou furnish His Table with cloths bespangled with gold, while to Himself thou affordest not even the necessary covering? And what good comes of it? For tell me, should you see one at a loss for necessary food, and omit appeasing his hunger, while you first overlaid his table with silver; would he indeed thank thee, and not rather be indignant? What, again, if seeing one wrapped in rags, and stiff with cold, thou shouldst neglect giving him a garment, and build golden columns, saying, "thou wert doing it to his honour," would he not say that thou wert mocking, and account it an insult, and that the most extreme?

Let it then be thy thought with regard to Christ also, when He is going about as a wanderer, and a stranger, needing a roof to cover Him; and thou, neglecting to receive Him, deckest out a pavement, and walls, and capitals of columns, and hangest up silver chains by means of lamps, but Himself bound in prison thou wilt not even look upon.

And these things I say, not forbidding munificence in these matters, but admonishing you to do those other works together with these, or rather even before these. Because for not having done these no one would ever be blamed, but for those, hell is threatened, and unquenchable fire, and the punishment with evil spirits. Do not therefore while adorning His house overlook thy brother in distress, for he is more properly a temple than the other.<sup>20</sup>

Thus spoke the Fathers! They did not mince words. Down the centuries many reflections have been made on the Eucharist. Still, the writings of the Fathers on the Eucharist challenge us deeply even today. What would they tell us today if they saw not only the poor neglected but also the dalits discriminated against and sometimes even forced into separate places lest they 'corrupt' the dominating caste people? What would they think of the



English-speaking congregations claiming the best timings for their services and leaving the more inconvenient times to the majority congregation who communicate in the local language?

The patristic writings, in general, tended to be more pastoral than dogmatic. And in the writings on the Eucharist the Fathers gave more importance to what happened and should happen to a Christian who received Jesus Christ in the Eucharist than to the Eucharistic bread and wine. This is their strength.

## Notes

1. About 200 AD Minicius Felix a Roman lawyer wrote a dialogue in which he mentioned a discussion between a Christian, Octavius and a person of another Faith. To the accusations levelled against the Christians by the non-Christian based on the rumours Octavius explained that the rumours were unfounded. See Minicius Felix, Octavius 9, 6.
2. For details see Leonard Fernando, *Christian Faith Meets Other Faiths: Origen's Contra Celsum and its Relevance for India Today*, Delhi: VIEWS/ISPCK, 1998, pp. 13-22.
3. Pliny the Younger, Letters 10. 96, as cited in Fernando, *Christian Faith Meets Other Faiths*, pp. 15-16.
4. James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology Of The Eucharist*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988, p. 4. The author points out that the first full treatise on the Eucharist was written only in the ninth century.
5. Daniel J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 7, Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1986. p.16.
6. Eucharist as memorial, sacrifice, presence of Christ in the sacrament, etc. found in the writings of the Fathers are not taken up for discussion in this paper.
7. John Chrysostom, Homily on Mathew 82, *Library of Fathers*, Vol. 34, p. 1092.
8. As cited in O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna*, p. 28.
9. Ephesians, 20, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol 1, New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947, p. 95.10 Gregory of Nyssa, *Great Catechism*, 37, *A Select Library of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol 5, Grand Rapids: WM Eerdmans, 1972, pp. 504-505.
11. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V, 2 , 2, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. 9, Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1869, p. 59.

12. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV, 18 , 5, *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol 5, p. 435
13. Augustine of Hippo, Sermon 227, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 38, p. 196. On St Augustine's short formula on the Eucharist see the Note by G. Gispert-Sauch, "The Eucharist as seen by St. Augustine," *VJTR* 69(2005), pp. 387f.
14. Didache, 14, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol 1, p. 182.
15. Philadelphia 4, *The Fathers of the Church*, Vol 1, p. 114.
16. John Chrysostom, The Homily on the Gospel of John 15, *Library of Fathers*, Vol. 28, p. 126-27.
17. John Chrysostom, The Homily on the Gospel of Mathew, 50 *Library of Fathers*, Vol 15, p. 684.
18. Ibid., p. 685.
19. Ibid., p. 685.
20. Ibid., p. 685-86.

## **The Eucharist and the Reformers Luther, Zwingli, Calvin**

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### **Abstract**

The early Church affirms clearly that it is the Lord's body and blood that the community partakes of at the Eucharistic gatherings of the Church. In subsequent centuries there was intense clericalization and elaborate ritualization of the Eucharist both in the East and in the West, but the basic nature of the Eucharist was never challenged till the ninth century. This challenge is to be understood against the background of the increasing popular piety, which was no more satisfied with mere symbols, but wanted more "substance" for their devotions. So a new theology was developed teaching that the Eucharistic symbols of bread and wine were not mere symbols but really the body and blood of Christ. The most significant challenges were developed by the reformers Luther, Zwingli, Calvin. This article tries to study the challenges posed by them and to respond to these challenges creatively.

### **Keywords**

Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, clericalisation of eucharist, ritualisation, presence of Christ.

The Eucharist as the memorial of the Lord's Last Supper was, from the beginning, the sacrament *par excellence* for Christians. But already in New Testament times there were misunderstandings about the real nature of the Eucharist to which Paul draws the attention of the community in Corinth (1 Cor 11:20-22). He affirms clearly that it is the Lord's body and blood that the community partakes of at the Eucharistic gatherings of

the Church. In subsequent centuries there was intense clericalization and elaborate ritualization of the Eucharist both in the East and in the West, but the basic nature of the Eucharist was never challenged till the ninth century. This challenge is to be understood against the background of the increasing popular piety, which was no more satisfied with mere symbols, but wanted more “substance” for their devotions, as a result of which there arose the widespread veneration of saints, icons, images, relics etc. In this context there developed also the teaching that the Eucharistic symbols of bread and wine were not mere symbols but really the body and blood of Christ, a view strongly advocated by Paschasius Radbertus (790-860). In 844 Radbertus published his *De corpore et sanguine Domini* in which he wrote that in the host is the same flesh that was born of Mary. It was the precursor of the transubstantiation theory of later times. His opponent, Hrabanus Maurus (780-856), the Archbishop of Mainz, said that Christ is present in the Eucharist in essence but not in appearance. Others joined him, like Rathramnus of Corbie and John Scotus. This controversy reappeared in the eleventh century when Berengar of Tours (d. 1088) revived it. He understood the consecration of the bread and wine in the Eucharist only symbolically, a view that was much criticized. In his *Rescriptum contra Lanfrannum* he accepted the real presence but denied that any material change in the elements is needed to explain it. Berengar’s position was never diametrically opposed to that of his critics and he was probably never excommunicated although his case was discussed widely.<sup>1</sup> But the controversy eventually led to the doctrine of transubstantiation theory of the IV Lateran Council (1215), which has found its classic formulation in the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas. At the Council of Trent the medieval doctrine was reaffirmed, which ultimately was the restatement of the position of Paschasius Radbertus.<sup>2</sup>

For the Reformers, not only the Eucharist but the entire sacramental system of the medieval Church had become an aberration and they mounted a sustained attack on the medieval understandings of the number, nature and function of the

sacraments. Why was this so? First, the theology of the sacraments was seen by many Reformers as representing all that was bad about medieval theology.<sup>3</sup> While the Scholastics saw the development of the intricate sacramental theology as a great achievement, the Reformers saw it as mere medieval additions to earlier and simpler versions of Christian theology. Secondly, the sacraments represented the public face of the Church, its only point of contact with ordinary people. And what it represented often was the ugly face of the Church. Very often celebration of the sacraments were linked to monetary benefits. The most important sacrament was the Mass. The Mass had become a pure ritual celebrated in a language that the people did not understand. It had become one of the “works” that the priest performed. Moreover, many Reformers had difficulty in understanding concepts like transubstantiation, which conveyed a purely magical understanding of the Eucharist which reinforced the predominant role of the priest and needlessly rationalized a mystery.<sup>4</sup> But in spite of having a common ground against the Catholic understanding of sacraments and especially the Eucharist, the unity of Protestantism was destroyed precisely on account of the Eucharist. We are not in a position to enumerate the various phases of this conflict within Protestantism, but will discuss the Eucharistic theologies of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, three important figures of early Protestantism.

### **Martin Luther**

The Word of God and outward signs are the centre of Luther’s sacramental theology. That applies also to the Eucharist where the Word of God and the material signs of bread and wine play a pivotal role. So in all his debates about the Eucharist the words of Jesus in the institution narratives are central. The forgiveness of sins which is especially stressed in the institution narratives must be available to human beings and must become relevant for their existence. The Word of God mediates this forgiveness. The grace actualized in the Christ event is mediated

through the Word of God and the action of the Holy Spirit. This is the foundation of Luther's understanding of the Eucharist.

One can identify four phases in Luther's teaching on the Eucharist. The first was till 1518 when Luther was basically still a Catholic. The second phase lasted till 1523 when Luther clearly departed from the Catholic understanding of sacraments. The third phase lasted till 1529, and this is the period of intense conflict between Luther and Zwingli and the left wing of the Reformation. The fourth phase covered the rest of his years, where he consolidated his teaching in clearly anti-Zwingli and anti-Catholic terms.

In the first phase Luther followed the teaching of Augustine. The Eucharist has a significative character in so far as it represents the cross. In this representative character the Eucharist leads to contrition and forgiveness of sin. The sacrament of the Eucharist is understood spiritually but the personal presence of Christ in it is taken for granted.<sup>5</sup> The transition from the first phase to the second was determined by Luther's understanding of the sacrament. The sacrament not only leads to Christ but it brings Christ to people. So the Eucharist is the sacrament *par excellence* which brings grace to people. In the second phase too Luther maintained that the Eucharist is not merely a spiritual representation of Christ but his real personal presence. Luther understands that this presence is in the elements of the bread and wine which are distributed to the faithful as the body and blood of Christ. These signs are the seal of the grace given by Christ. But he rejects the transubstantiation theory as pseudo philosophy based on Aristotle.<sup>6</sup> It is essential to appreciate that Luther did not criticize the underlying basic idea that the bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ. Luther's objection was not to the idea of the real presence but to one specific way of explaining that presence.

In the third period the main problem was the conflict with Zwingli and the left wing of the Reformation. Here Luther was forced to clarify his understanding of Word and faith. For him

the Word of God has absolute priority over faith.<sup>7</sup> The words of the institution show that Jesus is present in the bread and the wine in an unseen and hidden way. The body and blood of Christ are given to the believer and they make them partakers of the totality of Christ. So from the institution narratives which are the true Words of the Lord Luther derives the real presence of Christ in bread and wine.<sup>8</sup> That is the obvious meaning of biblical texts such as Matt 26:26: *hoc est corpus meum*. To deny this would be to challenge the clarity of scripture which he regarded as fundamental to his reforming programme. This was emphasized against the spiritualization of the Eucharist by Zwingli who said that the word “is” was simply a rhetorical figure of speech which really means “signifies” or “represents” and is not to be taken literally. For Luther this was simply a misreading of the text. Luther based his argument also on his Christology, where the union of the two natures of Christ is clearly stressed. Luther also maintained that the presence of God in this world is not to be understood by pure reason alone. So for Luther the real presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine was not a problem because in this revelation God has communicated bodily to the world and brought himself close to human beings.

The fourth phase was Luther’s consolidation of his teaching and its defence against all attacks especially from his enemies. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is consistently emphasized. The main argument here is once again the institution narratives which Luther takes as Word of God and as true and that is the basis of his teaching on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. According to John 1:14 God had become incarnate in human flesh and so all matter is a medium for him. But the body and blood of Christ in bread and wine are not realities which are available to human reason. This is communicated to the believer in a hidden way. It could be believed because of the absolute dependability of God’s promises. Luther’s views on the real presence were regarded with disbelief by his reforming colleagues because they seemed to them as making too much concession to his Catholic opponents.

## Huldrych Zwingli

To understand Zwingli's views on the Eucharist, we must understand his views on sacraments. Originally he understood sacraments as signs of God's faithfulness to his people and his gracious promise of forgiveness. But soon he changed his understanding and said that it was the pledge of obedience and loyalty to one another. It is a means by which someone proves to the Church that he either intends to be or already is a soldier of Christ.<sup>9</sup> Sacraments are subordinate to the preaching of the Word of God. Preaching brings faith into existence; sacraments merely provide an occasion by which this faith is publicly demonstrated. From that point of view they have only symbolic value. The Eucharist is a memorial of a historical event leading to the establishment of the Church. *Hoc est corpus meum* spoken by Christ at the last supper signify the way in which he wished to be remembered by the Church. The celebration of the Eucharist is an occasion for the Church to remember what Jesus did for us. It is neither a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ nor the real presence of Christ. It is pure remembrance.

Zwingli rejected the sacrificial character of the Mass based on an exegesis of Hebrews 7 and 8. He rejected transubstantiation basing himself on the Platonic tradition that the earthly has no spiritual effect. This was not a dualism in the real sense because he also held that God in his activity can use earthly means in so far as they are mere signs. So he replaces the "is" in the institution narratives with "signifies." So there is no real presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine. According to him it is inconceivable that the bread could be the body of Christ. Zwingli based his arguments on the location of Christ. Both scripture and the creed affirm that Christ is now seated at the right hand of God. So he cannot be present in the Eucharist. This was taking the primacy of the Word too far! For Zwingli it is also essential for the protection of the uniqueness and definitiveness of the work of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross cannot be repeated by the sacraments.<sup>10</sup> To support the real presence is also against



the true humanity of Christ. True humanity demands that it cannot be ubiquitous and therefore, there cannot be a substantial real presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine. From all this Zwingli calls for a mere symbolic understanding of the Eucharist.<sup>11</sup>

It may be important to summarise the arguments of both Luther and Zwingli, since here the first major difference among the Reformers emerged and it led to the first division within Protestantism. Both rejected the medieval sacramental scheme. For Luther both the Word of God and the sacraments are inseparably linked. Both bore witness to Jesus Christ and both mediated his power and presence. For Zwingli it was the Word of God which created faith and the sacraments demonstrated that faith publicly. Luther was considerably traditional in his approach to the celebration of the Eucharist. He was prepared to retain the traditional title of Mass provided it was not understood to imply a sacrifice and authorized to celebrate it weekly. Zwingli abolished the title and said it should be celebrated three or four times a year. No longer was it the centre of Christian worship. Luther emphasized preaching within the context of the Eucharist, but Zwingli replaced the weekly Eucharist with preaching. The institution narrative was interpreted differently by both, based on two different ways of interpreting scripture. Both rejected the medieval doctrine of transubstantiation. Luther did so on the basis of its Aristotelian foundation and was ready to accept the reality, that is, the real presence. Zwingli rejected both the term and the idea. Zwingli rejected the real presence on the basis of Christ's location which Luther rejected as philosophically unsophisticated. For him Christ could be present without the limitations of space and time. Here Luther interpreted the scriptures metaphorically. The colloquy of Marburg in 1529 tried to mediate between the two positions but it was not successful because of the issue of the real presence.<sup>12</sup>

## John Calvin

Calvin has tried to develop a theology of the Eucharist both against Luther and Zwingli. For Calvin, sacrament is an external symbol by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promises of good will towards us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith. They are gracious divine accommodations to our weaknesses. God knowing our weakness of faith, adapts to our limitations using earthly elements<sup>13</sup> which are made sacred through the Word of God. So the Eucharist is a sacrament where the promises of God are made manifest through earthly elements. He calls the sacrament of the Eucharist *verbum visibile*. The central debate between Luther and Zwingli concerned the relation between the sacramental sign and the spiritual gift which it signified. Calvin may be regarded as occupying a position roughly midway between the two extremes represented by them. In the sacraments there is such a close connection between the symbol and the gift which it symbolizes that we can easily pass from one to the other. The sign is visible and physical, but the thing signified is invisible and spiritual. The Eucharist comprises the sign, the thing signified and the promises of God. The thing signified is Jesus Christ in his person and in his work. This happens through the work of the Holy Spirit and it is manifested in faith. Bread and Wine only help make present the presence of Christ and help us to remember what he did for us. In this way Calvin also rejects a real presence of the human nature of Jesus in the elements of the Eucharist. But according to Calvin the Eucharist is necessary for the faith of the individual and the community. It is also the means of grace by which the promises of God come to us. Jesus is the real substance of the Eucharistic meal but his understanding of substance is that it is not a heavenly or earthly matter but a reality, the reality of salvation.

Like Zwingli Calvin also is concerned that the real presence of Christ in the materials of bread and wine in substance somehow endangers the true humanity of Christ which has implications for soteriology itself. Calvin speaks of a *carnis Christi praesentia in*

*coena*<sup>14</sup> but it is not bound to the bread. The way of presence of Christ in the Eucharist is ultimately a mystery. Calvin says that he cannot doubt the words of the Lord at the last supper<sup>15</sup> but it should be a parabolic understanding. It is a spiritual presence not material, a mysterious activity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

The Reformation tradition was united in its protest against the Roman Catholic understanding of sacraments with its upholding of the absolute primacy of the Word of God. But in the understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist this unity was lost. But the cause of the disunity lay also in the understanding of the Church, and the interpretation of scripture which eventually led even to exclusion of each other from each other's Eucharist. The Council of Trent gave the Catholic answer to the views associated with the Reformers in its seventh session which concluded on 3 March, 1547. It rejected all the views of the Reformers categorically. But a positive statement of the Eucharistic doctrine of the Catholic Church came in the thirteenth session which concluded on 11 October 1551 in which it vigorously upheld the real presence and the doctrine and the idea of transubstantiation.

The so-called Radical Reformers or the Left Wing of the Reformation who comprised mainly the Anabaptists and various other dissenting groups had no unified view on the Eucharist but a different view from the mainline Reformers. Caspar von Schwenkfeld's writings may be considered representative of this view. It inclines towards Zwingli in rejecting the real presence of the human nature of Jesus Christ in the elements of bread and wine but speaks of the presence of Christ in the heart of the believer when he receives communion. The Eucharist is a heavenly meal and needs no real connection with the external elements of bread and wine. They are mere representations of the elements which Christ used. He stood between Luther and Zwingli and rejected some aspects of the teachings of both. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is also rejected.<sup>17</sup> The Anglican tradition is substantially influenced by Calvin. Elizabeth I had removed article 29 from the Forty-Two Articles in 1553

which contained some statements opposed to the teaching of Luther on the Eucharist. It was reinserted in 1571. Since then the Thirty-Nine Articles make up the doctrinal basis of the Anglican faith. Art. 28 formulates the teaching on the Eucharist thus: *Corpus Christi datur, accipitur, et manducatur in coena, tantum coelesti et spirituali ratione. Medium autem quo Corpus Christi accipitur et manducatur in coena, fides est. Sacramentum Eucharistiae ex institutione Christi non servabatur, circumferebatur, elevabatur nec adorabatur.* (The Body of Christ is given, accepted and eaten in the supper only in a heavenly and spiritual way. Faith is the medium through which the Body of Christ is accepted and eaten in the supper. By Christ's institution the sacrament of the Eucharist was neither preserved, nor carried around, nor elevated nor adored).<sup>18</sup>

## Conclusion

The Christian churches differ in their understanding of the sacrament of the Eucharist. But in the changed ecumenical circumstances, sharing the Eucharistic table has become the touchstone of ecumenism. When the decree on ecumenism spoke of *communicatio in sacris* but not directly envisaging the Eucharist it says: "As for common worship, however, it may not be regarded as a means to be used indiscriminately for the restoration of unity among Christians. Such worship depends chiefly on two principles: it should signify the unity of the Church; it should provide a sharing in the means of grace. The fact that it should signify unity generally rules out common worship. Yet the gaining of a needed grace sometimes commends it." (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 8). A genuine tide of ecumenical activity did follow in the wake of the Council although at different levels between the various churches. Thus the Orthodox churches were treated on a higher level than the churches of the Reformation on account of the validity of Order in the Orthodox churches. But the conditions became stricter as years passed by.<sup>19</sup> There are fundamental questions to be asked in this context. Are the churches of the Reformation maintaining a totally untenable position on

the Eucharist scripturally and theologically? Have practical discipline and historical memories taken the upper hand over theology? Should sharing the Eucharist be seen solely as the seal of unity achieved or should it be seen also as a means to create that unity? “No community is perfect and no community’s Eucharist is a perfect symbol but all embody analogously Christian presence in the world.”<sup>20</sup> The recent Catholic doctrinal statements on the Eucharist<sup>21</sup> enunciate in terms of sacramental discipline an absolute, ahistorical idea of unity present in the Roman Catholic Church. In other words, the official position appears to express obliquely the “one true Church” claims of pre-Vatican II Catholicism and with them the former ‘one, true Eucharist’ claims.<sup>22</sup> The discussion seems to revolve around the manner of Christ’s presence in the world. Christ is present in the world when Christians live the values of the Gospel.

## Notes

1. F.L Cross and E.A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, 190-1.
2. For a detailed discussion see “Abendmahl III/2: Mittelalter” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Studienausgabe, Teil I), Band I, 89-106.
3. Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, Blackwell, Oxford, Cambridge, 1993, 159.
4. *Ibid.*, 160.
5. Ernst Bizer, *Fides ex auditu. Eine Untersuchung über die Entdeckung der Gerechtigkeit Gottes durch Martin Luther*, Neukirchen, 1958, 69ff.
6. “Abendmahl III/3: Reformationszeit” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* (Studienausgabe, Teil I), Band I, 111, in Luther’s *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*, and *De instituendis ministris ecclesiae*.
7. *Wider die himmlischen Propheten* (1520).
8. *Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis* (1528).
9. McGrath, 171.
10. *Aktion oder Brauch des Nachtmahls* (1525).
11. “Abendmahl III/3: Reformationszeit”, 113-14.

12. McGrath, 178-181
13. Ibid., 182.
14. (Institutes IV 17,31)
15. Ibid., 17, 32
16. Ibid., 17, 33
17. “Abendmahl III/3” 114-5.
18. Ibid., 118.
19. See F.J. Laishley, “Unfinished Business” in Adrian Hastings, ed., *Modern Catholicism*, SPCK, OUP, London, New York, 1991, 226.
20. Ibid., 228
21. *Dominus Jesus* (2000), *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003) and *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004)
22. Laishley, 228-9.

## **Eucharist as the Christian *Dharma*: Exploring the *Dharma* Vision of the Eucharist in the Papal Encyclicals**

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### **Abstract**

In this paper the author wants to explore the possibility of broadening the scope of the theology of the eucharist. He attempts to expand the eucharistic discourse by approaching the eucharist as representing the Christian *dharma*. With this aim, he first clarifies the concept of *dharma* in general and, then, discusses its application to the eucharist. It will be followed by an analysis of some of the liturgy documents of the post-Vatican era from the point of view of the impetus and material they provide for dealing with the eucharist as the Christian *dharma*. In the conclusion, the author indicates the challenges of understanding the eucharist in terms of *dharma* for the Christian living as well as for the theology of the eucharist.

### **Keywords**

Dharma, Eucharist as Christian Dharma, *Mysterium Fidei*, *Dominicae Cenaе*, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

### **Introduction**

The church has been showing a lively concern, especially since the Second Vatican Council, for revitalizing and reinvigourating the Christian life. The renewal of the liturgy that is taking place in the church is an integral part of the effort. Pope

John Paul II in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* notes with satisfaction, “The liturgical reform inaugurated by the Council has greatly contributed to a more conscious, active and fruitful participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar on the part of the faithful.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there is a great deal of vitality and vigour visible in the cultic celebration of the eucharist.

At the same time, there are also problems. Pope John Paul II has identified them as abandoning of eucharistic adoration, abuses leading to confusion with regard to sound faith and Catholic doctrine concerning the eucharist, a reductive understanding of the eucharistic mystery; the celebration of the eucharist as a mere fraternal banquet depriving it of its sacrificial meaning, the denial of the necessity of the ministerial priesthood in celebrating the eucharist, and the ecumenical initiatives contrary to the discipline of the church.<sup>2</sup> The popes have been issuing documents addressing various issues and problems that surround the eucharist. However, in spite of all the efforts, the problems do not seem to go away. They persist making it necessary for the magisterium to promulgate more and more documents giving explanations, clarifications, issuing norms and regulations, gently inviting, harshly reproofing and even threatening with stringent sanctions.

In this context, it is necessary to inquire into the causes of the persistence of the problems. The magisterium of the church has located the problems in the sphere of the cultic celebration of the eucharist and identified their root as a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the mystery of faith, which manifests itself in the cultic sphere. Accordingly, the papal encyclicals, focusing on the cultic sphere, address the cultic dimension of the Christian life and worship and seek to develop and deepen a theology of the eucharist based on the Tridentine doctrines of sacrifice, memorial, representation, sacrament, real presence and so on. Consequently, the theology of the eucharist tends to become cult-centred and inward looking, incapable of helping the faithful to meet the challenges of living the Christian faith in the world. My contention, therefore, is that the real problems do not reside in the cultic sphere. The issues that surface in the cultic sphere are



symptoms of a deeper malaise that has to do with the relationship between the ritual celebration of the eucharist and the actual life of Christians beyond the cult. Therefore, what is required is an opening up of the theology of the eucharist to encompass the total sphere of the Christian existence.

In this paper my aim is a modest one and it is to explore the possibility of broadening the scope of the theology of the eucharist. I attempt to expand the eucharistic discourse by approaching the eucharist as representing the Christian *dharma*. By Christian *dharma* I mean the ontological and functional dimensions of the existence of a Christian who has been christically transformed by the sacraments, especially, by the sacrament of the eucharist. With this aim, I shall first clarify the concept of *dharma* in general and, then, discuss its application to the eucharist. This will be followed by an analysis of some of the liturgy documents of the post-Vatican era from the point of view of the impetus and material they provide for dealing with the eucharist as the Christian *dharma*. In the conclusion, I shall indicate the challenges of understanding the eucharist in terms of *dharma* for the Christian living as well as for the theology of the eucharist.

## THE CONCEPT OF *DHARMA*

The polysemous term *dharma* evokes and comprehensively expresses the Indian world-view that is described as the ‘cosmotheandric’ vision of reality. The polysemic and, therefore, the metaphoric nature of the term defy any definition. That is to say, the concept *dharma* resists any attempt to circumscribe and contain its meaning. This elusiveness and ambiguity can be a source of confusion in any discussion on *dharma*. It is necessary, therefore, to clarify the term and to specify the precise sense in which the concept is used in this essay.

In general *dharma* has been variously taken to mean different things at the same time. Thus Gavin Flood writes, *dharma* “has been variously translated as ‘duty’, ‘religion’, ‘justice’, ‘law’, ‘ethics’, ‘religious merit’, ‘principle’ and ‘right’. More

particularly *dharma* is the performance of vedic ritual by the Brahmans”.<sup>3</sup> Kuppuswamy writes, *dharma* “stands for religious observances, righteousness, justice, conformity to law, conformity to custom, obedience to the social order, sense of duty, etc., and thus, has religious, moral, ethical as well as legal significance”.<sup>4</sup> This shows that *dharma* has multifaceted meaning which makes the use of the concept extremely difficult. However, there are two basic meanings that underlie and presuppose all other meanings of *dharma*. According to Zaehner:

The word *dharma* is used in two distinct general senses in the great Hindu texts. It means first what is set down in the sacred texts themselves, and particularly in the texts dealing with Hindu customary law. In this usage it corresponds approximately to what we call ‘canon law’, a ‘law’ that is clearly defined, refined and ever more minutely explained in the legal treatises themselves. By extension it is used to represent the religious assumptions on which these laws are based. *Dharma* in this sense is not at all ‘difficult to know’, for it is formulated at enormous length throughout the huge corpus of Hindu sacred literature, and is therefore, in its broadest connotation, best translated as ‘religion’. It is, then, both ‘law’ and ‘religion’. ‘Law’ and ‘religion’ are, however, only expressions of something far more fundamental, and that is the eternal law<sup>5</sup> that governs all human and non-human existence...

Zaehner points out that *dharma* as law specifies and regulates existence as such in the world, and, *dharma* as religion provides the vision that justifies and sustains the law. These, on the other hand, are manifestations of the *sanatana dharma* or eternal law. Lipner tries to highlight the two fundamental senses of the concept by examining the origin of the word. According to him,

The word *dharma* comes from the Sanskrit root *dhr*, which means ‘to support’, ‘to undergird’, ‘to establish’. *Dharma*, then, is that which ‘bears up’ in some way or other. In some contexts, e.g. the social or civic, the word could well be translated by ‘law’, but not in others. For traditionally Hindus have also spoken of the

*dharma* of something in the sense of the essential characteristic, the basic property, of that thing. Hence the *dharma* of fire is to burn, the *dharma* of the human spirit or atman has been (for most Hindu philosophers) ‘consciousness’. ‘Burning’ and ‘consciousness’ are the outstanding natural marks of fire and the atman respectively, the characteristics that establish them for what they are, that bear up to scrutiny. This sense of *dharma* is descriptive, not prescriptive. Thus we see that *dharma* can have physical, moral, social and religious connotations, depending on context. *Dharma* is that which properly undergirds or establishes something from a certain point of view, prescriptively and/or descriptively. ... Socio-religiously, *dharma* is that which acceptably upholds private and public life, which establishes social, moral and religious order, or at least which characterizes the nature of something.<sup>6</sup>

That is to say, while the prescriptive aspect of *dharma* is implied in the understanding of *dharma* as law, descriptively it indicates what essentially constitutes a thing. Zaehner makes the same observation.

Etymologically the word *dharma* derives from a root *dhr* – meaning ‘to hold, have, or maintain’ – the same root from which are derived the Latin *firmus*, ‘firm’ and *forma*, ‘form’. *Dharma* is, then, the ‘form’ of things as they are and the power that keeps them as they are and not otherwise. And just as it maintains the whole universe in being in accordance with eternal law (*sanatana dharma*), so, in the moral sphere, does it maintain the human race by eternal moral law.<sup>7</sup>

Ramamurthy links *dharma* with the manifestation of the divine as the essence (*dharma*) of all that exists and says,

The word *dharma* ... is used to mean the rightful conduct of man, either individual or social, or as that which sustains, governs and unites the world, or as the nature of a thing or a phenomenon. What is basic to all its senses or what characterizes *dharma* in whatever context it is used is its power or capacity to hold together, sustain and unite. What sustains, gov-

erns and unites a thing or a phenomenon is *dharma*. Each phenomenon is unified, sustained and governed because of *dharma* that is immanent within it. As the essence of each and every phenomenon *dharma* is the unity of every phenomenon. This is the primary or Vedic meaning of *dharma*. All that is there is grounded or founded on *dharma*, or *dharma* is the ground or foundation of all that is there (*dharme sarvam pratistitam, dharmah visvasya jagatah pratistha*)<sup>8</sup>

The above citations from various scholars show that the concept *dharma* has two fundamental and correlated meanings and it can be used both descriptively and prescriptively. Descriptively, *dharma* refers to the essence or nature of a thing, the essential characteristic that makes a thing what it is. *Dharma* is that which constitutes a thing, holds it in existence, unites, sustains, supports and governs it. Prescriptively, *dharma* refers to the corresponding actions or behaviour that flow from the nature or essence of a thing. In other words, while the descriptive aspect of *dharma* emphasizes the ontological dimension of a thing, the prescriptive aspect points to its functional dimension. Thus, the ontological and functional dimensions together constitute one's *dharma*, thereby bringing together the being and the behaviour of a thing.

This implies that there cannot be any dichotomy between the two. The absence of a harmonious fusion between the ontological and functional dimensions of *dharma* may be considered as *adharma*, which is going contrary to one's *dharma*. *Adharma* entails a radical negation of the nature or essence of a thing. The Hindu tradition locates the root of *adharma* in *avidya* (ignorance of who one is) leading to *ahamkara* (the tendency to separate oneself from that which sustains us and to assert one's independent existence over against all others). This is consonant with the unitive vision of reality as expressed in cosmotheandricism, where the *dharma* of each is to contribute to *lokasamgrah*, the well being of all. Though there is an inherent danger here of isolating and reifying one's *dharma* on sociological or religious

basis as *varnasramadharma*, *jatidharma*, *kuladharma*, etc., as happened in the Indian social organization, the broader understanding of *dharma* as the manifestation of the divine essence or nature (*sanatana dharma*) in the created reality inviting it to adhere to the divine *dharma*, rather than to any human made *dharma*, helps transcend such dangers. One's *dharma*, thus, becomes a conscious participation in the divine *dharma*.

## **EUCHARIST AS THE CHRISTIAN *DHARMA***

The Christian *dharma* refers to the essence or nature of a Christian as well as to the corresponding behaviour that reveals one to be a Christian. One becomes a Christian ontologically by participating in the divine life in Christ through the Spirit. Becoming a Christian is a Trinitarian reality, the truth of which is manifested in the personal life of Christians. This fact can be better grasped by looking at the *dharma* of Jesus. The late professor George Soares-Prabhu, S.J., biblical scholar and theologian, who has initiated and endeavoured to interpret the Christian Scriptures in the Indian categories of thought, has used the concept of *dharma* to understand and articulate the religion, spirituality and the mission and ministry of Jesus.<sup>9</sup> He describes the *dharma* of Jesus in terms of the love commandment in which the love of God and the love of neighbour are fused together. The foundation of Jesus' *dharma* is his experience of the love of God and the consequence of this experience is his commitment to love, freedom and justice for all people, especially those who are deprived of them and who suffer on account of the deprivation. Thus, the whole life of Jesus, both in its horizontal and vertical dimensions, including his passion, death and resurrection, is a manifestation of his *dharma*.

The entire event of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus or the paschal mystery is ritually celebrated in the eucharist, inviting the participants to become part of that event and to conform one's life to the paschal mystery. In this sense, the eucharist recapitulates and represents the *dharma* of Jesus and,

thereby, reveals the Christian *dharma*. It reveals who Christians are by transforming them into the Body of Christ, “a sacrament for the humanity”<sup>10</sup> the temples of the life giving presence of God in the world. It also reveals how Christians should conduct their lives in the world as members of the Body of Christ. In other words, while the cultic celebration of the eucharist ritually celebrates and proclaims the Christian *dharma* in the cultic sphere, the life of the Christian in the social sphere becomes the locus for the manifestation of the Christian *dharma* as a lived reality. Thus, the *dharma* of Jesus, which is nothing but the *dharma* of God, becomes the *dharma* of the Christian in the eucharist, both in the cultic celebration as well as in the life that has become ‘completely eucharistic.’<sup>11</sup>

Jesus, as the manifestation of God’s *dharma*, is God’s life-giving presence in the world; the eucharist is Jesus’ life-giving presence in the world; the Christian life is the living proclamation of the life-giving presence of God in Christ in the world made possible through the christic transformation effected by the participation in the cultic celebration of the eucharist. The christic transformation functionally manifests itself in the social sphere of the Christian existence by making our lives completely eucharistic, just as Jesus made his whole life into a eucharist. The living proclamation becomes real and authentic to the extent that Christians actually become a source of life, the bread of life through their commitment to human freedom, peace, love, justice and solidarity, that is, through their commitment to *lokasamgraha*, the well-being of all, “the restoration of the world to God.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the eucharist eminently manifests the Christian *dharma*. It describes who a Christian ontologically is – the living and life-giving presence of Jesus Christ in the world. Prescriptively, it stipulates the functions that flow from the ontological status – to be eucharistic, that is to say, to become a source of life by being a bearer of Christ in the world through one’s eucharistic communion with Christ. These two dimensions of the Christian *dharma* as represented by the eucharist underscore the two facets of the love commandment – “the characteristic

mark of a Christian”<sup>13</sup> – namely, the love of God and the love of neighbour that characterized the *dharma* of Jesus. Thus, the Christian *dharma* as represented by the eucharist is rooted and grounded in Jesus’ own *dharma*.

## POST VATICAN LITURGY DOCUMENTS

After having clarified the concept of *dharma* and the way it is used in relation to the eucharist as to designate it as the Christian *dharma*, I shall now analyze some of the encyclicals of the recent popes on the eucharist to identify the *dharma* vision in them. The Second Vatican Council in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, sought to consolidate and advance the liturgical reform in the church. It was followed by two papal encyclicals in the post-Vatican period<sup>1</sup>, namely, *Mysterium Fidei*<sup>14</sup> of pope Paul VI and *Dominicae Cena*e of pope John Paul II. Recently there were two more documents, namely, the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* of pope John Paul II and *Redemptionis Sacramentum*<sup>15</sup> by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments together with the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. These documents have the central purpose of making the eucharist the core of Christian life and experience. Thus, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* aims at re-invigourating the Christian life. *Mysterium Fidei* addresses some of the problems concerning the doctrine of the eucharist and deals with the questions of private Mass, transubstantiation and the devotion to the eucharist. *Dominicae Cena*e emphasizes the importance of the eucharistic mystery for the life of the church and of the priest. The aim of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* is to make the eucharist “shine forth in the life of the faithful”. *Redemptionis Sacramentum* seeks to further the aim of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* by issuing new norms and reaffirming the old ones.

Before I proceed with the discussion on the *dharma* vision of the eucharist in these documents, I would like to offer a few general observations. First, the underlying theology of the eucharist in these documents is a faithful reiteration of the

Tridentine doctrine of the eucharist. They give renewed emphasis to the traditional doctrines of sacrifice, memorial, sacrament, and real presence. Undoubtedly, these are central to the Catholic faith on the eucharist and any deviation would imply a dilution of the Catholic faith. Generally Catholics, with the exception of an isolated few, faithfully adhere to these doctrines of the church. However, we are far removed from the problems encountered by the church in the Reformation period and as addressed by Trent. Today's problems do not concern so much doctrines as the link between the cult and the Christian life. This calls for new interpretations of doctrines so that the eucharist may be seen as integral to the Christian existence. It is new interpretation, rather than a mere verbal reiteration of the doctrines, that is going to generate this vision and impart vigour and vitality to the Christian life. The absence of any substantial new interpretation of the Tridentine doctrine of the eucharist along this line gives the impression that the Catholic theological imagination has been ossified since the Council of Trent!

Second, besides affirming the Tridentine doctrine, these documents, by and large, address the cultic dimension of the Christian life. Their focus, by and large, is on the eucharistic prayers, the sacred music, the sacred vessels, the sacred vestments and furnishing, the matter of the eucharist, the rubrics, communion, the eucharistic worship and its adaptation to the cultural context of the people. It is unquestionable that the eucharistic liturgy must be conducted in a dignified setting in a dignified way in a manner consonant with the universal practice of the church and the socio-cultural context of the people. However, only a minuscule part of Christian life is expended in the cultic sphere. The greater part of it is lived in the social sphere beyond the sphere of the cult. Therefore, revitalizing the Christian cultic life need not necessarily imply a corresponding revitalizing of Christian life in the larger sphere. Rather, the effort to live a committed Christian life of faith in the world will generate the desired renewal in the cultic sphere. It would entail liberating the



eucharist from the iron grip of the cult and allowing it to actualize itself in the life of the Christian beyond the cult.

Third, some of the documents do indicate an orientation of the eucharist toward the larger sphere of the Christian life. For example, the notion of ‘social love’ as indicated in *Mysterium Fidei*, the emphasis on the eucharist as ‘the school of love’ as shown in *Dominicae Cena*, the need of ‘making life completely eucharistic’ as mentioned in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and similar notions advanced by the recent popes in their letters and addresses seek to provide an understanding of the eucharist as integral to the understanding of Christian existence in the world. However, this line of thought, which is constitutive of the *dharma* vision of the eucharist, remains inadequately developed and as subtexts to the cultic understanding of the eucharist. In this paper I intend to take up these overlooked subtexts in the magisterial teachings and to substantiate the argument that the eucharist is the *dharma* of the Christian.

## **DHARMA VISION OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE POST-VATICAN DOCUMENTS**

As already mentioned, some of the post-Vatican documents on liturgy show a certain awareness of the intrinsic link between the cultic and testamentary traditions of the eucharist.<sup>16</sup> Although the documents do not give an exhaustive treatment of the issue, they offer some elementary direction for a eucharistic theology that would take into account the link between the cult and the Christian life in the world. The fact that there is no single document systematically dealing with the eucharist and its social-ethical dimension, and that the teachings on this issue are found scattered through various encyclicals, letters, homilies and addresses of the popes, creates difficulties for developing a broader theology of the eucharist. However, the new orientation given by the popes offers building blocks for dealing with the eucharist as the *dharma* of the Christian.

## **MYSTERIUM FIDEI: EUCHARIST AND SOCIAL LOVE**

The encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* of pope Paul VI was written specifically to address some of the problems concerning the doctrine of the eucharist, particularly, “with reference either to Masses which are celebrated in private, or to the dogma of transubstantiation, or to devotion to the eucharist.”<sup>17</sup> The encyclical emphasizes the teaching of the Council of Trent on the eucharist: that the eucharist is a sacrifice, it is a sacrifice of propitiation, it is the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus; it is a sacrament, as well as the doctrine of transubstantiation and real presence of Christ in the eucharist. It also affirms the centrality of the eucharist in the life of Christians, and the public and social nature of the Mass as taught by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.<sup>18</sup> As is evident, the problems concern the cultic celebration of the eucharist and, hence, the focus of the encyclical is mainly on the issues surrounding the cultic sphere of the church’s life.

However, there are a few exceptions where the encyclical goes beyond the cultic sphere and associates cult with life. To this effect, there is a remarkable statement in the encyclical. After stating that “the reserved eucharist is the spiritual centre of a religious community, or of a parish. or even of the universal church and of all of humanity”, it says:

From this it follows that the worship paid to the divine eucharist strongly impels the soul to cultivate a “social” love, by which the common good is given preference over the good of the individual. Let us consider as our own the interests of the community, of the parish, of the entire church, extending our charity to the whole world, because we know that everywhere there are members of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

In this passage, which is quoted again in the address given to the bishops of the United States in 1978,<sup>20</sup> one finds rare instance of connecting the eucharist with social responsibility. Here the worship of the eucharist is brought into explicit and close relationship with social love according to which the good of the

individual becomes subordinate to the common good. Accordingly, making the interests of the parish, the community, the entire church and the whole world our own is seen as integral to the worship of the eucharist. This, in an eminent way, highlights the *dharma* vision of the eucharist. In the same address pope Paul VI sought to give further clarification to the connection between the eucharist and Christian life and, thus, to underscore the eucharistic *dharma*. Addressing the hierarchy in America he said:

The eucharist is of supreme importance in our ministry as priests and bishops, making present Christ's salvific activity. The eucharist is of supreme relevance to our people in their Christian lives. It is of supreme effectiveness for the transformation of the world in justice, holiness, and peace. Precisely, therefore, because of the intimate relationship between the eucharist and the apostolate to which we dedicate ourselves, we wish to reflect with you on several aspects of this sacrament, which is the bread of life.<sup>21</sup>

In this context he also interpreted the statement found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that "the eucharist is the summit and source of Christian life" in relation to its link with the apostolate. Regarding the effectiveness of the eucharistic celebration he says, that the people of God

can draw unlimited strength from the eucharist to collaborate actively in the mission of the church. It is the summit of their lives, not in the sense that their other activities are not important, but in the sense that, for their full effectiveness, these activities must be united with Christ's salvific action and be associated with his redemptive sacrifice.<sup>22</sup>

By uniting human activities to the salvific mission of Christ through the eucharist, the pope broadens the scope of interpreting the notion of the eucharist as the source and summit so as to include the social mission of the church as related to the eucharist.

Thus, even though the link between the eucharist and its social ethical demands does not find further elaboration in the

rest of the encyclical, this association had become one of the concerns of the pope as is evident from his addresses and homilies.<sup>23</sup> The fact that the pope stresses the link between the eucharist and social love in *Mysterium Fidei* and he is aware of this interrelationship has important implications. First, it can open up the possibility of reading and understanding the social teachings of the church in conjunction with the eucharist. Conversely, it would also make it possible to raise questions about the lack of social orientation in the liturgy documents. Previously, it would have looked somewhat strange to bring social issues into the discussion of the liturgy. Even *Sacrosanctum Concilium* did not provide for such a linkage. Second, the subsequent teachings on the eucharist could develop further this initial attempt to incorporate a social dimension into the understanding of the eucharist. A certain orientation toward this development is seen in the encyclicals of pope John Paul II and in some of his letters and homilies.

## **DOMINICAE CENAE: EUCHARIST AS SCHOOL OF LOVE**

In *Dominicae Cenae* pope John Paul II seeks to underscore the significance of the eucharistic mystery in the life of the church and of the priest. The encyclical, consistent with the teachings of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* as well as of *Mysterium Fidei*, emphasizes the public character of the eucharistic liturgy, its intimate link with the church, its centrality in Christian life, its sacrificial and sacramental nature and the notion of the two tables, namely, the table of the word of God and the table of the bread of the Lord. The encyclical highlights the cultic dimension of the eucharistic liturgy and the importance of the cultic worship of the eucharist. From this perspective it stands in the tradition of Trent and the Second Vatican Council.

At the same time, the encyclical also builds on and develops certain aspects that remained implicit or partially developed in the traditional teachings on the eucharist. Especially in the sections

on 'eucharist and charity', 'eucharist and neighbour', and 'eucharist and life,'<sup>24</sup> the encyclical attempts to link the cultic dimension of the eucharist with the 'social love' that pope Paul VI had already introduced in *Mysterium Fidei*. Before *Dominicae Cena*, pope John Paul II in his letters and addresses had already made an effort to apply the notion of 'social love' to the understanding of the mystery of the eucharist. However, it is only in this encyclical that the ideas of the pope find a systematic development. Hence it is appropriate to begin with the encyclical.

*Dominicae Cena* provides a potential theological foundation for the *dharma* vision of the eucharist as it seeks to connect the Christian life, love, and the eucharist. After affirming, in conformity with the teaching of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, that 'the eucharistic worship constitutes the soul of all Christian life', it states,

In fact, Christian life is expressed in the fulfilling of the greatest commandment, that is to say, in the love of God and neighbour, and this love finds its source in the Blessed Sacrament, which is commonly called the sacrament of love.<sup>25</sup>

In the eucharist, as the sacrament of love, primacy is given to the love of God that is revealed in the paschal mystery which is being made present in the cult, and which, in turn, opens up the path of love for those who take part in the eucharist. Thus the encyclical says:

Together with this unfathomable and free gift, which is charity revealed in its fullest degree in the saving sacrifice of the Son of God, the sacrifice of which the eucharist is the indelible sign, there also springs up within us a lively response of love. We not only know love; we ourselves begin to love. We enter, so to speak, upon the path of love and along this path make progress. Thanks to the eucharist, the love that springs up within us from the eucharist develops in us, becomes deeper and grows stronger. Eucharistic worship is therefore precisely the expression of that love which is the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation. This worship springs

from the love and serves the love to which we are all called in Jesus Christ.<sup>26</sup>

In this statement one finds a strong theological foundation for a *dharma* vision of the eucharist as it brings the eucharist into the heart of Christian living. The foundation is the notion of love – both the divine love and the human love that springs from it. In the eucharist, by coming into touch with the source of love, the participants understand the finality of Christian life itself in terms of love. The encyclical states in unequivocal terms that love is ‘the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation’.

In the section, ‘eucharist and neighbour’, the encyclical establishes a link between the experience of God’s love in the eucharist and the love of neighbour. The argument is based on the Catholic understanding of the origin of the value and dignity of the human person. As the encyclical explains, the source of human dignity consists in the fact that “Christ offers Himself equally to each one,”<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

and in the eucharist this self-offering of Christ actually takes place. Christ’s offering of himself and human participation in his life in the eucharist are simultaneously the source of each person’s dignity and the rationale for loving one’s neighbour. According to the encyclical,

If our eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person. The awareness of that dignity becomes the deepest motive of our relationship with our neighbour.<sup>28</sup>

It also calls for a special concern for the oppressed people of the world, especially because oppression and injustice inevitably results in the denial of the dignity of the human person. Hence the encyclical strongly emphasizes that, “We must also become particularly sensitive to all human suffering and misery, to all injustice and wrong and seek the way to redress them effectively.”<sup>29</sup> The important point to be noted here is that the commitment to the neighbour with a view to eradicating suffering,

misery, injustice and wrong derives from a deeper understanding of the mystery of the eucharist. According to the encyclical, the reality of the indwelling of God in every person effected through their participation in the eucharistic communion, rather than any humanistic concerns, is the foundation and motivation for Christian social commitment. Inviting Christians to understand the value of persons from the perspective of the eucharist, the encyclical states:

Let us learn to discover with respect the truth about the inner self that becomes the dwelling place of God present in the eucharist. Christ comes into the hearts of our brothers and sisters and visits their consciences. How the image of each and every one changes, when we become aware of this reality, when we make it the subject of our reflection! The sense of the eucharistic mystery leads us to a love<sup>30</sup> for our neighbour, to a love for every human being.

Thus, God's indwelling through Christ in the eucharist effects a christic transformation of the faithful. This christic transformation becomes a lived reality through our love for the neighbour and for every human being. The eucharist not only makes us conscious of the dignity and value of persons, but it also leads us to commit ourselves to redress effectively the injustices that deny human dignity. In this context, the pope rightly states,

The authentic sense of the eucharist becomes of itself the school of active love for neighbour. We know that this is the true and full order of love that the Lord has taught us: "By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples." The eucharist<sup>31</sup> educates us to this love in a deeper way.

In this way, the pope understands the authenticity of the eucharistic celebration as intrinsically related to the love of neighbour, particularly those who suffer oppression and injustice. This way of understanding the eucharist, as proposed by the pope in *Dominicae Cenaе*, allows a glimpse of eucharist as the *dharma* of the Christian.

There is a revealing statement that appears toward the end of the first section of the encyclical. Acknowledging the need for greater and fuller development of the reflections upon the worship of the eucharistic mystery, the pope says:

In particular, it would be possible to link what has been said about the effects of the eucharist on love for others with what we have just noted about commitments undertaken towards humanity and the church in eucharistic communion, and then to outline the picture of that “new earth” that springs from the eucharist through every “new life”. In this sacrament of bread and wine, of food and drink, everything that is human really undergoes a singular transformation and elevation.<sup>32</sup>

Here the pope explicitly admits the dynamic orientation of the eucharist toward the world, and also the need for developing a eucharistic theology that would incorporate such a dynamism of the eucharist into its reflection. The theological foundation for this direction can be found in the definition of the eucharist as the sacrament of love – both divine love and the love of human beings for one another. Moreover, the encyclical’s perception that ‘the commitment undertaken towards humanity and the church in the eucharistic communion’ points to a link between the celebration of the eucharist and commitment to transform the world in conformity with the vision of the reign of God. The encyclical connects ‘the picture of the new earth’ with the eucharist. That is to say, the eucharist is linked to the new earth through its power to transform the participants into ‘new selves’. In the encyclical’s understanding, the personal transformation effected through the eucharist opens up the way toward a new earth.

This dynamism of the eucharist is also emphasized in the context of the discussion of the sacrificial nature of the eucharist. After stating that the eucharist is the sacrifice of the redemption and also the sacrifice of the new covenant, the encyclical goes on to discuss the cosmic nature of the sacrifice. It says:

Precisely by making this single sacrifice of our salvation present, men and the world are restored to God



through the paschal newness of redemption. This restoration cannot cease to be: it is the foundation of the “new and eternal covenant” of God with man and of man with God. If it were missing, one would have to question both the excellence of the sacrifice of the redemption, which in fact was perfect and definitive, and also the sacrificial value of the Mass. In fact, the eucharist, being a true sacrifice, brings about this restoration to God.<sup>33</sup>

In this highly nuanced statement, the encyclical, without questioning the value of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, indirectly challenges the significance of a eucharistic celebration that does not promote the restoration of human persons and the human world to God. Because the sacrificial nature of the eucharist is seen as linked with the renewal and restoration of humans and their world in line with the love of neighbour and the commitment to humanity to realize the ‘new earth’, one can conclude that the encyclical endeavors to incorporate ‘social love’ and the necessity of commitment that flows from it into the understanding of the eucharist.

The crucial point to be noted is that, unlike *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the understanding of the eucharist presented here makes an attempt to go beyond its cultic aspects by incorporating some of its cosmic dimensions. According to the encyclical, the eucharist allows a theological perception of the new creation and, thereby, makes the commitment to transform the human reality as an integral part of the eucharist. The explication of the cosmic dimension of the eucharist in terms of commitment to humanity and the church, with the intention of transforming everything human so that the biblical vision of the new earth may be realized, helps bring out the *dharma* vision of the eucharist. Not that the cosmic significance of the eucharist was totally absent from the understanding of the eucharist; but that in understanding its cosmic dimension, seldom has the role of human commitment in the process of transforming the world been sufficiently emphasized. Hence the encyclical’s attempt to relate social commitment to the world-transforming power of the eucharist must be seen as a

renewed effort to recapture the authentic meaning of the eucharist. However, this effort still remains in its initial stages and, hence, as the encyclical says, it “could be developed at greater length and more fully.”<sup>34</sup> No serious attempt has been made so far in this direction.

In this regard, the development of the understanding of the social dimension of the eucharist in the thought of pope John Paul II could probably indicate the direction for such a eucharistic theology. A brief overview of a few more of his writings can provide further clarity to the understanding of the eucharist along the lines of Christian *dharma*. In a letter to Cardinal J.R. Knox on the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress at Lourdes in 1981, the pope wrote in 1979,

This lived tradition is the starting point from which the Congress can proceed toward seeing more deeply and expressing to today’s world how and why the ‘new world’ is bound up with the eucharist and the eucharist itself with Christ’s passion and resurrection.<sup>35</sup>

The theme of that Eucharistic Congress was ‘Jesus Christ, the bread broken for the sake of a new world’, and it is in this context that the pope brings the eucharist into explicit relationship with the new world – a world marked by “generous distribution of bread” and where “the wall between people who are enemies” is broken down.<sup>36</sup> Quoting the command to lay down our lives for one another as Christ has done, the pope says, “The results expected from the bread of life that the church breaks and distributes in Christ’s name are a ‘new being’ (Col.3: 10), a new world bearing the sign of its filial relationships with God and its fraternal relationships between people, a new humanity.”<sup>37</sup>

The letter goes on to emphasize the moral consequences of the bond with the body of Christ and the sharing in the life of the risen Christ for both the participants and society. It says:

There are profound implications here, first, regarding the relationship between the communicants: “the eucharist creates the church”, it unites as members

of the body those who partake in the very body of Christ: “that all may be one” (Jn. 17:21). There are also profound consequences for society itself, for the way of drawing near to our fellow human beings, especially the poorest, to serve them, to share with them the bread of earth and the bread of love, to build with them a world more just and more worthy of God’s children, and at the same time to prepare a ‘new world’ yet to come. ... The Lourdes Congress will have as its task to make clear in detail the entire spiritual and ethical dynamism that the eucharistic Christ brings to those who receive him with the right disposition.<sup>38</sup>

Like *Dominicae Cena*, this letter establishes a link between the eucharist and the moral and social responsibilities for building a new world. According to the letter, the cultic celebration of the eucharist constitutes the participants into the body of Christ. But it does not stop there; for the spiritual and ethical dynamism of the eucharist ought to manifest itself in the commitment to building a more just world. In this process the poorest will have special care shown to them.

The connection between the eucharist and Christian living in the world is even more pronounced in the homily of pope John Paul II at Phoenix Park, Dublin, in 1979.<sup>39</sup> Emphasizing the link between cult and life, the pope says,

Our full participation in the eucharist is the real source of the Christian spirit that we wish to see in our personal lives and in all aspects of society. Whether we serve in politics, in the economic, cultural, social or scientific field – no matter what our occupation is – the eucharist is a challenge to our daily lives.<sup>40</sup>

From this perspective, the eucharist is not merely related to Christian ‘charity’. The scope of involvement is enlarged so as to encompass all the spheres of human activity. In other words, the eucharistic communion with Christ cannot be confined to the cultic sphere alone. The union with Christ that is established in the cult should manifest itself in the social sphere. Thus the pope says,

There must always be consistency between what we believe and what we do. We cannot live on the glories of our past Christian history. Our union with Christ in the eucharist must be expressed in the truth of our lives today – in our actions, in our behaviour, in our life-style, and in our relationships with others. For each one of us the eucharist is a call to ever greater effort, so that we may live as true followers of Jesus: truthful in our speech, generous in our deeds, concerned, respectful of the dignity and rights of all persons, whatever their rank or income, self sacrificing, fair and just, kind, considerate, compassionate and self-controlled – looking to the well-being of our families, our young people, our country, Europe, and the world. The truth of our union with Jesus Christ in the eucharist is tested by whether or not we really love our fellow men and women; it is tested by how we treat others, especially our families: husbands and wives, children and parents, brothers and sisters. It is tested by whether or not we try to be reconciled with our enemies, by whether or not we forgive those who hurt us or offend us. It is tested by whether we practise in life what our faith teaches us.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, according to pope John Paul II, the litmus test of our communion with Christ is an authentic Christian life manifested in our commitment to our fellow human beings, the various manners of which are clearly and in detail specified by the pope in his homily. More than merely linking the eucharist with the social sphere, the pope emphasizes the challenge to live the eucharist, to practise in our lives what faith teaches us. In this way the sphere of the cult is expanded to include the sphere of everyday Christian life. The pope's homily takes the discourse on the eucharist beyond the eucharistic doctrines to the sphere of the implications and consequences of celebrating the eucharist for the modern world. In other words, the doctrinal sphere of the eucharist is enlarged and the question of living the Christian faith is included as part of the eucharistic discourse. In the process the pope has facilitated an understanding of the eucharist as the Christian *dharma*.

## ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA: *EUCCHARISTIC LIFE*

*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* is the last encyclical of pope John Paul II in which the pope seeks to highlight the centrality of the eucharist for the life of the church. The purpose of the encyclical, which bears the mark of his personal testimony to the eucharist, is “to effectively help banish the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice, so that the eucharist will continue to shine forth in all its radiant mystery.”<sup>42</sup> With this aim the encyclical presents a brief theology of the eucharist (Ch 1), the church’s relationship with the eucharist (Ch 2), the apostolicity of the eucharist (Ch 3), the eucharist and ecclesial communion (Ch 4), the dignity of the eucharistic celebration (Ch 5), and, Mary as the woman of the eucharist (Ch 6). The encyclical ends with a personal testimony to the importance of the eucharist and with an invitation to make the eucharist central to Christian living. In keeping with the overall aim of this essay, I shall explore in this section the *dharma* vision of the eucharist as reflected in the encyclical.

Since the avowed purpose of the encyclical is to “banish the dark clouds of unacceptable doctrine and practice,” it reiterates the traditional doctrines of the eucharist and affirms the traditional practice of the church concerning the eucharist. In the process it points out that any deviation from the traditional teaching and practice of the church casts a shadow on the radiant mystery and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to safeguard the eucharist. The encyclical proposes neither any new teaching nor any new practice that could contribute to the eucharistic practice and life. It only recapitulates and reaffirms the teachings and practice of the church. From this perspective, the focus of the encyclical is on the cultic sphere.

At the same time, the encyclical occasionally strains to go beyond the cultic dimension of the eucharist to encompass the total life of the believers. One such occurrence is found toward the end of the doctrinal section of chapter one. The document

highlights the eschatological thrust that marks the celebration of the eucharist<sup>43</sup> and states:

A significant consequence of the eschatological tension inherent in the eucharist is also the fact that it spurs us on our journey through history and plants a seed of living hope in our daily commitment to the work before us. Certainly the Christian vision leads to the expectation of “new heavens” and “new earth” (Rev 21:1), but this increases, rather than lessens, *our sense of responsibility for the world today*. I wish to reaffirm this forcefully at the beginning of the new millennium, so that Christians will feel more obliged than ever not to neglect their duties as citizens in this world. Theirs is the task of contributing with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan.<sup>44</sup>

In this paragraph, the pope explicitly and forcefully correlates the social responsibility of the Christian as stated in *Gaudium et Spes*<sup>45</sup> with the eschatological tension implied in the celebration of the eucharist. The pope goes on to specify the social responsibilities of the Christian in a ‘globalized’ world: to work for peace, to base relationships between peoples on solid premises of justice and solidarity, to defend human life from conception to its natural end, and to give hope to those who have little hope, namely, the weakest, the most powerless and the poorest. In this context the pope refers to the testamentary tradition of the eucharist to substantiate his point.

Significantly, in their account of the Last Supper, the Synoptics recount the institution of the Eucharist, while the Gospel of John relates, as a way of bringing out its profound meaning, the account of the “washing of the feet”, in which Jesus appears as the teacher of communion and service (cf. *Jn 13:1-20*). The Apostle Paul, for his part, says that it is “unworthy” of Christian community to partake of the Lord’s Supper amid division and indifference towards the poor (cf. *I Cor 11:17-22, 27-34*)<sup>46</sup>

By emphasizing the Christian responsibility to the world as implied in the testamentary tradition of the eucharist, the pope incorporates into the theology of the eucharist the social ethical dimension of the Christian life. This is further evident in the concluding paragraph of the section.

Proclaiming the death of the Lord “until he comes” (1 Cor 11: 26) entails that all who take part in the eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely “Eucharistic”. It is this fruit of a transfigured existence and a commitment to transforming the world in accordance with the Gospel which splendidly illustrates the eschatological tension inherent in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the Christian life as a whole: “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20)<sup>47</sup>

Here the pope uses eucharist in an adjectival sense to describe the quality of the Christian life in the world. The participation in the cultic celebration of the eucharist entails a transfiguration of Christian existence as well as a commitment to transform the world. This implies that the eucharist does not end with the cultic worship. Its cultic dimension is essentially linked with the existential realities of the Christian life in the world. In other words, the cultic celebration of the eucharist gets completed when it becomes a lived reality in the life of the Christian.

The use of eucharist as an adjective for the Christian life is something new insofar as the papal encyclicals are concerned. It furnishes a new perspective on eucharistic theology and a new direction to Christian existence. If the finality of the Christian life is to live a eucharistic life, to make the eucharist the Christian *dharma*, then the goal of the cultic celebration of the eucharist is intimately linked with the finality of the life of Christians in the world. Thus, just as the eucharist is a sacrifice, a memorial representation, a sacrament and the real presence of Jesus Christ, so also the Christian life has to be a sacrifice, a memorial representation, a sacrament and the real presence of Jesus Christ in order for it to be eucharistic. In this way, the understanding of the eucharist enhances the meaning of Christian existence, and

the understanding of the Christian life in terms of the eucharist opens up new and deeper perceptions of the meaning of the eucharist.

I would like to conclude the analysis of *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* with the following remarks. After discussing the world transforming power of the eucharist through Christian love, pope John Paul II in *Dominicae Cena*e suggested that this line of thought needs to be “developed at greater length and more fully”. One would have expected the pope, as one who is keenly aware of the social implications of the eucharist, to undertake and complete this urgent task in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. But belying all expectations, the pope chose to focus mainly on the cultic sphere, confining the social consequences of celebrating the eucharist to a minor part of the encyclical. However, the pope has convincingly pointed out the challenge of the cultic celebration of the eucharist in making the life of the participant completely eucharistic. Only when the life of those who participate in the eucharist is transformed and becomes completely eucharistic, “the eucharist will continue to shine forth in all its radiant mystery”, as expected by the encyclical. In other words, the luminosity of the eucharist will increase to the extent it becomes the Christian *dharma*.

## CONCLUSION

Pope John Paul II has emphatically stated that love is “the authentic and deepest characteristic of Christian vocation.”<sup>48</sup>

This love, which includes love of God as well as love of neighbour, finds its source in the eucharist, the sacrament of love.<sup>49</sup> In the ritual celebration of the eucharist, the participants receive this love and undergo a christic transformation through the indwelling of the God of love.<sup>50</sup> This changed existence is manifested, as pope Paul VI says, in ‘social love,’<sup>51</sup> that is, in the love of neighbour. This christic transformation of the Christian leads toward commitment to the transformation of the world. In this way, Christians reveal in their personal lives the truth of the newness of life that springs from their participation in the cultic



celebration of the eucharist. The changed life of the Christian becomes eucharistic. Thus, the eucharist as the Christian *dharma* represents, at once, the christic transformation and the consequences of this transformation for Christian existence in the world. It reveals the descriptive and the prescriptive dimensions of being a Christian.

This understanding poses great challenges to Christian living. All of us are accustomed to having a ‘nice eucharistic liturgy’ with lots of novelty, variety, excitement, and with everybody ‘doing’ something to indicate an egalitarian celebration. But the fact is that often such celebrations beautifully cover up the existence of divisions and the prevalence of prejudices in the community based on caste, class, gender, race and language. It is not uncommon that some of us who actively participate in the cultic worship are notorious in acting in ways that are totally contrary to the spirit of the eucharist. That is to say, our eucharist camouflages our *adharma*. The tragedy is that the current theology of the eucharist does not permit one to recognize the contradiction that exists between the cultic sphere and the social sphere of the Christian life. The understanding of the eucharist as the Christian *dharma*, on the contrary, challenges such cleavages and makes it imperative for us not only to experience an interior union with God in Christ, but also to manifest it concretely in our personal lives. It will instil in our hearts the conviction that the christic transformation experienced during the cultic celebration of the eucharist must necessarily pervade and permeate our entire life.

This is the total thrust of the cultic and the testamentary traditions of the eucharist which is gradually being emphasized by the papal encyclicals. As we have seen, the encyclicals and the writings of the recent popes provide a *dharma* vision of the eucharist as well as the resources for dealing with the eucharist as the Christian *dharma*. Focusing on these resources, I have made a modest attempt to explore the possibility of dealing with the eucharist as the Christian *dharma* within the limited scope of this essay. It would be

the task of the theologians to capitalize on these available resources and to articulate a comprehensive theology of the eucharist from the perspective of the Christian *dharma* integrating the cultic and the testamentary dimensions of the eucharist. Personalizing the *dharma*, vision of the eucharist would be one of the surest and effective ways to increase the vitality and vigour of Christian life in contemporary times.

## Notes

1. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17 April 2003. Supplement to *Petrus*, XXV, nos. 5-6, May-June 2003, (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2003), no.10.
2. Ibid.
3. Gavin Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 52.
4. B. Kuppaswamy, *Dharma And Society: A Study in Social Values* (Madras: Macmillan Press, 1977), 16.
5. R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 2-3.
6. Julius Lipner, *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86.
7. R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 38 A. Ramamurthy, *The Philosophical Foundations of Hinduism* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2000), 110-111.
9. See the articles of George Soares-Prabhu, "The Dharma of Jesus", "The Love Commandment", "The Dharma of the Biblical Prophet" and other essays in Scaria Kuthirakattel, ed., *Collected Writings of George M. Soares-Prabhu, S.J. Vol 3: A Biblical Theology for India* (Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2003). See also his articles, "The Dharma of Jesus: An Interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount", "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society", and other articles in Francis X. D'Sa, ed., *Collected Writings of George M. Soares-Prabhu, S.J. Vol 4: Theology of Liberation: An Indian Biblical Perspective* (Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 2001)
10. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 22.
11. Ibid., no.20
12. John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae: The Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist*, 24 February 1980, in *Christ to the World*, Vol. XXV, no 4

(1980) 178-187 and Vol. XXV, no.5 (1980) 258-273. The quoted expression is found in no.9.

13. Ibid. 5
14. Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*: On the Doctrine and Worship of the Eucharist, 3 September 1965, in Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts, by International Commission on English in Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 378-392, no.176. Henceforth DOL. Though *Mysterium Fidei* appeared some months before the closing of the Council, it is considered as post-Vatican in the sense that it came after *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.
15. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*: Instruction on Certain Matters to be Observed or to be Avoided Regarding the Most Holy Eucharist, 25 March 2004. Supplement to *Petrus*, XXVI, no. 7, July 2004, (Mumbai: St Pauls, 2004)
16. Xavier Leon-Dufour identifies two traditions of the eucharist in the New Testament: the cultic and the testamentary. He locates the "cultic tradition" mainly in the Synoptic Gospel, which emphasizes remembering Jesus in the liturgical actions of the community. He finds "the testamentary tradition" especially in John, which emphasizes remembering Jesus "by an existential attitude of service and love that reflects the way Jesus himself had lived in this world." Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Sharing of the Eucharistic Bread: The Testimony of the New Testament*, trans. J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). The quote is from page 95.
17. *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 10
18. Regarding the centrality of the eucharist, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states that the eucharist is the 'summit and source' of Christian life. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10. As regards the public and social nature of the eucharist, the document says, "every Mass has of itself a public and social character." *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 27
19. *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 69
20. Paul VI, Address to the bishops of Regions I and II of the United States, on the eucharistic sacrifice as centre of the Church's unity, 15 June 1978, in DOL. no.189, p. 435
21. Ibid., 433
22. Ibid., 434

23. In an address given to a general audience on the feast of Corpus Christi on June 7, 1971, the pope emphasized that “we cannot enter into communion with God, with Christ, if we are not in communion with one another. A preparation by familial charity is needed if we wish to enjoy the sacrament of charity and of unity, the eucharist. This too is a great lesson. What a change of heart our frequent communion calls for! What practical and social results our religious devotion can and must bring about: peace, pardon, concord, love for each other, goodness!” In DOL., no.181, p.422. The same point was stressed in a Homily at St. Paul’s-outside-the-Walls, on the feast of Corpus Christi in June 12, 1977. The pope says, “The eucharist thus puts the problem of our life as a supreme challenge of love, of choice, of fidelity; if we accept the challenge, the issue from being simply religious becomes social. .... Love received from Christ in the eucharist is communion with him and is therefore transformed into and expressed by our communion with our brothers and sisters – that is with all human beings, who actually are potentially our brothers and sisters.” In DOL., no.186, p. 430. In other words, the eucharistic communion cannot be limited to the cultic sphere alone. It has to find expression in the communion with other human beings.

24. *Dominicae Cenaе*, nos. 5-7

25. Ibid., no. 5

26. Ibid.

28. Ibid., no. 6

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., no. 6

32. Ibid., no. 7

33. Ibid., no. 9

34. Ibid., no. 7

35. John Paul II, Le Congrès eucharistique to Cardinal J.R. Knox, announcing the theme of the International Eucharistic Congress at Lourdes in 1981, 1 January 1979. An excerpt from the letter in translation is offered in DOL. no.190, pages 436-37. The quote is found in page 346.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., 347

38. Ibid.

39. John Paul II, Homily at Phoenix Park, Dublin: "The Eucharist Contains the Entire Spiritual Wealth of the Church", 29 September, 1979. An excerpt in translation is given in DOL., no. 193, pp. 442-444.
40. Ibid., 443
41. Ibid.
42. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 10
43. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, nos. 18-19
44. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no 20
45. *Gaudium et Spes*, no.39
46. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no.20. In a footnote the pope quotes the strictures of St. John Chrysostom on those who participate in the eucharist without fulfilling their duty toward the poor and needy: "What good is it if the Eucharistic table is overloaded with golden chalices when your brother is dying of hunger. Start by satisfying his hunger and then with what is left you may adorn the altar as well".
47. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no 20.
48. *Dominicae Cenaе*, no.5
49. Ibid.
50. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no.20 and *Dominicae Cenaе*, no. 6
51. *Mysterium Fidei*, no. 69

## **The Eucharist and Mission**

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### **Abstract**

The Eucharist is the inspiration and support of all who proclaim the good news. This is articulated by St. Paul when he wrote: "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (I Cor 11: 26). The Eucharist gathers individual Christians into one community and in turn sent them into the world, transformed and strengthened. Therefore, the Eucharist is rightly described as the centre and summit of Christian life. In this article the author considers the various aspects of the link between the Eucharist and the Church's mission. The author concludes by affirming that the Eucharistic table is the matrix of mission. It is there the Church and the world intersect in the presence of Jesus Christ. It is the place from which we are sent forth to love and serve the world. The Eucharist is the well-spring of mission for the world. When we move into the world in service to the poor and the needy, we do not cease to celebrate the Eucharist.

### **Keywords**

Eucharist as mission, Eucharist as constituting Church, grace, memorial, Eucharist as centre and summit of Christianity.

Through his incarnation the Lord Jesus became Emmanuel, God with us (Mt 1:23), to carry out his mission. At the end of his ministry he instituted the Eucharist, the new form of his presence. Thus, the Eucharist by its very nature is bound up with the mission of the Church. Even as the Church is for mission, so also the Eucharist is for mission. The Eucharist is the inspiration and support of all who proclaim the Good News. This is articulated

by St. Paul when he wrote: “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (I Cor 11: 26). The Eucharist gathers individual Christians into one community and in turn sends them into the world, transformed and strengthened. Therefore, the Eucharist is rightly described as the centre and summit of Christian life.

In this article we shall consider the various aspects of the link between the Eucharist and the Church’s mission focusing on the following points:

1. The Eucharist constitutes the Church
2. The grace of mission flows from it
3. It contains the missionary message
4. Eucharist is mission

## **1. Eucharist Constitutes the Church**

Baptism incorporates one into the Christian family, the Church, the community to which the mission of the Incarnate Lord is entrusted. Baptism is the external sign of the effective internal transformation into the discipleship of the Lord. Thus, baptism constitutes the Church. Every baptized person becomes part of the people of God, the missionary community, with a common dignity, based on one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God (Eph 4:5) though with different functions and roles.

However, in reality this community is called together (*ekkaleo*), made visible, concrete and tangible basically at the Eucharistic assembly. It is the Eucharist that gathers the baptized members into one community. The Eucharistic assembly is the visible presentation of the Church. In this sense the Eucharist constitutes the Church. Hence the Eucharist is at the heart of the Christian life. It is at the Eucharist that the Church is formed as a communion and community. It is formed into the likeness of the Lord and eventually sent out through the Eucharistic celebration. The earliest believers in the Apostles’ preaching expressed their communion, according to the Acts of the Apostles, in the breaking of the bread (2: 42). It was not only a continuation of the table

fellowship of the Lord with the disciples, but it also anticipated the imminence of the parousia of Jesus Christ (Mt 26:29).

The mystery dimension of the Christian life is experienced at the Eucharist in so far as in it we experience oneness with God and with each other which, in turn, is the source of inspiration for Christian living and witnessing. The Eucharist is an invitation to join the Lord and each other and to travel with them towards the eschatological fulfilment, a pilgrim people, for the Kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world (Mt 25:34).

With St. Augustine, the Second Vatican Council describes the Eucharist as a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 47). This reminds us of how the Eucharist not only gathers the community but also effects the quality of its existence. This fact is emphasized also by St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 10: 16-17). What is at issue is the quality of Christian life that has to be reflected in the actual celebration and in the life thereafter. Thus, the Eucharist brings about not only a deeper conversion in the participants but it makes them better instruments to witness to the world, with greater unity, solidarity and love. As John Paul II reminds us, “[t]he Eucharist brings about that unbreakable bond between communion and mission, which makes the Church the sacrament of the unity of the whole human race (*Lumen Gentium* 1)” (2000: 452).

## **2. The Grace of Mission flows from the Eucharist**

The bread that is broken opens up the life of the Christians and of the community to a sharing and self-giving life at the service of the world (Cf Jn 6:51). Even as Jesus gives himself in the Eucharist as food for the world, so also all those who participate in this self-giving of the Lord, are invited to participate in his mission of giving themselves to be at the service of the world, so that the world may have life in its fullness. In fact the very symbolism of the Eucharist, food and drink, brings out this constitutive element of sharing. The many table fellowships of the Lord, coupled with the signs/miracles of the multiplication



of the bread, the immediate background of the Eucharist, reinforce the aspect of sharing that we celebrate in the Eucharist. Thus, the Eucharist is an invitation to mission.

In the Johannine Eucharistic discourse Jesus describes himself as the true bread that came down from heaven as opposed to the manna that Moses gave to the people in the desert (Jn 6: 26ff). He is the Word, the new revelation and the bread that nourishes one for eternal life. The Bread of life is the symbol of the Word of God. Here we have the link between the Eucharist and the proclamation of the Word.

The Eucharist as a liturgical act is the celebration of the Christian Faith through symbols. Here the main symbols are bread and wine, the ordinary food of the people of Palestine. Food is a favourite symbol for the poor. The Lord intentionally makes use of this symbol to inculcate in the community of his disciples two key ideas: firstly, how the members of the community are to be drawn together towards each other and to the Lord by sharing of his body and blood in the Eucharistic species and secondly, how they are to be drawn towards the poor. This way the Eucharist leads to a missionary involvement in real life. The Eucharist is not just a dry gesture, but is the context and the content of mission.

We bring to the Eucharist the human realities, more so the boundary situations that stand in need of healing and transformation. In this sense, there can be no gap between the liturgy and the mission of the Church. They are two sides of the same Christian living. Both are expressions of the same faith: one in the form of celebration and the other of living it in day to day life.

Oscar Cullman, basing himself on the study of other scholars, has shown how there were two 'primitive types' of liturgy, one of St. Hippolytus and the other of ancient Egyptian liturgy. While the former emphasized the death of Christ, the latter refers to the return of the Lord and to the fellowship of the community gathered (Cullman: 5). A closer examination would show, in either case, that mission is at the core of the Eucharist in so far as the death of

Jesus Christ was the culmination of Jesus' ministry (Mk 3:6) and the return of the Lord looks forward to the eschatological fulfilment for which the community has to be prepared through the Eucharistic celebration as the anticipation of the heavenly banquet. Each Eucharist is a declaration of God's love for the world. It reminds us of the plight of the world and God's desire to transform it into God's Kingdom. Everything is given to us in the Eucharist and yet everything is not yet accomplished. This is the situation of the already and the not yet of the Eucharistic celebration. It is this not-yet dimension which is the first aspect of the mission. At the same time we also witness to others what we have experienced, inviting them to communion.

### **3. Eucharist contains the Missionary Message**

The Eucharist is the memorial of the Christ event, of Jesus Christ who went about doing good (Act 10:38). Hence there cannot be a Eucharistic celebration without leading the participants to that same mission. In the Eucharist we celebrate God's self-giving in Jesus Christ, at the service of humankind. As "Abba" experience was at the centre of Jesus' consciousness during his ministry and manifesting God as the Abba was the focus of his mission (Jn 12: 45 & 14: 9), so also the Eucharistic experience enables the participants to live the same spirit and thus to manifest God as the Father/Mother of all and each of them as brother/sister. Thus, the Eucharist invites us to be social prophets. One who has participated in the Eucharist cannot be blind to the dehumanizing situations of the world, still worse, cannot be agents of such situations. That would be profaning the body and blood of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11: 27). In the Indian context, the Eucharistic celebration is a condemnation of any sort of caste practice, or discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, age, profession, etc. Hence Walter Kaspar points out how gathering of the community in the Eucharist without mission becomes a sterile practice (1985:135). The community that participates in the Eucharist is transformed into Christ-like concern and compassion which makes Eastern theologians speak

of the process of *Christosis*, becoming Christ-like. That will enable the Christians to bear fruits of Christian living because the Eucharistic celebration.

The primary function of the Eucharist, as we have seen, is the calling together of the community. From it flows the mission of unity. For a world that suffers from deep divisions, the service that the Eucharistic community can render is the call to unity. The Church can enable communion to grow at every level of its own life and of society according to the model of unity that the Church celebrates in the Eucharist. This mission begins already with the life in the community that celebrates the Eucharist. The various divisions that we experience in our life, such as linguistic, regional, or based on interests, etc., must give way to the unity called by the Eucharistic celebration. If that does not happen, then in a way we too become the objects of St. Paul's reprimand to the Corinthians, who went through their Eucharist without rectifying the divisions within their Church.

This unity within the local communities that results from the Eucharistic celebration will enable those communities to bring that unity to the places of their ministry, such as parishes and places of various apostolates. This can also lead to Ecumenical and Inter-religious communion, with greater mutual respect and acceptance.

This communion can take shape also in the form of greater hope for history where no one is marginalized or exploited but all experience a sense of belonging and participation. The Eucharist as centre and synthesis of the history of salvation makes us understand the dynamic thrust of history and enables us to read the signs of the times in a critical manner. We understand God's project of the communion of all people, the project inaugurated by the Kingdom ministry of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

The Eucharist leads to a mission of liberation. The Eucharist, due to its link with the Jewish Paschal Meal that was commemorated in the last supper, is also associated with the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. This

liberative dimension has become somewhat obliterated by the theology of atonement. That is to say, the historical liberation of the Israelites comes to be equated with the 'redemption' that Jesus won for his people through his atoning death. Such a theology blunts our call to liberate the millions of our brothers and sisters who are condemned to eke out a dehumanizing life in poverty and exploitation. The Eucharist is a serious challenge to all such dehumanizing existence that was also the experience of the Israelites in Egypt. Hence Pope John Paul II teaches how the Eucharist is also a permanent school of charity, justice, and peace for renewing the surrounding world in Christ. From the presence of the risen one, believers draw the courage to be artisans of solidarity and renewal, committed to transforming the structures of sin in which individuals, communities, and at times entire peoples are entangled (*Dies Domini* 73).

Our Eucharistic celebration must sensitize us to every form of enslavement in our human society: based on gender, caste, age, economy, etc. These enslavements hinder people from the development of the full human potential. We are invited to expose these situations and their causes and to commit ourselves to seeking their solutions; to uphold the rights of the poor, to promote primary education, to provide material aid, to accompany people in their march towards a humanized life.

All these somehow indicate that our Eucharistic celebration must become a laboratory of change from the non-Kingdom situation to a life of the Kingdom situation. This requires a great deal of sensitivity and empathy, the ability to feel with all those who suffer discrimination, harassment, unjust suffering anywhere, including in the Church. The Eucharist is to be celebrated "inside out," i.e., with an orientation to the world. The Eucharist must bring us into contact with the world, with its hopes, agonies and aspirations.

This is also a call to free the Eucharist from a mere ritualistic celebration with an insistence on the various practices and rituals, but with little to contribute to the reality of daily life. More than

the insistence on sheer ritualistic observances we have to ask how to make our Eucharistic celebration more fruitful and relevant to the lived situation.

#### **4. Eucharist is Mission**

Eucharist as mission can be understood only in the light of the origins of the Eucharist. It has been generally understood by scholars that the Eucharist goes back not just to the last supper, but to the entire Christ event, and more so to the ministry of Jesus, with its journey and the many table-fellowships. In the Lucan Gospel there are 10 descriptions of the meals of the Lord (5:27ff; 7:36ff; 9:10ff; 10:38ff; 11:37ff; 14:1ff; 19:1ff; 24:13ff; 24:36ff.).

The meal was a time of instruction, probably following the Hellenistic practice of inviting guests to dinner when a guest of honour was at home, so that the guest of honour could engage in conversation with them. It had its precedents also in the Eastern hospitality meals. These meals were occasions for Jesus to teach, to challenge, to confront and to transform people. It was at such a meal that the Eucharist was instituted (Lk 22:15-20). Thus, the Eucharist is the memorial of the entire Christ event. Seen in this perspective, the focus of the Eucharist becomes the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus was sent on a mission of proclaiming the Kingdom. An important expression of this mission, as we saw, was the many Table Fellowships of the Lord. It was a symbolic gesture that projected and anticipated the Kingdom, the focus of his mission. As an all inclusive communitarian celebration, the table fellowship of the Lord gives us the content of the Kingdom, the creation of a community without exclusion, where all experienced the sense of belonging. Thus, our Eucharistic celebration must become a symbolic projection of the Kingdom to which we look forward. Our Eucharistic celebration becomes an anticipation of the Experience of the Kingdom. Through his many table fellowships, Jesus showed how God was inviting all, without exception or exclusion, to communion with God and with one another. This is

the sum and substance of our Eucharistic celebration today. This presupposes a personal conversion and a social transformation, the fruits of the Eucharistic celebration. Thus, each Eucharistic celebration becomes a proclamation and projection of the Kingdom, the main content of Jesus' mission.

It is also an invitation to give rise to Christian communities where there are no communities or to accompany the communities which are not viable yet. It is the ecclesial community that celebrates the Eucharist and becomes the anticipation of the Kingdom sacramentally. Thus we discharge our mission as disciples of Jesus by sharing in his mission of witnessing to the Kingdom. We not only become instruments of giving rise to communities that serve as the sacrament of the Kingdom in every culture, but we also contribute for the Eucharistic celebration of these communities.

Eucharist leads us more so to those on the periphery, whose lives are broken with the injustice and discrimination that they have to endure. Arguably we have to reach out to all. However, we must have a preferential option for those broken lives as represented by the broken bread, the Eucharist. Such a reaching out, in fact, is the radical continuation of the Eucharistic celebration. Through this we bring healing into the lives of the people on the margins and in the process we ourselves become healed. In this way they become sources of healing for ourselves. In this sense mission becomes a matter or reverse, i.e., those to whom we are sent become missionaries for us.

#### 4.1 Paradoxical Situations

A memorial (*anamnesis*) of Christ's ministry, death and resurrection, the Eucharist (a gift, a meal, and a lesson about love and loyalty, justice and joyousness), has become for many a famine and a scandal: a famine, in so far as it does not nourish us; a scandal in so far as it does not heal the divisions. Rather, separated celebrations accentuate the divisions. A preeminent sign of nourishment and unity for Christians and to the world, the

Eucharist is currently the focus of embarrassment, division, and dissension instead of being a beacon of light and standard-bearer of justice. Often we experience the paradoxical situation of coming to the banquet but retuning famished!

Far too frequently, the Eucharist seems to have been domesticated, where pious people gather around the nectar, hovering in their own space, charming and harmless, effortlessly sustained, but unrelated to the wider world of hunger, homelessness, injustice, hostilities and death.

For others the Eucharist is a foreign affair, controlled by foreigners, celebrated in foreign symbols, unrelated to the life and culture in which we live.

Yet for others, the Eucharist is a crossroads under fire, where a privileged, male, hierarchical Church, with its munitions, complacency, arrogance, and power, has taken the high ground. Others may be invited to the celebration, but come to it with the feelings of woundedness and anger (Gittins 1993:26-27).

The Eucharist, we said, is the visible actualization of the communion of the disciples. This communion is constitutive of the Church's mission to the world in so far as Jesus made it a precondition for mission (Jn 17:21). His disciples are united by the same faith but divided by the same Eucharist! These are some of the contradictions of our Eucharistic celebration. Unless these are addressed the Eucharist remains largely symbolic and far from being the centre and summit of Christian life. As an egg is transformed from the gelatinous to the semisolid and then to the solid state through contact with boiling water, a genuine Eucharistic celebration must enable us to go through a process of transformation.

Are we celebrating the Eucharist or attending the Mass? The latter is a passive presence, with diffidence and apathy, with minimal acknowledgement of the others gathered for the celebration. There is little anamnesis, there is little transformation. On the contrary, in a genuine celebration of the Eucharist we are one with others, with involvement and openness, exposing us to

the warmth and solidness of the signs of welcome, of peace, of sharing, of praying together.

## 4.2 Eucharist: Centre and Summit

The Constitution on the Liturgy (S C 10) describes the Eucharist as the centre and summit of Christian life and genuinely so as we have seen above. It is instrumental in gathering the faithful as the body of Christ to celebrate the faith and to be nourished and supported to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. At the Eucharist we hear Christ's call, "You give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37), and the disciples' helpless acknowledgement "All we have is five loaves and two fish." It reminds us of the call we have received and of the response and the resources of the response as well as the transformation implied. It is a call to our social responsibility. We must make use of whatever is available and appropriate, relying on the power of God to meet the needs of the people.

The Eucharist is the reminder of the covenant relationship that we have with God as a community and the personal relationship of each of us with God. Thus, it is basic to all other relationships. The Eucharist becomes central to the Christian community, the overriding imperative in our response as a Christian community. Hence we must discover new ways of expressing that relationship with God and with each other.

In John's Gospel, this relationship is expressed in the form of foot-washing, a preeminent symbol of service. The Eucharist challenges us to free ourselves from the various shelters that we normally have recourse to, our tendency to create a home away from home, ensuring our comfort, convenience and privacy, enabling us to retain control, insulating us against the demands of evangelization.

The Eucharist invites us to break ourselves for others, rather than to insulate ourselves against others. We wilfully embrace uncertainty in trust. We identify elements of our selfishness, ethnocentrism, prejudices and fears. We are no more afraid of



people of other ethnic communities, of other gender, of other religions, of different social classes, of different castes, and different political views. We are called to encounter them all. We are sent to them all. This is the centrifugal thrust of mission that derives from the Eucharist: Go, you are sent forth! Jesus is our exemplar. He journeyed along the borders (Lk 17:11ff). He asked the most unlikely people what they would like him to do and to meet their requests (Mk 10:46ff). He encountered a variety of sinners and outcasts (Mk 7:24ff). Jesus' entire life was directed toward engagement with people and negotiating and transcending their boundaries, also his own. We have to be committed to the call of mission, to transcend ourselves to reach out to others. More so, people on the periphery, as we said earlier.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The sharing of the bread broken and the cup blessed was the symbol that Jesus gave the disciples to show how they were included in his own vocation. The Eucharistic table is the matrix of mission. It is there the Church and the world intersect in the presence of Jesus Christ. It is the place from which we are sent forth to love and serve the world. The Eucharist is the well-spring of mission for the world. When we move into the world in service to the poor and the needy, we do not cease to celebrate the Eucharist. For God in Jesus Christ is not only in the Church, where the Word is truly preached and the sacraments are administered. Jesus is present also where the least of his brothers and sisters are ministered to as he says in Mt 25:31-46. That is why Nicholas Berdyaev, the Russian thinker could say, "My own bread is only a materialistic question, but my neighbour's bread is a spiritual question." Philip having stayed with the Lord and having experienced the Lord goes and tells Nathaniel, "Come and see" (Jn 1:46). We who have experienced the Lord at the Eucharistic table are sent to witness to the world and to extend the same invitation as Philip did, "Come and see", come to the feast of the Eucharist. Without mission, the Eucharist becomes an empty symbol: You search me only to have your stomachs full (Jn 6:25).

On the contrary, each Eucharistic celebration reminds us that “When we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim your death and resurrection until you come in glory.”

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## **Inculturation of the Eucharistic Celebration**

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### **Abstract**

Just as Christianity has been reduced to a religion in the course of centuries, the eucharistic celebration too has become for many Christians a ritual action. The image of the eucharist which we have today is not the same as the one projected by the early Church. Just as the Last Supper was for Jesus the symbolic synthesis of his whole life and mission, our eucharistic celebrations should be the expressions of our Christian life and commitment. The purpose of inculturation is to make this life and commitment become existentially relevant. This can be achieved only if the celebrations are situated in the social and cultural context and not merely through replacement of symbols which are just taken from the religious and cultic milieu. In order to effect this we need pastors and the faithful who are involved in the life of the community and society around. We do not celebrate our eucharist at the foot of the cross, but in the midst of the world. The celebration of the eucharist with the altar facing the people is a very good beginning of the inculturation of the eucharistic celebration provided that both the priest and the people understand its genuine significance.

### **Keywords**

Last Supper, Inculturation, symbols, early Church, Indian Church.

Just as Christianity has been reduced to a religion in the course of centuries, the eucharistic celebration too has become for many Christians a ritual action. The image of the eucharist which we have today is not the same as the one projected by the

early Church. The New Testament writings do not present the eucharist as a cultic action, but as an expression of discipleship using symbols taken from human relationship. The first Christian communities went to the temple for their worship and gathered in their homes for the Eucharist (Acts 2, 46). What was required for the celebration of the Eucharist was fellowship expressed in human sharing. The leader of the eucharistic assembly was called 'president' and not 'priest'. The eucharist was celebrated around a table and not an 'altar'. All these indicate that eucharistic celebration did not belong to the category of ritual acts. This is perfectly in line with the New Testament understanding of worship described in the letter to the Hebrews, 10: 5-10. The community that participated in the eucharist was a community of reconciliation which partook in a fraternal meal. The risen Lord manifested himself in the midst of this community through the symbol of breaking the bread and sharing the cup. When the symbols of sharing the meal disappeared, the eucharist lost its community dimension and its ritualization began: the 'priest' replaced the 'president'; the 'altar' replaced the 'table'; the 'church' as a sacred place for worship replaced the 'church' as the house of the community. People gathered as a group of worshippers rather than as a community of fellowship; cultic rituals taken from religious cultures replace the symbols of human relationship.

In our efforts towards inculturation of the eucharistic celebration, our starting point has been the eucharist as a cultic action and not as a community action. In the early period when the liturgical families began to grow, differentiate and develop, ritual elements from Mediterranean cultures were introduced into the eucharistic celebration; in the same way, after Vatican II, in the implementation of liturgical inculturation in Asia, there has been a tendency to introduce the ritual elements of the religious traditions of the people. As is evident, this approach to inculturation will only perpetuate the distortion of the eucharistic celebration as it took place in the Mediterranean world. In the light of these considerations, our approach to inculturation of the eucharist needs to be reviewed in order to make sure that we bring

out the authentic meaning of the eucharist. This means that our efforts towards eucharistic inculturation should manifest more clearly its secular, human, communitarian and socially transformative character than its cultic character. This takes place under the impulse of the Holy Spirit who is the primary agent both in the eucharistic action and in inculturation<sup>1</sup>. I intend to present my reflections on the inculturation of the eucharist in this perspective.

## **1. The symbolic elements of the Last Supper**

We need to examine the symbols which Jesus used in the institution of the eucharist before we take any step towards the inculturation of the eucharist. This is required in order to be faithful to the command of the Lord and to be relevant to the context in which we are putting into practice what he told us to do.

### **A. Was the Last Supper a paschal meal?**

Whether the Last Supper was a ritual paschal meal is a question that is still debated. The Gospel narratives of both the Synoptics and St. John seem to pose a problem with regard to the paschal character of the last meal which Jesus took with his disciples. However, irrespective of the paschal character of this meal, from the Gospel narratives we can derive one conclusion, namely, the eucharistic institution was not linked to any of the ritual elements of the paschal meal. "In fact, whether the supper was this special paschal meal or another, there is no doubt that Jesus did not connect the eucharistic institution of the new covenant to any details that are proper to the Passover meal alone. The connection is solely with what the Passover meal has in common with every meal, that is, the breaking of the bread in the beginning and the rite of thanksgiving over the cup of wine mixed with water at the end. And we may add, this is what made it possible for the Christian eucharist to be celebrated without any problem, as often as one might wish, and not only once a year"<sup>2</sup>.

The eucharistic symbols, given during the Last Supper of Jesus, be it a Paschal meal or not, are not taken from the ritual elements of the Passover meal. In the Gospel of John it is explicitly stated at the beginning of the Last supper that it was an expression of Jesus' love for his disciples; it was an *agape*; it was related to the Passover of Jesus from this world to the Father and not to the ritual Passover rites of the Jews." Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end" (John 13, 1). In order to understand the meaning of this meal more clearly, it is necessary to relate this meal to the many meals which Jesus had during his life-time. He ate with sinners; he multiplied the loaves to offer a meal to the hungry crowd; he had meals with his disciples. The Last Supper was the climax of all these meals; all of them were ordinary meals marked by feelings of human relationship; all of them implied the involvement of Jesus in the lives of those with whom he shared these meals. This last meal indicated his total and definite involvement – his death and resurrection.

## B. The meals of the risen Lord

For the disciples, after the resurrection, the Last Supper became the Lord's Supper, i.e., they recognized him as the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread which was a continuation of the meals which they took with him before he died. These meals, too, were not ritual meals as is evident from the contexts within which they took place. Jesus ate with them after the resurrection in order to convince them that he is truly human and he still shares his life with them in a human way. Hence, we may say that the eucharist does not have its origin in a ritual meal, but in a meal of human relationship.

## C. The Eucharistic celebrations of the early Church

The first Christian community celebrated the Lord's Supper in a secular context. There were no sacred or religious rituals connected with it. In fact some of the people around considered

them atheists, because in their gathering together as Christians they did not have any sacrifice or acts of religious worship as commonly understood by their religious neighbours. From the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of Paul it is clear that “the house-church was the centre of their existence, where their bonding and communion were forged...There is no specific information about presidency of the Eucharist either in the Pauline letters or elsewhere in the New Testament. From Luke’s supper account we know that it was considered a service rather than a holding of rank and since it had to involve teaching and blessing, it is classified as a word ministry requiring appropriate charisms...Since the model of worship was at first deliberately non-priestly there was no parallel with levitical cult”<sup>3</sup>. The Eucharistic celebration is called an act of proclamation rather than a ritual act.

#### D. The Eucharist in the later Period

With the change in the understanding of the Church, from community to a religious institution, the eucharistic celebration also underwent a change. Cultic expressions taken from the Old Testament tradition and from the religious background of the peoples in the midst of when the Church existed, began to enter into the celebration of the Eucharist. This resulted in the loss of the human and secular characteristics of the Eucharist. It became more and more an act of worship of the Lord rather than the proclamation of his death and resurrection. The symbols of celebration acquired meanings that indicated orientation to God in a vertical manner rather than those of the early celebrations which indicated communion with God through human relationships. The typical Christian religiosity which consisted in discovering the divine within the human was replaced by a religiosity that consisted in the performance of rituals that were meant to establish communication with God whose abode was in a mysterious world. The symbols of the eucharist are no more the table around which people sat, but an altar placed away from the people and accessible only to the priest; the leader of worship

was separated from the rest of the community in the way he dressed and through a language that was unintelligible to the people. The eucharistic bread is no more the bread of human sharing, but a ritually prepared bread, distinct in appearance and form from the bread that is used for expressing human fellowship. In other words, we may say that human and secular symbols are replaced by religious and cultic symbols.

## **2. The meaning of inculturation**

In the Christian understanding inculturation is not mere cultural adaptation. Taking the Incarnation as the paradigm for inculturation, it implies the assumption of all that is human. The Word became truly flesh in its existential reality. This was clearly shown by Jesus when he became one with the poor and the down-trodden. This has its consequences in all areas of human life. “The Gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole way of life of man”<sup>4</sup>. The encounter between the Word and the world, Gospel and culture is a dynamic process. The involvement total and unconditional will be followed by a prophetic critique and a re-interpretation of the assumed reality. When this happens inculturation will result in the creation of a new society in a given historical and geographical area manifesting the vitality of Word of God within particular contexts. We may call this the process of creating authentic local churches. The Christian community that emerges from this course of action will be able to share its experience with its contemporaries, in the context of the world and history from within, fully in the socio-cultural-religious milieu. Seen in this light inculturation will not consist merely in replacing a set of existing symbols with another set taken from the local culture, nor does it consist in adapting some existing formulations with a view to making them more intelligible to different mentalities. It will call for changes that affect the lives of the people and will pose challenges that question the existing structures. There will emerge a new way of being and acting with its consequences in on all the spheres of life. “The good news of Christ constantly renews the life and culture of fallen men. It



combats and removes the errors and evils resulting from sinful allurements which are a perpetual threat. It never ceases to purify and elevate the morality of peoples. By the riches coming from above, it makes fruitful, as it were from within, the spiritual qualities and gifts of every people and of every age”<sup>5</sup>. Modern liturgical renewal initiated by Vatican II has stated the following as general criteria for the reform of liturgy: “Liturgy is made up of unchangeable elements divinely instituted, and elements subject to change. The latter not only may but ought to be changed with the passing of time if features have by chance crept in it which are less harmonious with the intimate nature of the liturgy, or if existing elements have grown less functional”<sup>6</sup> Inculturation is one of the general norms for this renewal: “Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather she respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit”<sup>7</sup>. We need to see now how we can apply these principles and norms to the inculturation of the Eucharist.

### **3. Inculturation of the Eucharistic Celebration**

#### **a) The source of the symbols in the inculturation of the Eucharistic celebration**

We have already seen that the symbols used by Jesus at the Last Supper are not cultic symbols. We also know that Jesus abolished the rituals of worship of the Old Testament with a new set of symbols which have their source in human relationship (Heb. 10, 5-10). Besides, rituals are artistic expressions of faith. When they express the divine too much they can become superstitious. In the eucharist we affirm the originality of the Christian faith, namely, the discovery of the divine in the human.

The Christian economy of salvation which the eucharist celebrates begins with the humanizing of the divine. God descends in the midst of the human community and expresses Himself through human symbols. When we use rituals, we tend to reverse the movement; we divinize the human divinize straight away. "If we are to interpret the ritual of the eucharist accurately, we need a sacramental language that will take seriously the humanness of the action and the finiteness of the people and objects involved in it."<sup>8</sup> The symbols used for the inculturation of the eucharist have to be carefully selected. The question is: to what extent should we respect a people's culture? The history of the Church is the history of both cultural adaptation and cultural imperialism. Some of the symbols of religious worship in India can indicate not only the vertical character of worship, but also the discriminatory caste system which is prevalent in the religious life of the peoples of this country. The borrowing of such symbols from the cultic practices can distort the very meaning of the Eucharist which is a celebration of brotherhood/sisterhood, equality and sharing. We need, therefore, to look for a symbol system which indicates human relationships and communion of persons. It is necessary to adopt symbols in the celebration of the eucharist which challenge the unjust structures of society. Then the prophetic critique which is characteristic of inculturation modelled on Incarnation will become operative and this will facilitate the emergence of a new society that is to be transformed by the Gospel. It will be a proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ in the context of a society that must be liberated from sin and injustice; it will be a proclamation that truly announces the coming of the Lord, 'until the Lord comes', a proclamation that heralds the emergence of the new earth and the new heaven.

#### b) The methodology for the inculturation of the Eucharist

When one speaks of the inculturation of the liturgy, the first thing that comes to the mind of many people is the change of the symbols used in the celebration. This does not seem to be a correct

approach. Every celebration presupposes a life. We celebrate what we are trying to live. Seen in this perspective, our inculturation of the eucharist should start not from the ritual of the celebration, but from the life of the people who celebrate it. The symbols used will not only reenact a historical event of the past or point to a future world of happiness to come, but they will be capable of challenging the lives of those who are engaged in celebration. In fact the renewal of the liturgy of the eucharist after Vatican II has this as its objective. The altar facing the people is not merely a change meant to perform the rituals in front of the people; it is proclamation of the death and resurrection in the midst of the people, challenging their lives and urging them to interpret their lives in terms of the Mystery that is celebrated. "Our symbols affect the way we perceive and respond to our environment. As symbols are an interpretative filter, they both express and shape our experience. Symbolic relevance means the ability of the ritual to engage its participants at the level of their consciousness which awakens their sensibilities"<sup>9</sup>. Another area where the eucharistic liturgy can challenge the participants is the use of symbols at the offertory or the preparation of gifts. The people should bring to the eucharist their life that is committed to sharing everything with their brothers and sisters. The gifts that are brought at the offertory in order to express participation of the people in the eucharist must indicate their self-gift. To make the inculturation of the eucharist authentic we need to make sure that the symbols which are chosen are related to the life situation of the people; they should indicate their readiness to build up the body of Jesus, the community where there is was no one in need as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 4, 34) We celebrate in the eucharist the Mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection actually taking place in the midst of the community. The symbols used in the celebration should be capable of expressing this reality. "Rituals and sacraments are not discourses. They originate as expressive actions and it is the action that always remains basic...Indeed such actions as breaking the bread and sharing the cup say what a thousand sentences could not say. But such actions are symbolic

in many contexts; so words enter to fix the context and interpret the precise meaning of the action”<sup>10</sup>. The inculturation of our Eucharistic liturgy should enable us to interpret our lives in the variety of contexts in which we celebrate them. The symbol which is the language of such celebrations should be adequate enough to fulfil this role.

#### **4. The efforts towards the inculturation of the Eucharist in the Indian Church**

##### **a) What has been done already?**

The inculturation of the eucharistic celebration began in India almost immediately after Vatican II. The National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), under the direction of the CBCI, took the initiative in this matter already in 1968. The Second All India Meeting held at Bangalore in January 1969, suggested to do this in different stages: at the first stage, it was proposed to introduce some minor adaptations with a view to creating an Indian atmosphere of worship, chiefly the adoption of Indian postures and gestures, Indian objects and elements, vestments and decorations, forms of homage and veneration; the second stage was to consist in the composition of an Indian anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer) which would proclaim the marvels done by God not only in Israel, but also in India and in the world. This was to be composed in a language and way of praying specific to India. The meeting also proposed a schema for an Indian liturgy of the Mass<sup>11</sup>.

The implementation of these proposals began immediately after the meeting. The meeting itself suggested twelve points of adaptation to be introduced into the liturgy of the Mass. These were approved by Rome in the same year<sup>12</sup> and were proposed for optional implementation all over India. An Indian anaphora was composed following the above directive; however, it was not approved by the CBCI and hence it was not sent to Rome. Later on in the late 80s the text of the anaphora was revised and approved

by the CCBI during one of its General Body Meetings and sent to Rome for approval. But no reply has been received from them up to now. The preparation of an Indian Liturgy of the Mass was taken up by a subcommission of the CBCI Liturgy commission in 1971. Taking into account the 12 points of adaptation and others given by the Second All India Meeting, an Order of the Mass was prepared. It is being used on an experimental basis in some parts of India.

b) A critique of the efforts already made

The 12 points of adaptation which were approved by Rome and implemented in some places have served their purpose to some extent, namely, the creation of an Indian atmosphere of worship. But it must be admitted that they have not fully served to achieve the true goal of inculturation which we have described above. They have remained mainly on the level of rituals and have not succeeded in bringing out the community building and social thrust of the Eucharist. Some people have labelled these changes brahminical and hence unpalatable to the Dalits who see in them symbols of oppression and discrimination. However, it must be admitted that those who have participated in eucharistic celebrations in which they have been introduced after a proper catechesis, have found them capable of communicating an experience of God. It depends on the celebrant or the animator of worship to relate these symbols to actual life-situations and thus challenge the participants to get involved in the life of their brothers and sisters. The political thrust of the eucharistic action will be kept alive if the celebrant who uses the symbols interprets them in the correct context.

The Indian Eucharistic Prayer takes us to a deeper level in the inculturation of the eucharist. The Eucharistic Prayer is a text that proclaims the marvels of God's saving intervention in human history. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal the Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and summit of the whole celebration of the Mass: "The meaning of the prayer is that entire congregation of the faithful joins itself with Christ in

acknowledging the great things God has done”.<sup>13</sup>. God’s marvels for people cannot be reduced to the happenings in the history of Israel. God has been active in the lives of all the peoples in the world. Christ came to reveal this. In the celebration of the Mystery of Christ, it is necessary to proclaim not only the history of salvation as it was realized in Israel, but also as it has been taking place in a hidden and mysterious way in the rest of human history. In our eucharistic celebrations, therefore, we should also proclaim God’s marvels in our history. In this way the eucharist will interpret for us the presence of the saving God in our midst, both in the past and in the future. It will enable us to enter into communion with all other peoples and join in their struggles with the Spirit of Jesus as our guide. The Indian anaphora, composed by the subcommission, has the following characteristics: the basic structure of the Eucharistic Prayer, common to the East and West is preserved. This is required for the continuation of the tradition; The Eucharist is something that has been handed down (1 Cor. 11, 23). The specific Indian character of this prayer is spelt out in these words by the composers of this prayer: “A first element of Indianisation is to be found in the phraseology and manner of expression of the Christian eucharist. The Christian theme of thanksgiving can and must be coined in forms and thought-patterns harmonious with Indian culture. In the texts proposed here, parallel references to Christian and Indian scriptures are provided, to show how thought-patterns in harmony with Indian culture have been made use of to express the Christian eucharist in a way that will appeal better to the Indian mind. More important however than the adoption of Indian thought-patterns is the place given, in the content of various parts of the anaphora, to the Indian scene. Thus, for instance, in the proclamation of God’s deeds of salvation, the Noah-covenant is applied to the age-long quest for God found in the religious tradition of India; similarly special reference is made to the Indian situation in the intercessory prayers”<sup>14</sup>. This prayer has tried to maintain the two requirements of continuity with the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the history of salvation as well as the specific interventions of God in the life of our people. It is a

proclamation that can experientially evoke the thanksgiving of our people. At the same time, a question can be asked regarding the relevance of this proclamation for the actual Indian situation today? In fact there are some Eucharistic Prayers composed in the West which mention certain concrete events and situations that exist in the lives of the people today. Perhaps this is better done through a catechesis oriented to the participation of the faithful in the Eucharistic Prayer than by mentioning them in the printed text of prayer. The president of the Eucharist can even invite the people to call to mind the actual situation in which they are living and struggling as they listen to the proclamation during the celebration. The contextualization of the Eucharistic Prayer is part of the pastoral action of the celebrant during the celebration; it is not possible to include them always in the printed text of the liturgy, since these vary from place to place, from community to community and from time to time.

The steps towards the creation of an Indian Liturgy of the Mass were taken up by a subcommission set up by NBCLC. The basic structure of the Christian eucharist, common to all rites, has been preserved: introductory rite, liturgy of the Word, liturgy of the eucharist and concluding rite. Within this general framework a new order has been evolved. The introductory rite consists of three parts: a) Reception and welcome, using symbols taken from social life, b) purification rites, using elements taken from *Agamic* worship, c) lighting of the lamp, representing Christ in the assembly. The liturgy of the Word has remained substantially the same with some slight modifications such as more importance given to silence and the introduction of the Upanishadic invocation, *Asatmo ma sad gamaya* before the Gospel reading. In the liturgy of the Eucharist there are only few innovations from the perspective of inculturation: a) the gifts are brought in a metal tray; b) together with the gifts eight flowers are offered; they indicate the eight directions, that is, all corners of the world from where Christ gathers his people through his death and resurrection in order to offer a pleasing worship to the Father, c) finally at the doxology a triple Arati is offered in a spirit of dedication and

surrender to the Father together with Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> As can be seen from the above description, because of the presence of certain cultic and ritual elements in the celebration, the originality of the Christian eucharist as a community building action is not fully brought in this Order of the Mass. However, it must be admitted that in the understanding of the Eucharist prevalent among our people, it is not possible to eliminate all symbols of a cultic nature from our celebrations. It is the task of the leader of the community to interpret them in the proper manner relating them to the actual life situation of the people. The inculturation of the eucharist, therefore, does not depend entirely on the texts that are used for the celebration; it depends very much on the pastor who animates the celebration. In other words, it is necessary to understand that the eucharistic celebration is not merely an act of worship, but it is also a pastoral action; it is not only an act by which people relate themselves to God, but also to one another in order to build up a new society.

## **5. The future of inculturation of the Eucharist in India**

Looking at the state of inculturation today both in India and in the rest of the world, we have to admit that the future of inculturation is not very encouraging. The attitude of the Roman authorities as revealed in the recent documents does not seem to be very much in favour of evolving an inculturated eucharistic celebration. Rome insists that all efforts towards inculturation must be undertaken keeping in mind the unity of the Roman Rite. This can and does pose an obstacle to the creation of inculturated liturgies in the world as is evident from the following statement of the Fifth Instruction of the Congregation for Divine Worship for the right implementation of the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council “The work of inculturation...is not therefore to be considered an avenue for the creation of new varieties or families of rites; on the contrary, it should be recognized that any adaptations introduced out of cultural and pastoral necessity thereby become part of the Roman



Rite, and are to be inserted into it in a harmonious way”<sup>16</sup>. Rome wrote an encouraging letter to the Chairman of the Indian Liturgical Commission: “The proposal to compose a new Indian Anaphora in collaboration with experts in different fields are most welcome”<sup>17</sup>. But in the subsequent years, the directives that were issued by the same Roman Congregation in this matter were far from encouraging such initiatives. With regard to the inculturation of the Eucharistic Prayer by the local Churches, another document says: “In the eucharistic prayer, because of its nature, it is not always or easily possible to achieve a precise adaptation to the different groups or circumstances”<sup>18</sup>. The Instructions that came show that the Roman authorities look at the efforts of the local Churches to compose their own eucharistic prayers with caution and at times even with suspicion.

In spite of all these restrictions, we can inculturate our eucharistic celebration if we situate our celebrations in the life contexts of our people. The issue becomes more complicated and difficult if we try to bring in religious and cultic elements into this process; but if we make our eucharist more and more community centred and if the celebrations become proclamation that challenge the lives of the people, the real purpose of eucharistic inculturation will be achieved. Then there will emerge symbols that are appropriate.. One simple example is the case of our offertory processions. If they are an expression of our readiness to share life with our brothers and sisters, the gifts that are brought to the altar will signify the true meaning of the eucharist as participation in the self-gift of Christ. Another case could be that of a brief introduction given by the priest before beginning the Eucharistic Prayer relating the prayer to the theme of the whole eucharist. Even when we use the existing approved Eucharistic Prayers, if we make intelligent choices from among them we can express the relationship of the eucharist to the life of the community that is celebrating.

## Conclusion

Just as the Last Supper was for Jesus the symbolic synthesis of his whole life and mission, our eucharistic celebrations should be the expressions of our Christian life and commitment. The purpose of inculturation is to make this life and commitment become existentially relevant. This can be achieved only if the celebrations are situated in the social and cultural context and not merely through replacement of symbols which are just taken from the religious and cultic milieu. In order to effect this we need pastors and faithful who are involved in the life of the community and society around. We do not celebrate our eucharist at the foot of the cross, but in the midst of the world. The celebration of the eucharist with the altar facing the people is a very good beginning of the inculturation of the eucharistic celebration provided that both the priest and the people understand its genuine significance. The process of inculturation will naturally flow from this. There will be spontaneity in expression and involvement in participation. It will become a eucharist that is truly inculturated and more effectively celebrated than those which are performed, according to a book or a symbol system prepared by liturgical experts.

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## Eucharist and Daily Life

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### Abstract

Unfortunately there is a tendency to understand the Eucharist today on the level of information because symbols that were so meaningful for one situation in a particular worldview are universalised without going deeper into the meaning of this worldview. We need to go deeper in order to understand what we are doing when we celebrate the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a matter of mere information. It belongs to the realm of understanding that leads to faith. If it remains just at the level of information it does not move us nor does it burn our hearts. *Understanding* makes us familiar with the world of symbols. It transforms us, transforms the world around us and changes our vision. Moreover, our attitudes towards these symbols change, our concerns become universal and we discover meaning in life. The author shows that the Eucharist leads to celebration and self-emptying in daily life. Self-emptying means, among other things, work for justice and peace. *Kenotic Service* or working for the welfare of others is the translation of the Eucharist into daily life. It is a service that seeks the well-being of *all* without seeking any reward. Only then we become channels of peace, reconciliation and healing and are able to build communities. In short, the Eucharist takes place at every moment of our life.

### Keywords

Daily life, kenosis, symbol, metaphor, material dimension, cosmic dimension, intellectual dimension, communion, paschal mystery, sin of the world.

## INTRODUCTION

The Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery belong to the world of symbols. Symbols like lamb, blood, meal, bread etc., have loaded meanings in a cultural setting. In order to understand or get involved in the world of these symbols we need to locate them in their contexts. We have to be familiar with those worlds.

The Paschal Mystery refers to a historical setting and its background is the Exodus: passing over from slavery in Egypt to a land of freedom. But this does not end there. It is symbolic of a *process* of liberation which is highlighted in the Eucharist. The Eucharist too has a similar meaning: it is a *passing over*. Again, the Eucharist cannot be restricted merely to the Eucharistic ritual. It is a lifelong *process* of passing over from darkness to light and from death (sin) to life.

Unfortunately there is a tendency to understand the Eucharist today on the level of information because symbols (like the *paschal lamb*, *lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world* or *Christ our Paschal Lamb* etc.) that were so meaningful for one situation in a particular worldview are universalised without going deeper into the meaning of this worldview.

We need to go deeper in order to understand what we are doing when we celebrate the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a matter of mere information. It belongs to the realm of understanding that leads to faith. If it remains just at the level of information it does not move us nor does it burn our hearts. *Understanding* makes us familiar with the world of symbols. It transforms us, transforms the world around us and changes our vision. Moreover, our attitudes towards these symbols change, our concerns become universal and we discover meaning in life. Understanding opens us to the realm of faith. Hence it is important that we consider the meaning of the Eucharist in this context of *information* and *understanding*. The more our world becomes the world of symbols, the more meaningful the symbols become for us. Consequently it is imperative that we get some idea about what we mean by *symbol* and its expression in language,

*metaphor*. Only then can we understand the fuller meaning of the Eucharist and its significance for our daily life.

## SYMBOL AND METAPHOR

Whether we are aware of it or not we live and move in a world of symbols; our day to day language is symbolic; our religious experiences are expressed in a symbolic language. For example we can recall scenes in our lives where our hearts began to burn! Any scene of beauty, friendship or joy, any moment we had experienced, something that we were unable to explain adequately in words like the sunrise, sunset, moonrise in the sea, crystal clear water, the smile of a baby, the beauty of a landscape, the depth of concern of a friend etc. Such experiences are symbolic experiences. We are unable to fathom their depths. We are taken up, grasped as it were by these experiences that point to the *beyond*, experiences which we try to put in words. But these *expressions* are not the *experience*, though they are intimately connected with each other. So there is an *experience* that belongs to the level of the symbol, and there is the *expression* of that experience which pertains to the level of symbol-language, namely, metaphor. In other words symbol refers to the experience of reality and metaphor refers to the expression of that symbol-experience in language. Moreover, in order to understand this better let us have a glimpse at our *experience* of reality.

What do we understand by reality? When we look around our world we do not just see objects thrown here and there. What we see is something holistic, something interconnected and interrelated. For example we speak of a flower but a flower does not exist all by itself. There is the plant on which the flower grows. But the plant cannot exist without the earth that holds it, the sun that warms it, the air, the minerals, the water and the surroundings etc. that contribute to its being. There is perfect collaboration between these natural elements that help in bringing forth this flower! If one of these elements is missing we cannot have a flower! What is more, there is a relationship between a human

being and that flower because it is the human being that discovers that flower. Finally, a flower has something more than merely meets the eye. There is something mysterious in it so that none of us can assert that we know [all about] the flower.

To put it concretely, reality is all that *is* and all that *is* is inter-related, and in this interrelationship we observe a trinitarian principle. First of all there is the material *world* (cosmos, universe) we live in and without which we cannot *be*. This world is the background of our very existence. Secondly, there are *humans*, who inhabit this world, who are conscious of their own existence and the existence of the world around them. Thirdly, there is an all-pervading *Mystery* present in the universe which grasps us, before which we stand in awe and which satiates our thirst for Meaning, for the Infinite. There exists nothing outside these three fundamental invariants. None can make sense all by itself. None is independent of the other. The world is meaningless without humans and humans cannot exist without the world. God cannot be known and experienced without humans and the world. There is an existential link, an ontological relationship between these three: God, World and Humans. If something goes wrong with one, all three are affected because they are mutually interdependent and irreducible to the others.<sup>1</sup> To put it differently, our experience of reality encompasses three dimensions: material or cosmic, human or intellectual and the depth or spiritual dimension.

### Material/Cosmic Dimension

First of all there is the material world. It is the realm wherein our senses are active. We see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. We *experience* reality first at the level of matter, at the material level. This is the cosmic dimension of reality. The cosmic dimension then is that dimension of reality which *connects everything* with *everything*. This dimension is quantifiable, perceivable and objectifiable.

### Human/Intellectual Dimension

Secondly, there is the human world. It is a world of persons, of love and understanding. This dimension of reality *discovers*

the interconnection between things. If all things are related in and through the cosmic dimension, it is the human dimension that discovers these relationships. Accordingly it is not enough that things are related; their relationship comes into its own only when the human consciousness locates and identifies them.

## Spiritual/Depth Dimension

Thirdly, there is a spiritual world, the world of faith. Reality has something 'more' than humans can comprehend. It has a dimension of depth. The more we know about a thing or person the more there remains to know. Knowing means being open to knowing something more and implies *inexhaustibility*. We cannot however know anything exhaustively nor can anything be known exhaustively. Raimon Panikkar argues: "To place limits on being - *qua* being - is to destroy it."<sup>2</sup> This is because every *being* has an open-ended character as part of its very nature. This open-endedness is the *mystery* dimension, a dimension of the unknown and of the inexhaustible, a dimension of endlessness. Panikkar calls it the divine or depth dimension.<sup>3</sup>

## Symbol

Symbol is a bridge-builder. It brings the three worlds together: the cosmic, human and the divine. *A symbol symbolizes the symbolized reality*. Symbol is the cosmic dimension of reality.

Firstly, we encounter reality through its body, the material element, the *symbol*. Hence the material world is the *world of symbols*. Every being is a symbol because it is the dimension of relationship.

Secondly, for a symbol to be a symbol there is the need of a symbolizer. A symbolizer is the one who *discovers* symbols, not one who creates them. In the absence of the symbolizer there are no symbols. Humans are the discoverers of symbols because humans encounter reality.

Thirdly, a symbol *makes present* that which it symbolizes i.e., *symbolized reality*. Symbolized reality is the depth dimension



of reality. The depth dimension makes us enter into a world of meaningfulness of symbols. Our experience of reality when it is not superficial, takes us beyond the material level (beyond the symbol level). It makes us come in touch with the real – the level of faith, the level of meaningfulness. A sunset should take us to the Source of Beauty or the cosmos/world should point out to the Creator. But the danger is that too often we remain just at the material/object level. But the one, who discovers the symbolic dimension of the world, discovers that the world is not just an object, but a sacrament of God's Presence, that it is sacred, that it is the symbol of the divine. According to Vaishnava Spirituality the whole Universe is the body (symbol) of the Supreme Being. The Universe is the symbol and the Supreme Being is the symbolized Reality. A symbolic experience of the world is an experience of *seeing God in all things and all things in God*! See for example Blake's poem:

To see a World in a grain of sand  
And a Heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour<sup>4</sup>

In other words a symbol is *self-expressive*. It does not require an interpretation. When a symbol requires an interpretation then it has ceased to be a symbol. That is why we need to clarify some misunderstanding regarding the use of the word 'symbol'. Generally we say a flag is the symbol of a nation; a ring is the symbol of commitment; a rose is a symbol of love etc. They are not symbols but are *epistemic signs*.<sup>5</sup> Flag and nation are two different things brought together (artificially) by common understanding and given meaning in a particular culture. We need information about one in order to explain the other. We need someone to interpret the meaning to us. A real symbol on the other hand is transparent because it contains the reality in itself. E.g. a *smile* is an expression of *joy*. Joy is pressed out as it were through the facial movements of the smile. Joy cannot be seen except through its *symbol* the smile, but the smile is not joy and joy is not the smile but one cannot be without the other. Similarly,

the human *body* is the symbol of the *person*. We cannot separate the body from the person and the person can only be expressed through the symbol *body*. A smile does not stop at the smile nor the body stop at the body, but they lead us to participate in the symbolized reality i.e. joy and person respectively. Similarly a search for the symbolic nature of the world will lead one to the discovery of the Source of Reality. God breaks through the symbol and reveals Himself as the Symbolized Reality.

A Symbol *re-presents* or *makes present* the symbolized reality i.e., it reveals in itself or carries within itself the reality it symbolizes. The Symbol and the symbolized reality are not identical but are inseparable. One does not exist without the other but one is not the other. It is in this perspective we can try to understand the Scripture text: *Philip the one who sees Me has seen the Father*. The Symbol takes us to the Source. The symbolizer is the *pontifex*, the bridge-builder.

Reality then is the integration of three dimensions (cosmic, human and divine) i.e., these three dimensions form one community because they interpenetrate one another. Each dimension is unique, irreducible to the others and at the same time one cannot be without the other two. Hence there are no individual beings disconnected from one another. Panikkar calls this unitary experience of reality the *cosmotheandric experience*. 'God, World and Man' as he aptly puts it, are not and cannot be three separate entities but are three common invariants that form one fundamental unity in radical relativity.<sup>6</sup> Such an understanding is important for us to comprehend the meaning of the symbol-worlds.

## Metaphor

We can look at reality (and consequently persons and our world) from two perspectives: either we look at it from an *objective and objectifying perspective* - information level, or from a *symbolic perspective* i.e., from the level of understanding and faith. The basic problems that we face today such as individualism,

selfishness, fundamentalism, spiritual blindness, consumerism, discrimination against women, children, Dalits, the poor and the marginalized, ecological disasters and finally loss of meaning in life leading to addictions and despair etc., are all the outcome of this objective and objectifying attitude in life.

The symbolic perspective on the other hand operates at the level of understanding and openness. In order to understand we need openness. This is because life is not just information although information is very important in life. Faith cannot be understood from the objective perspective. Faith is basic openness. It belongs to another type of consciousness, another dimension, the level of openness of our being. Faith is the foundational ability given to every human being. But this ability needs to be activated. Openness to reality makes us experience faith and from this experience burst forth *expressions* of this faith-experience.

Consequently the *language* we use in our world of reality is either *informative* language or *symbolic* language.<sup>7</sup> Informative language is descriptive with univocal meaning, whereas symbolic language is the language of metaphors. Symbolic language is transformative, because there we enter into a world of personal relationships.

There can be three levels of interpretation: The material dimension is a world of perception where we concentrate on the *meaning* of the world; the human or the intellectual dimension points out to the *significance* of that world and the spiritual and mystical dimension concentrates on the *meaningfulness in life* of that world.<sup>8</sup> For example we can look at the sunset and remain just at the material level or personal level or it can open us to the third dimension, the sphere of faith.

We use *symbolic language* or *metaphor* to express our experience. Expressions like “Were not our hearts on fire”? “You must be born again”, “I am in the Father and the Father is in Me”, “I am the Vine and you are the branches” etc. cannot be understood at a literal or descriptive level. They are loaded with meaning and are real. Metaphor refers through what one is saying to what

one is *experiencing*. Metaphor (symbolic language) is *really* true but not *literally* true.<sup>9</sup> In the language of the metaphor we go beyond the physical meaning (literal meaning) and go into the direction of the fuller meaning of understanding. E.g. *were not our hearts burning within us* - here there is a denial of physical fire and a movement towards the real fire of personal relationships. Hence the truth of the metaphor is this: *a metaphor is really true but not literally true*. Literal truth is partial and not the whole truth. In other words literal language is informative and descriptive, not transformative. The metaphor: Jesus is the Son of God – *really true* but not *literally true*!

## **BREAD, THE SYMBOL OF LIFE AND COMMUNION**

Coming back to our theme the Eucharist, when we say that bread is the symbol of life and communion, we proclaim a greater truth here. Bread is a very rich symbol of life, and life is wholeness and communion. Communion is possible only in a world of relationships, of self-giving and collaboration. Communion is not possible in isolation and without mutual interdependence. No being exists by itself. Being is relationship. For example, one single corn or grain of wheat does not make bread. Bread is bread only in communion, in togetherness. Bread is a community, a presence of God's working in the world and in humans. It is a mysterious work of collaboration between God, the world and humans (the three fundamental invariants i.e., the Cosmic, the Human and the Divine). The existence of the corn goes back to Creation. Bread is there from the beginning of Creation and it is an ongoing process. Bread brings the three worlds together:

*The Cosmic*: the seed, the sun, the earth, the wind, the water, the minerals, fire, time and space etc. All these are cosmic elements. Without these cosmic elements the seed cannot grow and bread cannot be made.

*The Human:* human labour, human concern, love and pain, hope and despair, sweat, anxiety, fears, insecurity, poverty are equally a part of the process of bread making.

*The Divine:* bread remains always a mystery. How can we explain the mystery of *growth*, the mystery of the corn? What is this corn? We can analyze it through reason but none can give a final word of what it really is. It has a depth dimension.

Bread symbolizes a cosmic process, the cosmic process of self-giving or Kenosis. It is a continuous process of life and death. Beginning with the corn at each stage there is a self-giving, a death, so that the *other* might come to life. The corn has to yield itself, surrender itself to the earth and the earthly elements in order to give birth to the seedling. Jesus says “Unless a grain of wheat falls in the ground and *dies* it remains alone, but if it dies then it yields a mighty harvest”<sup>10</sup> The cosmic elements like the sun, water, earth, minerals etc., have to die to themselves to give life to the grain of wheat. The grain of wheat dies and gives life to the plant; the plant dies, in the sense it surrenders itself so that many other corns are born; again the corns die i.e. they have to be ground in the mill to become flour; the flour has to be kneaded and formed into bread and the bread has to be baked in the fire in order to become bread. The bread dies in order to be transformed into life-blood in humans. The process goes on and on. One who eats this bread has then the opportunity to become bread for others. All this reveals a deeper truth: a process of self-emptying, a process of life and death. This is so because reality itself is kenotic. Self-giving is the navel of Reality.<sup>11</sup>

The process of self-emptying is a continuous process. We all eat the same bread that has undergone this kenotic process. But unlike the bread, humans can turn out to be selfish. Thus the cosmic process of self-giving comes to a halt with the blindness and selfishness of human beings. It is because of this selfishness that today our bread contains blood and exploitation, poverty and hunger. It is profit-oriented bread which causes division, destruction and death. Symbolically expressed, humans though

they come into being because of the kenotic process of the cosmos, refuse to continue this process. Hence instead of communion what we have been mostly experiencing today is fragmentation.

In short, bread, a natural symbol of self-giving and communion, has in our present Indian context become a symbol of dehumanization, division, sectarianism, discrimination and marginalization on the basis of class (the rich and the poor), caste (the problem of untouchability), gender (patriarchal system that is denying human rights to females), creed (interreligious conflicts) etc.

## CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PASCHAL MYSTERY AND THE EUCHARIST

The connection is at the level of symbols. The world of symbols is a world of Mystery. It cannot be encapsulated in one formula, one doctrine or one belief. The life principle of these symbol-worlds of the Paschal Mystery and the Eucharist is: *Kenosis, self-emptying*, to be for others, not for oneself. Kenosis is life-giving, openness and relationship. The Ultimate Mystery has become human and being human really is equivalent to *openness and relationship*. Our Bread must bring us to this experience of openness and relationship, to communion and life, to an experience of faith.

Self-emptying (*Kenosis*) is the central mystery of Christianity. Where there is self-giving there is life. The same kenotic principle is at work in the *Bread of Life*. That's why Jesus is the Bread of Life for the world. The life of Jesus is a life of *kenosis*. He came to serve and not to be served. Hence bread is not only the symbol of the cosmic process; it means (signifies) to us Christians the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Eucharist is the symbol of Life and Communion. It is not a mere ritual, it is rather a re-collection. God is already present in the kenotic principle working in this bread. And in this bread we recognize the Bread of Life (Eucharist) when we *confess and proclaim* this incarnated principle of kenosis. *Where Kenosis takes*

*place there the Eucharist takes place*, there is the real presence of the Risen Jesus.

Moreover, *thanksgiving* or *gratitude* is grace or the work of God in us. The bread is a community, a communion, the presence of God's working in the world and humans. It is the recognition that our being is a gifted being. It is also our response to this working of God in us and in our world. We thank God for this Presence. *Where there is thanksgiving there is Eucharist*.

Where there is thanksgiving at work there is Hope, Love and Faith. Life, love and light express themselves always in symbols and all these are expressions of self-emptying, of Kenosis. We have already seen that the whole cosmos is self-emptying or kenotic. The sun is there not for itself but to give light and life to others; the water is there to give life to others; the beautiful landscape is there to feast our eyes and to give us delight; the whole creation is there at the service of others; creation is ruled by the principle of kenosis.

## **Eucharist and the Sin of the World**

Just before the reception of *communion* the Priest exclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sin of the world". As it stands, and judging from the response of the faithful, it has often become a mere pious exclamation which ignores the great truth of the Eucharist!

The Eucharist *proclaims* the principle of Kenosis: This is my Body, my Blood for you!" at work in the world – this is salvation history. Where this principle of self-emptying is operative there can be no sin! Whatever sins we may have committed, they will be wiped away through our kenotic (self-emptying) lives.

The sin of the world consists in *ignoring* the Divine Mystery i.e., *the life* of the world and in believing that the world is independent of this Divine Mystery. The Eucharist is a holistic act that acknowledges that we depend on this Divine Mystery; it is a proclamation of the belief that the Divine Mystery is our first

beginning and our final fulfilment. The more authentic our self-emptying, the less it leaves room for any sin.

## THE EUCHARIST AND DAILY LIFE

The way of symbol is the way of proclamation. What we proclaim on the Altar in the Eucharist is the culmination and the remembrance of everyday life. Only then can we call life a celebration along with all its ups and downs. Hence we need to develop an antenna for the symbolic dimension of the world.

As we said earlier, the Eucharist is the symbol of the kenosis/self-emptying of Jesus. That is why it cannot be restricted to half an hour of celebration. The Eucharist has to be understood as the Eucharist of Life and our lives have to become Eucharist.

Self-emptying is a lifelong process. Where there is self-emptying at work, there is *gratitude/thanksgiving* for the gift of life, not just individual life but *the life of the world*. Where there is self-emptying at work, there is *unselfish concern* for others – whoever they may be. Where there is self-emptying at work, there is *crossing of boundaries* of class, caste, colour, creed and gender. Where there is self-emptying at work there *relationships flourish* - in our families, neighbourhoods, circle of friends, places of work and wherever two or three are gathered together in the Lord's name.

In addition, the Eucharist, rightly understood, is a cosmic, divine and human action. It is not a private prayer but a manifesto of life and a programme of action and commitment. The Eucharist highlights the motivating force of our '*service of the earth*' (environmental questions), *welfare of humans* (human rights questions) and *confession of the Divine* (religious questions). How do we go about with our world? How do we go about with our fellow human beings? Or to be more precise how do we go about with our own body? As we go about with our body so we go about with the world, for we are part of this world-body. The world is an expression of God's love. The Eucharist gives an impetus to the quality of our service, commitment and confession.



Self-emptying also means, among other things, work for justice and peace. *Kenotic Service* or working for the welfare of others is the translation of the Eucharist into daily life. It is a service that seeks the well-being of *all* without seeking any reward. Only then we become channels of peace, reconciliation and healing and are able to build communities. In short, the Eucharist takes place all the 24 hours of the day and night.

## Notes

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## Globalisation, Violence and Religion

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### Abstract

After analysing the historical origin and consequences of the process of globalisation, the author presents the challenges posed by globalisation. This presents a serious challenge to the Catholic Church. She commands a vast network of social service institutions, schools, colleges and establishments of higher learning and research across the globe. Can any other organisation boast of such an army of allegedly committed and dedicated women and men, scattered all over the world, many in positions of power and decision-making? An international Synod of Bishops, not too long ago, declared that the ministry of faith must go hand in hand with action for justice. The Catholic Church is convinced of being one of the recipients of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Millions of qualified and professional persons make up her faithful followers, all sharing in the priestly, prophetic and pastoral office of Christ. And Pentecost may be seen as God's approval of authentic globalisation. In spite of all this, if she is not prepared to take any greater involvement in the great discernment process for freedom and unity and diversity the world over, she would not be worth the price of a shoe-lace.

### Keywords

Globalisation, Catholic Church, violence, WTO, GATT, UN, NIKE.

“Fundamentally, there is something extremely positive about the whole movement of making the world one. It’s an expression of creation, God’s creation. But, in creation there is also sin. The whole thing can be used to dominate people.” Ricardo Fall sj.<sup>1</sup>

## **The Birth of Globalisation**

In 1999, Merrill Lynch ran a series of full-page ads in several newspapers and journals worldwide, heralding the birth of Globalisation and trying, thereby, to win popular support for ‘the Market Economy’. Dating the inauguration of that Brave New Age from the collapse of the Berlin Wall, ten years earlier, it hailed the death of the Old Order of Cold War confrontation between two super-powers that had put the whole world on its collective toes. We were assured that a New World Order was a-dawning, an era of peace and prosperity for all, a ‘free global system’. “The world is Ten Years old”, it was proclaimed in banner headlines. Then it went on:

It was born when the Wall fell in 1989. It’s no surprise that the world’s youngest economy - the global economy - is still finding its bearings. The spread of free markets and democracy around the world is permitting more people to erase, not just geographical borders, but also human ones. It seems to us that, for a ten-year old, the world continues to hold great promise. In the meantime, no one ever said that growing up was easy.

Excellent copy. But note how, among other things, ‘democracy’ is casually (and causally?) linked with ‘free markets’, as if to say you can’t really have the former without the other. Indeed, ‘globalisation’ sounds like a nice, friendly word, holding out the promise of a Paradise on Earth. However in practice, as we shall see, the kind of globalisation we have. makes all this true for the rich among the Americans and the Europeans (especially the big business tycoons and their families) and for their allies and hangers-on, elsewhere.

## Globalisation's Roots

Globalisation is championed by the WTO (World Trade Organisation), based in Geneva, Switzerland. It had originally been called GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the name given to it way back in 1949, when it was founded. The new name was bestowed on it at Uruguay, in 1995. World Trade Organisation sounds more 'open', inviting and non-partisan.

And, right away, the WTO began to argue that its nascent offspring, 'globalisation', would be the surest and swiftest way to combat world poverty, promote sustainable growth and establish peace, prosperity and justice for all. Third World diplomats were, at first, impressed. They were assured that their countries would be the biggest gainers, for free trade would allow them to corner the world market with their cheaper priced goods (due to lower production costs). Some were not convinced, however. Since when, they asked, have the wealthier, stronger nations really sought the good of the Third World?

And it was not long before Asian economists began to suggest that there were 'vested interests' hiding behind the 'globalisation gambit'. An article of Joginder Singh, former Director of the Central Bureau Investigation of India, is a case in point. Backing his charges with well-researched facts and figures, he argued, "the rich nations, with [their] high standards of living [had] reached the saturation point in developing their countries and their economies," He went on,

The goods and services they produce, in the region of \$ 900 billion, are so huge that they have to find other markets, failing which their industries and financial institutions would either be in serious trouble or have to be closed down. ...

Good business sense suggested to them a simple expedient, whereby they could extricate themselves from the mess they had landed themselves into; do it at the expense of the weaker nations!<sup>2</sup> And, to add insult to injury, they would do so, all the while projecting themselves as unselfishly committed to helping the poor of the world to improve their lot.

## The WTO: For and Against

<i>The TEN BENEFITS the WTO claims to offer the world at large</i>	<i>The TEN DRAWBACKS of the WTO, as per; the charges of its critics:</i>
it promotes peace	it promotes exploitation of the Third World
it handles disputes constructively	it allows environmental degradation to go unpunished
it makes life easier for all	it permits dumping of harmful goods.
it cuts the cost of living through free trade	it props up corrupt governments, through increased trade flows.
it allows for greater choice of products	it blocks countries trying to ban imports of chemically modified food.
it stimulates economic growth thru increased trade	it jeopardizes US jobs by letting in trade cheap III World labour.
its basic principles make business more efficient	it operates in secret and is unaccountable.
it protects governments from lobbying	it furthers the 'americanisation' of culture.
it encourages good government	it's a cover-up for ruthless business.

## **The Seattle Protest**

The first rumblings of popular discontent with the way globalisation was unfolding were heard when thousands of people protested outside the venue of the WTO ministerial talks at Seattle, USA, on November 10, 1999. Riot police had to be called in and curfew imposed while minister-delegates from 134 countries (including ours) tried to get to the closed-door discussions.

The WTO believes in, and calls for, FREE TRADE and a FREE MARKET. The protestors, on the other hand, were calling for FAIR TRADE and a FAIR MARKET. Granted, the protests were somewhat blunted for a whole congeries of widely disparate complaints jostled together to voice their grievances under a huge umbrella. We concentrate on the anti-globalisation charges.

For one thing, all kinds of problems arise when one country doesn't want to import, from another member state, beef which has been treated with suspiciously unhealthy hormones, or when a wealthy nation wants to sell its steel to another poorer country at such a cheap rate (temporarily, of course), so that no one would want to buy the more expensive local variety. In such a case, of course, the smaller, less powerful steel-producers of the poor country would be driven out of business. For every signatory to the 2000-odd page GATT agreement – still upheld by the WTO – is also bound by Article XVI (paragraph iv) which stipulates that, “Every member shall ensure conformity of its laws, regulations and administrative procedures with its obligations, as provided in the annexed agreements.” Tucked among these is a rule that declares, in effect, that any local or national requirement that calls for the protection of cottage and small-scale industries, or demands a ban on certain foods on the grounds of health or environmental standards of the important-nation, could be over-ruled as in contravention of the provisions of the agreement.

## **US ‘bully-beef Tactics**

An instance to illustrate what we have just talked about. Europeans, as a whole, hate US beef. This is because about 90%

of US farmers, as a whole, rear their cows in cramped, confined spaces that allow them little movement. In addition, they feed them a diet of hormones. All this makes them grow fatter and faster (besides being rather cruel for the poor animal). This also raises fears among Europeans that eaters of such meat would become more susceptible to certain diseases, such as cancer. There is yet no conclusive evidence in that direction but experiments are going on to check that out. Europeans, to be on the safe side, insisted that – until conclusive evidence, one way or other is in – the US export to them only hormone free beef and the Americans gave them a written undertaking to that effect. Imagine the horror and anger of the Europeans when they found that they had been deceived: sample tests revealed that imported US beef contained hormones! When they charged America with fraud and perjury, the US, without batting an eye-lid, retaliated by claiming that the European beef-ban was against WTO rules. In order to further pressurise the continentals, it drew up a list of some \$ 900 million of European imports that would henceforth be banned in the US (including scooters and strawberry jam). On top of that, US farmers began to lobby for some \$ 500 million compensation from Europe for their lost beef trade. If that is the way how the US can -and does - throw its weight about with wealthy industrialised nations, one shudders to imagine how it would treat poorer, powerless people, who cannot afford the expenses of international disputes at World Courts. The reality is actually a good deal worse than we'd imagine.

### **Case Study No 1: The Plight of the Igorot People**

The Igorot (literally, 'Mountain People') are an indigenous folk of Bengu Province in the Philippines. For centuries, they have practised 'pocket mining' of the rich gold reserves found on their ancestral lands. The men, traditionally, dig - by hand - small, round caves into the mountains and the women and children, from time immemorial, hammer the lumps of gold - bearing rocks into less bulky, more portable sizes. Now, globalisation has stepped in and set up the Benguet Corporation,

with shares equally divided between rich Filipinos, the Philippine government and US investors. New hi-tech machines now cut deep gashes into the mountains, strip away trees and topsoil, dumping piles of polluting waste into riverbeds. The Igorot people, despoiled of their mining grounds, find their water resources destroyed and can no longer grow their rice and bananas. Now they have to trudge long distances to obtain water for washing, bathing and cooking. Furthermore, instead of using water to separate the gold from the rock, as the Igorot once did, the mining company uses more 'efficient' toxic chemicals (including cyanide compounds) to do the job and flushes by-products (at little or no cost) down the river, poisoning the water and killing not only the fish that the people had once used for food but also any of their cattle that come there to drink. Investing in proper waste disposal would hardly make a dent in the billion pesos that the Company makes every year. Instead, poor rice farmers and Igorots have to lose 250 million pesos a year as their yields decline and they add their numbers to the rural exodus. Once more the poor are called to foot the bills of the rich, with a massive energy transfer from the former to the latter.<sup>3</sup>

## **Case Study N. 2: The NIKE Story**

Finer NIKE products sell for about \$ 100 in the US and Europe. Most of its outsourced production takes place in Indonesia, where it is manufactured at a cost price as low as \$ 5.60 a pair, by hundreds of young women and girls, who are paid about 15 cents an hour. They are housed in militia like barracks, unions are banned and overtime is mandatory. In the event of protests, the army is regularly called in to enforce obedience. Cynthia Elone<sup>4</sup> reports that the \$ 20 million paid to basketball star, Michael Jordan, for promoting NIKE shoes, exceeded the entire payroll of all the Indonesian factories that make them. When questioned about conditions in NIKE's Indonesian factories, the General Manager of NIKE, Indonesia, gave a typically evasive answer. Yes, he had heard reports of labour problems there but, No, he had no details. He added, "I don't need to know. It is not



within our scope to investigate.” What apparently was within his scope was to ensure the bucks came in, no matter what.

### **Case Study No. 3: The Avon Success Story**

Avon is a brand name in cosmetics, popular among society ladies in the US and Europe. On August 2, 1994, TV Nation documented a very successful Avon campaign to market a product among some of the most miserable and impoverished women of the world - the thin, exhausted, prematurely aged and wrinkled women in the remote Amazon village of Santarem, Brazil. First hundreds of models were roped in to make a series of TV commercials, along side dashing handsome young men. The campasinas, bent and wearied long before their time, due to demanding years of child-bearing and back-breaking toil in the sun, were told that, by using a single jar off a miraculous product called ‘Renew’ (cost: \$ 40), they would be able to slough off their cracked skin to release the light-skinned, sensuous woman trapped within. Indeed, special effects depicted - in a TV ad – a typical campesina peeling away years from her face and becoming magically younger and sexier and the poor women fall for it. Rosa Alegria, Communication Director of Avon, Brazil, exults, “Women do everything to buy it. They stop buying things like clothes, like shoes. If they feel good with their skin, they prefer to ... buy something that is on TV, It’s a real miracle!” It’s certainly the kind of miracle that globalisation allows Avon and those of its ilk to perform, though it might also rank as one of the most aggressive and unethical efforts of all time to universalise consumer culture. So what if it dispenses false hopes and deprives indigent families of their basic needs? And when the campesinos realize they have been had, Ms. Alegria would probably quip that all’s fair in love, war... and business!

### **And elsewhere...**

In India, large-scale development projects displaced over 20 million people in 40 years. In Brazil, the switch-over from

agriculture carried out by small holders, who provided enough for domestic consumption, to capital-intensive goods for export, drove some 28 million peasants onto the road between 1960 and 1980. These schemes were launched by the World Bank with the alleged aim of helping the rural poor to become self-sufficient. However, when questioned by social workers, not a single WB staff member was able to cite a WB-inspired project in which the lot of the displaced people had, in anyway, improved. A recent NGO Conference gave the following bleak report on various World Bank funded projects

In Thailand, 10 million rural people face eviction from the land where they live, so as to make way for commercial farms. Ground water is depleted and mangroves continually destroyed by export-oriented shrimp farms. Tribal people struggle for the recognition of ancestral rights in the forests of Eastern Malaya and Indonesia. In the Philippines, the government's land reform programme is systematically eroded by the conversion of prime agricultural lands into industrial estates and other non-agricultural uses.<sup>5</sup>

The list can go on. No doubt, these projects will bring development and gain - not for the poor peasants they are supposed to benefit, but for big business and the wealthy. The *costs* of all these programmes would be borne by the lower income-groups and the impoverished. One can scarcely maintain that the World Bank and its crony, the International Monetary Fund, know nothing of all this!

## **Market Ideology: Fiction and Fact**

Globalisation exhorts us to give up out-dated nationalities. We must see ourselves as 'peoples of the earth', true cosmopolitans, whose commitments transcend native place and homeland. In itself, this is quite an attractive proposition. But could it be one more cover-up for global-and the 'growth model' of development on which it is based?

The ‘free trade’ and ‘free market’ touted by Merrill Lynch are presented as authentic precursors of true democracy. The half truth behind this sophistry is that people best express their will by voting with their bucks than their ballots. People manifest their sovereignty not so much by voting conniving politicians into power, as when they do it through their purchases. This is appealing logic, given today’s distrust of politicians and political parties and their scams and schemes to stay in power at any cost. But one key factor is being overlooked. In the market, every dollar, every euro gets a vote - not just each person, as in a traditional democratic set-up - and the more money you have, the more votes you get! Markets are inherently in favour of the rich and the big corporations, who often command more clout than governments. As markets become more global, our futures rest more in the hands of huge multi- and trans-national companies than our governments. No wonder David C. Korten entitled his distressing and devastating study, *When Corporations Rule the World*.<sup>6</sup>

### Foreign Aid - Who Helps Whom?

“\$ 146 billion: the combined income of the 528 million people living in the 43 least-developed countries of the world in 1999. \$ 1 trillion, the combined income of the 200 richest people in the world in 1999.”<sup>7</sup> These astronomical figures illustrate the yawning - and increasing - gulf between the haves and the have-nots in today’s world. It boils down to saying that 200 people have almost 1000 times more money than over 500 million others altogether!

The disparity is devastatingly consequential in what William Dugger calls ‘corporate libertarianism’.<sup>8</sup> He shows us why market-players are so drawn to corporations. Their legal nature is able to shield decision-making executives from the effects of their irresponsible actions and policies. A corporation is, thus, able to “create its own culture... [and] focus on corporate size and power.”<sup>9</sup> Unlike real people, who are all ultimately rendered equal by death and whose accumulation of wealth can be restricted by

taxes and other controls, corporations can apparently grow and exist forever as well as amass power and wealth infinitely. Thus, as the *New Internationalist* of March 1980, tells us:

An assessment of the largest 100 economies in the world show 53 to be countries and 47 multinational corporations. More significant for the next decade, the growth rate of these companies will be three or four times that of the industrialised countries.<sup>10</sup>

In 1985, General Motors already had a growth sales larger than the GNP of every African country or of every Latin American country (except Brazil and Mexico), or every Asian country (except Japan, China and India) or even of some European countries (like Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium and Austria.<sup>11</sup> Recently, Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR), a giant conglomerate in the food industry, made the colossal bid of \$ 24.88 trillion to swallow up RJR Nabisco - an amount equal to the combined fortunes of the six richest men in the US. That would have been enough to fund all Central American governments for a year, or sponsor 80 million destitute children over the planet for the same period.<sup>12</sup> These mega-giants, with their tentacles in every nation, unlike governments, cannot be voted out of power to give an opposition party a chance to reverse trends. They, more than any political party, run our lives, nowadays, as Barnett and Muller notes:

In developing a new world, managers of firms like General Motors, IBM, General Electric, Volkswagen, Exxon and a few hundred others, make daily business decisions which have more impact than most sovereign governments, on where people live what work – if any - they will do, what they will eat, drink and wear... and what kind of society our children will inherit.<sup>13</sup>

It is dangerous to allow so much wealth and power to accumulate in the hands of such profit-seeking, unaccountable megalomaniacs. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are UN-backed organisations, established precisely to ameliorate the conditions of poorer nations and streamline fiscal

services at the international level. However, as knowledgeable social activists testify:

If measured by contributions to improving the lives of people or strengthening the institutions of democratic governance, the World Bank and the IMP have been disastrous failures - imposing an enormous burden on the world's poor and seriously impeding their development.<sup>14</sup>

This is no more blatantly obvious, perhaps, than in the system of foreign aid to developing countries that they have established. Whatever be its pretensions, the whole scheme boils down to the poor nations paying back to their rich donors much more than they receive from them. In effect, it is the developing countries who are giving foreign aid to the opulent industrialised first world! Thus, Third World nations might have fared better off had the so-called First World nations *not* come to their aid at all. "Far from playing the Good Samaritan," notes Paul Vallely, "the rich world has developed a new role. Today we are Bad Samaritans."<sup>15</sup> And he goes on to point out that "latest figures show that the debt and interests due from the Third world are three times more than all the aid they currently receive."<sup>16</sup> In other words,

To repay it [i.e. their International Debt] Third World governments are being forced by the international authorities to cut food subsidies to the poor and their health and education budgets. After decades of improvement in levels of child nutrition and literacy, the situation of the Third World has begun to decline. The United Nations' Children's Organisation, UNICEF, has worked out that, as a result of these budget cuts a total of one million African children have died in the last decade. Throughout the developing world an additional. 500,000 children died, from this direct cause, in 1988 alone.<sup>17</sup>

The foreign debts of many developing countries are immense. For instance the debt of Sub-Saharan Africa is over \$ 220 billion. At \$ 365 per capita it is higher than the average GNP per capita which is just over \$ 308. Taking India's population to be one billion from January 2000, at the current rate of exchange,

every Indian - including the very young, the aged and the infirm - carries an external debt of Rs 10,000 on his/her shoulders. And let us not forget that 40% of our people still subsist below the poverty line.<sup>18</sup>

### **Can the WTO, WB and IMF be Fair?**

The WTO makes the rules by which the 'free' market works. It is controlled by the US, designed in the West and custom-built to serve the interests of the World's seven richest nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and US). These nations control half of the world's revenue and two-thirds of its trade. The least developed lands represent some 20% of the world's population, but generate only 0.03% of its trade. No wonder they are at a disadvantage when the former lay down their conditions.

To begin with, the Almighty Seven (and their Corporations) want a 'free market' that is, a set-up which best enhances their profits. This means no protection of local markets as this would limit the freedom of action that they would like to have, while functioning in the local economy. As globalisation is upheld, local rules, customs and regulations are pushed aside as prejudicial to the same understanding of globalisation (read big business). Such vast multi-, or trans- nationals can thereby take advantage of their poorer, less-equipped local competitors, driving them out of business with a few efficient moves, over-ruling anti-pollution laws, offering better perks and higher wages than any local firm, while still paying out much less than would be required on home soil.

This means arranging its global, operations to produce products where costs are lowest, selling them where markets are more lucrative and shifting the resulting profits to where tax rates are the least burdensome. The ability to shift production from one country to another weakens the bargaining power of the locals.<sup>19</sup>

These organisations, as they stand now, merely establish better and quicker means for the rich and powerful nations to

become ever more so - at the expense of the very nations they are supposed to be helping. Hence, they must be scrapped altogether, to make way for new ones, better equipped to realise their pristine goals of helping the poorer nations, or they must submit their functioning to drastic revision. Very specially must they stop demanding that all nations be bound by the same rules and that disputes be settled by world courts that involve an extremely costly and tedious process that only wealthy nations can afford.

Then there is the questionable practice of converting private debts into public liabilities that they have sanctioned. This began with Latin America in the 1980s and, after the Asian currency crisis of 1996 - 8, entered Thailand and then spread to Malaysia and South Korea, India is not unaffected. Putting it bluntly, the IMF forced the governments of all these countries to accept liability for private debts incurred by individual bankers, financiers and business groups in those countries who, for various reasons, were unable to pay back loans they had borrowed. Now the normal procedure in such cases, upheld by all banking institutions world-wide, is to require such defaulters to plead bankruptcy and the greedy lenders – who had thrown caution to the winds by advancing such loans (lured perhaps by the high rate of interest) would have to pay the price of their reckless loans. But thanks to the machinations of the IMF, traditional banking theory was bypassed and wealthy loaners were able to make good their losses at the expense of the already over-burdened citizens of the poorer countries!

## **The Either/Or Fallacy**

A common sophistry of the ‘growth model’ advocates that globalisation espouses the best of only two possible choices. Either we must cast our lot in with the ‘free market’, unencumbered by governmental restraint and open our borders to all the world, or we must settle for the grim totalitarian model of the old Soviet States behind the Iron Curtain, where the State would decide everything, leaving us with no personal, let alone, economic,

freedom, with perhaps another Wall to seal us off from the world around. If this were really the case, perhaps we would do better to opt for the present model of globalisation and 'free markets, after all.

But are we really caught up in such a Catch-22 situation? Why can't we opt for the system of Corporate Free Markets, but require them to function within a framework of responsibility? What we have now is a set-up that grants impersonal, profiteering corporations rights and freedoms above those of human persons ... and lets them get away with it! This permits them to seize all the advantages of success and make the poorer countries pay the cost!

### **Sheer Growth is NOT enough!**

Those who champion the growth model of development, on which today's globalisation schemes are based, assure us that if we merely produced more goods and services, all our problems with population, poverty and the environment would be solved. The fact is that, since 1950, global output has increased five-fold. The major effect of this was, as we saw, a glut of unsold goods in the hands of the rich nations - a problem they were only able to solve by the present day globalisation formula. In other words, unrestrained growth created more problems than it was supposed to solve. Of course, while world production increased, so did the population, but the former went up five-fold, while the latter merely doubled (So there was no Malthusan population growth outstripping production). At the same time, the percentage of those living in absolute poverty also doubled. Meanwhile, the assets of the world's richest 20% doubled, too, while those of the 20% poorest plummeted. In all honesty, we can't lay the blame for all this at the door of economic growth, but it just goes to show that mere growth cannot save us from our economic woes.

Unless we make some very radical changes in our production and distribution methods, the future of our ailing world will remain bleak. In the short run the rich will go on getting richer and the



poor will become more impoverished. In the long run, even the rich will begin to feel the pinch, for they will either pollute the world and themselves out of existence or they will have to set drastic limits to their extravagant lifestyles. Let us also not forget that the world's resources of fuels and natural wealth are not infinite; we cannot go on wrenching wealth from Mother Nature's ample bosom forever.

Even on the "home scene" the growth model hasn't helped improve things for the common man and woman. New York, centre of the world's most successful proponent of the growth model of development, is already beginning to manifest many of the external signs of a typical Third world city; wandering bands of homeless and hungry rubbing shoulders with the bold and beautiful lifestyles of the rich and famous, sparks of random violence, an overburdened police force caught between the mafia on the one hand and corrupt politicians on the other. The same can be seen in seedy localities of Paris, London and elsewhere in the First world. At times one wonders whether he or she has not suddenly been miraculously transported back to the slums of Kolkatta or the backwaters of Bogotá.

To sum up: the 'growth model' and its agents, the WB, IMF and WTO, coupled with the kind of globalisation they are championing are no help to the poor. In fact, they are a form of violence let loose upon the defenseless, however cynically and hypocritically its perpetrators try to portray themselves as social workers, healers and saviours of the down-trodden. It's time to call the bluff.

## **Proposing Alternatives**

The remedy is not to close the door to globalisation; a FAIR market and FAIR trade do not require that. It's not globalisation in itself that is to be blamed but the kind of irresponsible version of the same that the WTO and its cronies are defending. In place of 'the same rules for all', for the giants and the mites, the latter should be concretely assisted, rather than restricted by WTO rules.

Nor should we forget that growth is not necessarily a good thing. As the British economist, Paul Elkins,<sup>20</sup> has shown, there are certain conditions which decide whether it is or not.

a) the goods or services that are being increased should be inherently valuable and beneficial to society at large;

b) their benefits should be widely distributed throughout all sections of society;

c) any good accruing from them must outweigh all possible detrimental effects that might be unavoidable in the process of their production.

Mention could be made, here, of Gandhiji's advice to Nehru soon after Independence. One should ensure that resources be devoted to providing the poorest of the poor with their basic necessities (clean water, a non-harmful working environment, proper housing and hygiene. etc) before they are diverted to making more sophisticated playthings available for the rich (colour, rather than black and white TV and more opulent shopping malls and gilded arcades).

As Viktor Papanek, international planner and designer, who has worked closely with the UNESCO and other such bodies, put it, "The fact of the matter is that today there is more than enough to go around, if only it is properly planned."<sup>21</sup> In other words, instead of launching ourselves onto another round of frenzied production, let's concentrate on the HOW of production and distribution. This reminds us of the words of the Mahatma, "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed."

Actually, studies carried out by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), have shown that quality of life is not necessarily related to a high GNP. Saudi Arabia's average GNP is fifteen times that of Sri Lanka, but its literacy rate is far lower, Brazil's per capita income is twice as high as that of Jamaica, but its child mortality rate is also four times as much! It is not HOW MUCH, but HOW that matters, not GNP but quality of life.

## Small is Beautiful

Dr. E F Schumacher, former chief economist of the British National Coal Board, urges us to rid ourselves of the obsession with size and bigness. In his controversial *Small is Beautiful*, he suggests that we replace the system of 'mass production' with 'production by the masses'. The former, "based on sophisticated, highly capital intensive, high energy input dependent and human labour-saving technology, presupposes that you are already rich" before you can use it. On the other hand, production by the masses "mobilises the priceless resources which are possessed by all human beings, their clever brains and their skilful hands, and supports them with first class tools". Furthermore, it is compatible with the laws of ecology, gentle in its use of scarce resources and designed to serve the human person rather than making him or her a slave of the machine. There may be some point in the objections of idealism and 'back to nature' that have been levelled against Schumacher, but this shouldn't lead us to reject wholesale all that he is pointing at. Of course, agreeing with his thesis would oblige us to try and break free from the increasing pressure of the big industrial nations who are determined to foist on us their model of development. And our own educated elite, from whom our ruling cliques are drawn, studied, for the most part, in such lands and have imbibed their principles, so they add to the pressure. It'd be even more difficult to make them alter their patterns of thinking. Are we prepared to exert alternative pressure which is not necessarily in favour of Gandhiji's back to nature rural economy and the spinning wheel?

## Towards an alternative, Rural-based Model

We are familiar with the urban-based, high-tech model of development, but it is not the only one. Ivan Illich, an educator who has worked along with Paolo Freire in Latin American villages and favelas, calls for a rural-based model of development, ideally suited for countries like ours, where the majority of people still live in far-flung villages.

Instead of investing the usual \$ 100 million to construct yet another speed way between two big Indian cities, he would recommend we use that princely sum to construct a latticed work of small trails between villages, which could be traversed by 'mechanical donkeys', traveling at 5 mph and carrying loads of about a ton. If 50,000 miles of such 'kaccha' roads were laid between thousands of Indian villages, a whole network of trade and exchange would be established between previously isolated centres. This would encourage exchange, increase the quality, quantity and income of villages, promote indigenous handicrafts and cottage industries, reduce the movement to cities and move the entire rural population a step closer to self-fulfilment.

Illich denounces the kind of development that Latin America is being subjected to by big American cartels, to the detriment of other models:

Traffic jams in Sao Paolo, whilst a million Brazilians flee a drought by walking 500 miles. Each car which Brazil puts on the road denies 500 people good transportation by bus. Every dollar spent by Latin America on doctors and hospitals costs a hundred lives. ... Had each dollar been spent on providing- safe drinking water, a hundred lives could have been saved.<sup>22</sup>

He could have been writing of India, we're back again to the industrialised nations, basked by our urban elites, championing a form of development that is good for the city conglomerates of our land ("India") versus the needs of our rural-based majority ("Bharat"). Little consideration is given to the 'refugees from Bharat! who crowd into India', looking for a job and a meal and having to eke out a miserable existence in slums and shanty-towns.

## Two Gospels

Globalisation, as based on the Corporate Free Market Economy in today's world, is preaching the Gospel of Having More. It affirms that all that we seek, deep down - happiness, meaning, fulfilment - call it what you will is to be found in accumulating things and by limitless material gratification, even

if it involves depriving certain people (deemed insignificant) of the little they have. This approach is on solid ground for it appeals to the undeniable and demonstrable capacities for greed that lurks within us and against which all of us, like St Paul, have to contend with. It engenders competition, violence, hatred and racism. But there is, admittedly, something “deep down” in us that responds to the Gospel of Having More.

There is also in us humans another - equally undeniable and demonstrable - capacity, equally “deep within” us and it provides the basis for the Gospel of Being More. It focuses on enhancing the quality of living of everyone (not just a few privileged and insensitive bloated plutocrats), is sensitive to the environment and to the millions yet unborn, our children and grand-children of tomorrow.

It is up to us to decide to which of these capacities to respond. Which is the Gospel we want to build on? Healthy societies are built on love and compassion and sharing and they thereby create an abundance of those things that are important for the quality of life for all people. Unhealthy and dysfunctional societies nurture greed and competition. They cause scarcity, deprivation and ecological imbalance and sow the seeds of their own destruction. We must choose.

And this means that religions must choose, too. For it is especially the role and responsibility of religions to make us more human, to foster authentic human and social values. However, if our religions prefer to waste their time, energy and vast reserves of money on sterile doctrinal disputes or ritualistic arguments, if they continue to nurture intolerance and divisions on earth, if they promote conflicts and terror-tactics or let themselves become the stool-pigeons of conniving politicians and their vote-banks, then they will be rejected by the people. For those who want mere opium for the masses, well, there are cheaper and more attractive versions of the same than the religious one.

And what of the Catholic Church? She commands a vast network of social service institutions, schools, colleges and

establishments of higher learning and research across the globe. Can any other organisation boast of such an army of allegedly committed and dedicated women and men, scattered all over the world, many in positions of power and decision-making (priests and religious)? An international Synod of Bishops, not too long ago, declared that the ministry of faith must go hand in hand with action for justice. The Catholic Church is convinced of being one of the recipients (if not *the* recipient) of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Millions of qualified and professional persons make up her faithful followers, all sharing in the priestly, prophetic and pastoral office of Christ. And Pentecost may be seen as God's approval of authentic globalisation. In spite of all this, if she is not prepared to take any greater involvement in the great discernment process for freedom and unity and diversity the world over – then, to paraphrase Nietzsche – she would not be worth the price of a shoe-lace.

## Notes

1. In a personal conversation with the author (on record), during an interview at the Vienna International Centre on May 4, 1998.
2. In an article in the Maharashtra Herald, Pune, July 20, 2000, p.4
3. See David C Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, (Mapuca (Goa) The Other India Press, 1998, p. 43.
4. Cynthia Enloe, "The Globetrotting Sneaker", in *Mainstream*, March-April 1995, pp. 10 – 15; see also Richard J Barnet and Johann Cavanagh, *Global Dreams: Imperial Corporations and New World Order*, New York : Simon & Schuster, 1994, pp. 325 – 329.
5. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, p. 62.
6. Cf No. 03.
7. Time Magazine, quoted by Ambrose Pinto. Editorial to *Social Action*, Volume 50, No. 2, April - June 2000, pp. iii - iv.
8. In his book *Corporate Hegemony*, New York: Greenwood press, 1989.
9. Ibid.
10. Quoted by I John Mohan Razu, *Transnational Corporations as Agents of Dehumanisation in India*, Delhi: Cambridge Press, 1999, pp. 7-8.

11. Cf. The Marxist Review, January-February, 1987; quoted by Razu, Transnational Corporations as Agents of Dehumanisation in India, p.8.
12. Cf. The Multinational Monitor, March 1969, p. 4: quoted by Razu.
13. George W Ball, partner of Lehman Brothers and former US Under Secretary of State (1961 - 66) went on record admitting that multi-nationals and transnationals "have the power to affect the lives of people and nations." Cf. Razu, Ibid.
14. Korten, When Corporations Rule the World, p. 171. According to World Bank Debt Tables, corroborated by the Reserve Bank of India Report on Currency and Finance, 1998 - 99, India's external debt has escalated alarmingly, from US \$ 20 billion in 1970, to US \$ 77 billion in 1980 and further to US \$ 97 billion in 1999 - that's a debt burden something like Rs. 300 on every Indian, young or old, healthy or infirm. And let us not forget that India's per capita income is about US \$ 310.
15. Paul Vallely, Bad Samaritans: First World Ethics and Third World Debts, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990, p. 4.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Arun Ghosh, "External Indebtedness, Capital Flows and the Problems of Financial Integration", Social Action, Volume 50, No. 2, April-June, 2000, p. 111.
19. Korten, p. 126.
20. Cf. Korten, p. 39 - 40.
21. Quoted by Adam Daniel Pinnerty, No More Plastic Jesus: Global Justice and Christian Lifestyle, Maryknoll New York, 1979, p. 2.
22. Quoted by Finnerty, pp. 48-49.

## Jesus' Vision of A New World Order and His Stand against Society and Religion of His Day

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### Abstract

After accepting that we cannot expect Jesus to have given us a blueprint of the new society of God's dream, the author understands that it is legitimate to arrive at valid conclusions about his vision of a new society. There is ample evidence in the NT to show that Jesus was proclaiming a God for whom humans were more important than systems and structures, laws and regulations, temple and Sabbath. The God of Jesus wills that humans unfold themselves and become what they are called to become. In this article an attempt is made to show that Jesus' vision of a world order is not based on any ideology or pious fantasy but on his intimate, unique and personal relation with his Father as well as his revelation about what humans are and what humans can become. This is expressed by the symbol, *Kingdom of God*. In the first part of this article we shall see the context in which Jesus proclaimed his vision of the society. In the second part, how Jesus' relationship with his Father made him challenge the society and religion of his time which stood against all that he believed in and lived for. In the third part, what the main features of Jesus' vision are of a world where God's reign is lived out rather than sacralized and the consequences of his vision for those who are committed to him and his values.

### Keywords

Kingdom of God, symbol, vision of Jesus, new world order.



At the outset it must be made clear that the title of this article may be misleading. When we discuss the new world order according to Jesus' own vision, we must admit that it would be an anachronism to suggest that Jesus understood the complex socio-political and economic systems and structures which constitute nations and their complex interrelationships that make up the world order as we understand it today. Jesus' life and mission was limited to a very small geographical area and his knowledge about the surrounding nations and the Roman Empire that kept the Palestine of his time under its control might have been very limited. However, we can draw valid conclusions about his vision of a new society and a new order of human relationships based on the NT witness about his dream of a new society where God's reign is recognized, acknowledged and celebrated for human well-being.

We cannot expect Jesus to have given us a blueprint of the new society of God's dream which he claimed to interpret authoritatively. Still it is legitimate to arrive at valid conclusions about his vision of a new society. He had clear ideas about how humans should order their lives in this world. This we can conclude from the demands he makes on his disciples whom he called to be 'the light of the world and the salt of the earth' (cfr. Mt 5:13-14). There is ample evidence in the NT to show that Jesus was proclaiming a God for whom humans were more important than systems and structures, laws and regulations, temple and Sabbath. His virulent attack on those who perpetuate the systems of oppression whether religious and social is indicative of this commitment to humans who are valued more than anything else in this world. The God of Jesus wills that humans unfold themselves and become what they are called to become. So the new order of the world must create ways and means to enhance the unfolding of humans and to prevent those forces that work against the flowering of the human person. Jesus' own attitude to humans and their situation reveals that this new order must be based on ontology, the law of Being and not on autonomy or self-determined law unto itself for which the Zealots fought, or

the heteronomy of a hierarchical structure where the higher becomes law for the lower, which the Sadducees and Pharisees wanted for their society.

In this article an attempt is made to show that Jesus' vision of a world order is not based on any ideology or pious fantasy but on his intimate, unique and personal relation with his Father as well as his revelation about what humans are and what humans can become. This is expressed by the symbol, *Kingdom of God*. In the first part of this article we shall see the context in which Jesus proclaimed his vision of the society. In the second part, how Jesus' relationship with his Father made him challenge the society and religion of his time which stood against all that he believed in and lived for. In the third part, what the main features of Jesus' vision of a world are where God's reign is lived out rather than sacralized and the consequences of his vision for those who are committed to him and his values.

## **I. The Context of Jesus' New Vision of a World Order**

The context of Jesus' life was not very different from our own at least with regard to the human attitudes and tendencies in responding to their life situation and the options available to them. "The names might be different but the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots, Baptists, Scribes, Samaritans, Herodians, tax-collectors, the pious few, the agnostics, and practical atheists, the masses who live 'lives of quiet desperation' are still with us."<sup>1</sup> The NT gives us important insights into the attitude of Jesus with regard to the society and religion of his time and the position he took vis-à-vis the oppressive structures of both that society and religion. There was no separation between religion and society at the time of Jesus and the complex interconnectedness between them was such that anyone who stood against specific social issues would also be standing against the structures of religion and *vice versa*. There was another major force in the society, the

Roman occupation which, to some extent, affected the world-view of the Jewish people.

Though first century Palestine was considered by many historians a turbulent period, Josephus, the Jewish historian, attests that there were no conspiracies in Palestine between 6-44 CE. Jesus spent his life in Palestine during this time. But the Gospels give us sufficient indications to show that it was a turbulent period as Jesus invites his hearers to make a decision for letting God's reign happen in their lives and their society. They must be open to receive his kingdom. They must pray for its coming, "Thy Kingdom come!" (Lk 11:3).

In some of the parables there is an urgency to take a decision with regard to letting God's reign happen. A.M. Hunter comments on the parable of 'the Way to Court' which is the last of the five parables in Luke in which Jesus speaks of the impending crisis and calls his countrymen to read the signs of the times and make right decisions ( the Waiting servants, the Sleeping Householder, the Man in Charge and the Weather Signs). In the parable of the Way to the Court, the insolent debtor is Israel which is on the way to court. The parable of 'the Way to Court' is Jesus' way of describing the impending peril in the nation's history and God's judgment on the nation. Israel has to choose between her way of nationalism, which is no more than an exclusive tribalism expressed by fighting a losing battle against Rome or follow God's purpose for humans embodied in Jesus. A.M. Hunter further observes, " Consider the historical situation as Jesus saw it in the light of God's purpose for the world. God has chosen Israel to be his servant—to be the bearer to the world of a 'light to enlighten the Gentiles' that they too might come to knowledge of his saving truth. But Israel, by rejecting God's kingdom and Messiah, was repudiating her part in God's great plan."<sup>2</sup>

Israel could not take that decision to let God's reign happen in the lives of humans and the ordering of human society according to God's own purposes as the society was influenced by strong socio-religious and political movements like that of the Zealots,

Sadducees, Pharisees and others. Here again, we do not want to show the higher stature of Jesus as opposed to the caricatures of these movements like calling the Pharisees narrow-minded legalists, the Sadducees sophisticated skeptics, the Zealots fanatical nationalists or the Essenes esoteric sectarians and a large majority of people devoid of any religious sensitivities ('am-harez).<sup>3</sup> Our concern is to show how the well-intentioned approach of a group of people to determine the destiny of their nation , however religiously justified their assumptions may be, can go against God's purposes for humans and their world. The origin of Jesus' vision is different. It breaks the boundaries of all types of exclusivism and triumphalism and goes to the very root of human nature to enhance authentic communion.

#### a. The Zealots' Struggle for Autonomy

The term 'zealot' was used during the OT times and intra-testamental times for all those who were zealous for the establishment of God's law. There is no unanimity among scholars about the identity and ideology of the Zealots. The commonly accepted view about the Zealots is that it was a monolithic resistance movement against the Roman rule in general which began with the uprising of Judas, the Galilean in CE 6 against the census ordered by the colonial power Rome and ended in CE 74 with the suicide of those who tried to defend Masada. This monolithic movement seemed to have a dynastic leadership, a specific ideology, and a well-structured organization with a commitment to secure their plans and purposes through violence. Some scholars question this commonly held view on account of the lack of evidence to arrive at such conclusions. They claim that there was no specific group which could be called ' the Zealots' until CE 66-70 , the second year of the great Jewish revolt.

In fact, there were individual leaders who gave a certain identity to the resistant groups which held violence as a means to liberate the Jews from Roman rule. Josephus, the Jewish historian names five of these resistant groups which revolted against Roman

rule. The first among them was called the *Scicarii* (*sica* in Latin means dagger people). Their origin is not clear but probably they were influenced by the “Fourth Philosophy”<sup>4</sup> of Judas, the Galilean. They began their terrorist activity in the 50’s of the first century and ended at the fall of Masada. The second group, the Zealots who occupied the temple led by the priest Eleazer. The third group was that of the followers of the Galilean John Gischala who in collaboration with the Zealots terrorized Jerusalem. The fourth group were the followers of Simon bar Giora who had under his control the whole of Southern Judea and fought against the Zealots. The fifth group was Idumaeans who supported for sometime the Zealots and then the movement of John Gischala and finally joined the group of Simon bar Giora.<sup>5</sup>

It is not easy to point out exactly which group can really be called the Zealots. Sean P Kealy is right in affirming that whatever be the terminology and problems involved in identifying the group, ‘the option for Zealotry or armed resistance was a real option at the time of Jesus and indeed a tendency in the human situation in every age.’<sup>6</sup> However, the Zealots were not mere freedom fighters but also exhibited zeal for the establishment of God’s Law. According to Martin Hengel, Judas the Galilean and Menahem were not just leaders of armed groups of resistance but also preachers of repentance like the prophets of old. However they were oscillating between a mythical past and an eschatological future without a clear idea of what kind of state they would like to establish.<sup>7</sup> The ideology of all Zealots is the same, to establish a theocratic state. And often their armed struggle to establish a utopian theocratic state ends up with their own destruction as in the case of the Jewish revolt of 66-74 CE and 132-135 CE against Rome.

The Zealots’ ideology for a society or a nation and the methodology they employed in realizing it followed the principle of autonomy. Belief in theocracy as an ideology may be based on the principles of heteronomy, but the Zealot’s interpretation of theocracy and the violence they used as means to achieve it made their approach a perverted use of autonomy. All Zealot groups,

though they followed heteronomy in their organizational set up, executed their plans according to the principle of autonomy or by being a law unto themselves independent of every other group or the rest of the world. This was evident from the factional feuds among them. Richard M. Cassidy while explaining the main characteristics of the Zealot movement says:

“Perhaps the most important was the vicious factionalism that developed among the various leaders and groups who later took part in the struggle. The three rebel factions that were ensconced in the different sections of Jerusalem constantly pillaged and killed themselves, and it was not until the very end that they were able to mount a unified effort against the forces of Titus.”<sup>8</sup>

The dissension among the various Zealot groups indicates that the Zealots grand plans for the society of their dreams were founded on each groups’ particular interests and not based on God’s law which they claimed to defend. According to the report of Josephus, when the Zealots took control of Jerusalem they set fire to the Archive building to destroy the bonds of the money lenders in order to gain the sympathy of the poor sections of the society and to show that they were against the rich.

A new society cannot be built by manipulation of the sentiments of the populace or by setting one group against the other. It must be based on principles of recognizing the sovereignty of God, justice, equality and inter-personal relationship. A positive and right understanding of autonomy leads one to the unfolding of humans in right relationships with others. But a perverted understanding of it can only lead to the destruction of society through violence and disruption of human development by creating an atmosphere of debilitating fear and suspicion among humans that destroy communion. The Zealot groups were radically committed to the creation of a new society but only on their own terms, not based on God’s terms. So they were doomed to failure.

## b. The Sadducees' and the Pharisees' Vision of a New Society founded on Heteronomy

Sadducees, a name probably derived from Zadok who was appointed chief priest by Solomon (I Kings 2:26ff, 35),<sup>9</sup> were the priestly and aristocratic party in Judaism. They appear in the history of Judaism after the Maccabean rebellion and supported the Hasmonean development of the Jewish state. Their interest centred around the Temple and the power it implied. After the unsuccessful attempt to re-establish the monarchy under Zerubabel, the leadership in Judaism was centred around the priesthood and the Sadducees evolved into a party that consisted of high priests and aristocrats.

What characterized the Sadducees was their uncritical support of Hellenization which began with Antiochus IV Epiphanes and continued in the Roman rule. Being a pragmatic high-priestly and aristocratic group with their own political interest, they lived in splendid isolation from the ordinary populace, 'slow to shed their inheritance from provincial surroundings, maintained the violence and crudity of the rustic; loud and crude manners maintained aristocratic authority over subordinates.'<sup>10</sup> The Sadducees concern was to preserve Judaism as a state with its own politico-secular interests. It is also suggested that the Sadducees represented the interests of the temple and its priesthood. Therefore they were considered to be the defenders of priestly prerogatives of the performance of temple services and the priestly interpretation of the law. Perhaps the most important was their political interest in viewing Israel as a theocratic state properly organized under the leadership of the high priest.<sup>11</sup> For them the colonial rule of Rome, more than a political issue, was a threat to the high priest's rule and the uninterrupted temple service. For the Sadducees *the temple* seemed to have represented the political power concentrated in the high priest, hierarchically shared with the priestly and aristocratic group. It represented the economic power concentrated in those who were closely associated with the administration of

the temple and the cultic power to control cult and to interpret Divine law.

According to NT and Josephus the Sadducees rejected the doctrine of resurrection, spirits and angels and future punishments and rewards as they did not believe in the immortality of the soul. Hence their concern was for this worldly life which must be organized according to their principles of a theocratic state controlled by the high priest..

The origin of the name Pharisee is obscure. The common explanation is that it comes from the Hebrew word *parash* which means ‘one who is separate’ but separated from whom or what, is not clear. It is suggested that they were lay interpreters of the law who separated themselves from the priestly interpreters of the law in the post-exilic times. According to Josephus, Pharisees were known for their legalism and legalistic rigorism. They were noted for their strict accuracy in their interpretation of the law<sup>12</sup> which led to the development of an elaborate system of rules and regulations which were handed down orally and which could be adjusted to the new situations of the society. The Pharisees were accused of building a wall around the Torah preventing non-Pharisees from benefiting from the Torah. Though the large majority of the Pharisees were from the ranks of the laity, ordinary lay people could not follow their meticulous observance of ritual purity. The Pharisees too insulated themselves from ritual contamination by any association with the ordinary people. They formed themselves into a caste. They were supporters of the synagogues and the services in the synagogue and they took care that everything was done according to the demands of the law. Many of the scribes belonged to the party of the Pharisees.

Like the Sadducees, the Pharisees too were struggling to have political power. If not by fully aligning themselves with the foreign power, at least by not opposing, it they retained their position or enhanced it. In the writings of Josephus, the Pharisees emerge as a religious-political party in the Jewish-theocratic state, partisans of authoritative system of law based on tradition.<sup>13</sup> But



their main interest seemed to have been the development of Jewish religion. They believed that history was controlled by God and was governed by God leading it to its fulfillment as God had already planned. The Pharisees like the Sadducees believed in a theocratic state where religion determined the secular, the spiritual concerns were superior to material ones, cultic purity more important than moral purity, the Sabbath more than human beings.

What we discover in the vision of the Sadducees and Pharisees is their insistence on the rule of the state by a hierarchically ordered socio-political and religious structure. In this theocratic state divine law is interpreted to justify the hierarchical structure, the religious one is not only superior to the political one but also gives rules to the latter, the political superior gives rules to the subordinates and the rich to the poor. This is what we mean by a world order based heteronomy. "It is the hierarchical conception of the world. Not only cesaropapism and theocracy, but also caste system and state communism could be adduced as examples of cancerous heteronomy."<sup>14</sup> The doctrines and characteristics of the Pharisees were different from that of the Sadducees but in the final analysis their vision of the world was based on heteronomy.

Any world-order based on autonomy or heteronomy has already the seeds of violence in its very structure waiting to erupt at any opportune moment. It is based on the preservation, expansion and consolidation of power in the hands of a few, condemning the vast majority to a life of oppression and dehumanization. Religious traditions can be manipulated by any group to justify their unjust and discriminatory ideology, to further their selfish interests at the cost of human dignity and true glory of God.

## **II. Jesus' Vision of a New World Order: Its Source**

Jesus has not given us clear principles and methods of procedure to evolve a world-order or how human society can be organized taking into consideration the complex nature of the

elements involved in the making of a nation. However, his life, mission and his teaching clearly indicate what types of human societies should be established so that humans can unfold and become what they are called to become. He has given us a vision to be realized.

The very purpose of God-becoming human is primarily to reveal what humans are and what they can become. Whatever be the type of world-order it is for humans, and humans cannot be sacrificed of the sake of this world order. Whatever structures or systems whether religious or secular, that prevent humans from unfolding and becoming what they are called to become are challenged and prophetically denounced by Jesus. Whatever promotes the flowering of the human is proclaimed and promoted by Jesus.

The early Church recognized that the source of Jesus' authority to proclaim the presence of a new and hitherto unknown way of ordering human life and society originated from his intimate relationship with his Father whom he addressed in a such a familiar and unconventional way as *Abba*. It may have been the habitual way of expressing Jesus' intimate and unique relationship with his Father that made the evangelists articulate such a relationship in terms of theophanies where the Father addresses him as his beloved Son (Mk 1:11) John in particular expresses it very succinctly in a *Mahavakya* "I and the Father are oneness" (Jn 10:30). John emphasizes the point that Jesus' authority is derived from his relation with his Father (Jn 5:30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10). What we want to highlight here, is that his authoritative interpretation of the presence of God's reign springs from his deep relationship with his Father and, therefore, from his interiority. His words, deeds and life-style were the signs of a new way of human relationship where everyone finds adequate space for unfolding his or her life in a right relationship with God, other humans and the world. Indeed the right relationship with others becomes the criterion to judge the authenticity of one's relationship with God. Therefore, with courage and

conviction he confronts and overcomes the forces that would try to hinder the establishment of God's reign.

For the Jewish religious establishment Jesus was nonconformist and a non-orthodox in his interpretation of the law because he seemed to have relativized the demands of the law. His opposition to the religious authorities, the Scribes and the Pharisees was that they manipulate God through various mechanisms they had invented for their own ends. Their concept of God does not liberate humans. Their God stands for temple, Sabbath and the status quo. Finally he was condemned for blasphemy. Jesus' notion of God is different from that of the Jewish religion because Jesus' God stands for humans. For him moral purity is more important than ritual purity, humans more important than Sabbath (Mk 2.:23-28) communion with God and other humans based on love more important than the temple and all that it represents.<sup>15</sup>

By his table-fellowship or commensality he transgressed the boundaries of a social system based on discrimination and marginalization of those whom the society considers economically poor, socially outcast and ritually impure. By his association with such people he challenged the existing structures of social and religious hierarchies and unjust and inhuman mechanisms of discrimination. The cleansing of the temple could be considered as the climax of his stance against the nexus of socio-economic and religious structures organized to oppress the poor and the disadvantaged.

The method Jesus employed in confronting the structures of religion and society is a subject of serious debate among the scholars. The range of opinions regarding Jesus' response to the oppression and injustice perpetrated by religion and society moves from violence, non-violence, non-resistance and accommodation to complete indifference to worldly affairs.

Concluding from Jesus' way of teaching and acting aggressively and assertively against the agents of oppression and injustice some scholars hold the view that Jesus sanctions violence

against the structures of oppression. They base their arguments on certain passages like, 'I came not to bring peace but a sword' (Matt 10:34) and the 'arming' of the disciples (Lk 25: 35-38). There had been various attempts in the past to explain Jesus' life and mission as that of a Zealot, indeed a failed one like any of the leaders of the Zealots' groups or a political revolutionary. H.S. Reimarus (1694 – 1768) portrayed Jesus as a failed political revolutionary whose intention was to become the King of the Jews but the disciples covered up the whole story after he failed to achieve this by making him a spiritual Messiah. For Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) Jesus was not only a teacher but also an agitator who did not hesitate to use violence in the cleansing of the temple with an intention to liberate people from hierocracy and nomocracy. For W.Weitling (1801 - 1871) Jesus was like Pythagoras trying to bring about a radical revolution to transform society and abolish private property. For Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) Jesus was a social and political reformer who set in motion the eschatological development of history. There are also other proponents of such theories linking Jesus to the Zealot movement. S.G.F. Brandon in his book *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester, 1967) argued that though Jesus was not a Zealot or belonged to any Zealot groups, he and his disciples sympathized with the ideals and aims of Zealot group.<sup>16</sup> He too bases his argument on selected texts but misses the irony in Jesus' words in the selected texts. The debate goes on.

Jesus' approach to those who use violence against the poor and the marginalized and the very use of violence itself for bringing about a social order based on autonomy is considered as non-resistance and/or non-violence. These two categories are to be clarified to understand Jesus' approach to the oppressive structures of his time. Those who follow non-resistance refrain from not only doing physical harm to others but also from directly confronting those responsible for the existing systems of oppression and injustice. They suffer with those who suffer injustice and they hope that their suffering would convert those who use violence against them. But those who follow non-

violence as a means to confront the oppressors believe that they have to challenge and confront those responsible for socio-economic and political evils holding on to the principles of truth and love and by avoiding any violence to the persons concerned. This they believe would eventually lead to dialogue and a change of the situation for the better. <sup>17</sup> The adherents of both non-resistance and non-violence would bring the power of love in their confrontations with the situation of oppression but would shun physical violence as they consider it an obstacle to build a just society. According to Richard J Cassidy, who made a study on Luke's presentation of Jesus in the context of politics and society, Jesus' approach was non-violent and sometimes bordering on non-resistance. Jesus was aware of the oppressive political situation created by Herod Antipas (Lk 13:31) and Pilot (Lk 13:31). Several of his parables suggest that he was aware of the oppression and injustice perpetrated by those who wielded power and he uses fiery words confronting them. In my view, the NT as a whole presents him as one who lived and advocated both non-violence and non-resistance (Lk 6: 27-31, 11:4)

Human society must be transformed into God's Kingdom where humans can truly become humans by recognizing God's sovereign leadership. In Jesus' vision it is in such a Kingdom that the leadership of every human emerges. In this vision everyone will have the authority that comes from within even if they are powerless.

The new society is to be built on the foundation of *ontonomy*, the law of Being, which is nothing but a radical inter-relationship of everything that exists. In this order no one is excluded or included but all are related to one another radically and existentially. There is no exclusion or inclusion (as any exclusion or inclusion makes the presence of a higher power), no 'we' and 'they', no outsiders and insiders, no citizens and foreigners, no Jews and Gentiles, Christians and Non-Christians, believers and non-believers but all are fellow citizens and friends, children of God. Discovering the law of *ontonomy* is an in-sight, a re-velation. Jesus' *Abba* experience is the source of this discovery and his

proclamation of the Kingdom is the expression of this ontonomic relationship.

Therefore, Jesus proclaims an ordered human life based on the principle of love, equality, justice, reverence and respect for one another. This world order is based not on autonomy or heteronomy, which begets violence, disorder and dehumanization but on ontonomy, which expresses authentic communion of humans among themselves and with God, in right relationship with the entire creation.

#### a. Jesus' Stand Against the Structures of Society and Religion

The counter culture which originated from Jesus' preaching and teaching was a radically new culture based on his ontonomic vision of the kingdom-community. In this community there cannot be any discrimination and division based on the logic of haves and have-nots, male and female, Jew and Gentile, old or young, so-called just and so-called sinners. Any division or discrimination based on any ideology negates the very foundation of the Kingdom community. "The discipleship community is defined as a 'contrast society,' i.e., as a community that is fundamentally different from all other social organizations based on autonomy or heteronomy. This community's life, as well as the life of the individuals, is not defined by 'above' and 'below,' but by helping one another."<sup>18</sup> This kingdom has no boundaries. Nobody is excluded. It is not an organization. It is not an institution. Its foundation is the God of unconditional love. Its law is love. Its territory is the inner space of human beings that embraces everything and everyone as God does. Jesus praxis reveals the logic of this kingdom. It is the praxis he wanted his disciples to continue. Hugo Echegaray says, "Jesus did not set up a rigid model for action but, rather, inspired his disciples to prolong the logic of his own action in a creative way amid the new and different historical circumstances in which the community would have to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom in word and deed".<sup>19</sup> According to him Jesus' praxis in view of his commitment to the vision of the kingdom found

expression at three levels: first at the level of economics, second at the level of politics and the third at the level of ethico-social behaviour.

At the first level, the logic of the Kingdom does not allow the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few condemning the majority to abject poverty. At the same time it does not propose a utopian equality. It stands against the unjust accumulation of wealth, which not only creates division of humans into classes and categories but also prevents true communion among humans as brothers and sisters. It creates a class of people who are always in debt and who can be manipulated by the economically powerful for furthering their own selfish interests. Religion further makes the plight of the poor still more miserable by considering them as sinners and excludes them from the so called 'holy' people and even canonizes the accumulation of wealth as a sign of blessing from God. Jesus subverts this wrong understanding of wealth and the dehumanizing attitude that follows from this understanding. For him wealth is for sharing with the needy. Wealth accumulated is bad if it prevents communion and discriminates among human beings on the basis of what they possess or what they do not possess. Jesus enters into table-fellowship with those who are discriminated in this way. "The practice of Jesus would thus leave to the community the responsibility of building itself up without at the same time yielding to the system of accumulation of goods and wealth that was the characteristic of the empire."<sup>20</sup>

At the second level, the political power exercised by rulers is in contrast to the praxis of Jesus, which reveals the logic of the Kingdom in exercising power. In the Kingdom the exercise of power is based on justice and the equality of humans because they are the children of the same loving Father. It excludes all forms of domination, manipulation, cover-ups, lies and abuse of power by those who wield power. In the Kingdom community there is no other justification for the use of power except for service.<sup>21</sup> Leadership, in Jesuan praxis, is the empowerment of others to be leaders in self-emptying service (Lk 22: 24-27; Mt 20: 20-25; Mk 10:45).

At the third level the Jesuan praxis reveals that the Kingdom community must promote ethico-social behaviour based on the logic of freedom and love. There is no triumphalism or arrogance that contradicts and hinders right relationship among humans. In fact, the practice of right relationship might involve more hardships and suffering as it may subvert the type of relationship promoted by the systems and structures opposed to the kingdom-community. In this context one can understand the warning Jesus gave to his disciples, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10:16). Echegaray, commenting on the praxis of Jesus at the level of ethico-social behaviour says, “The disciple must overcome a spirit of diffidence; collaboration in the kingdom calls for decisiveness, tenacity, and fruitfulness (cf. the parable of the talents). The disciple must work as the Lord worked and not be afraid of the kingdoms of this world.”<sup>22</sup> It is God’s dream that the whole human race becomes the kingdom-community where all can experience the unconditional love of God through the self-emptying love of humans for one another. It is in such a community one experiences true freedom to become authentically human.

To build up such a kingdom community Jesus appoints a small community of leaders whom he called apostles. He gives them a vision. He educates them to take up leadership of the communities in which all are leaders in decision-making, though decision-taking may be left to the one appointed by the community with the utmost docility to the Spirit of God.

#### b. Implications of Jesus’ Vision of a World Order

The iconolaters have never for a moment conceived Jesus a real person, who meant what he said, as a fact, as a force like electricity, only needing the invention of suitable political machinery to be applied to the affairs of mankind with revolutionary effect. Thus it is not disbelief that is dangerous to our society; it is belief. The moment it strikes you (as it may any day) that Jesus is not a lifeless, harmless image he has hitherto



been to you, but a rallying centre for revolutionary influence, which all established States and Churches fight, you must look into yourselves, for you have brought the image to life, and the mob may not be able to stand that horror.<sup>23</sup>

This was George Bernard Shaw's observation about the impact Jesus would make on society if Jesus and his teachings were to be taken seriously. This too was the belief of Sun Yat-sen, who organized armed resistance against the colonial powers in East Asia and welcomed the Bolshevik revolution. He says: I do not belong to the Christianity of the churches but to the Christianity of the Jesus who was a revolutionary."<sup>24</sup> .

It is clear that individuals and groups will interpret the life and mission of Jesus according to the needs of the context and according to their psychological and ideological perspectives. However, no one can deny that Jesus' stance against religion and society was founded on his vision of the unfolding of human life in this world and it has much to do with the socio-political situation of the people. It is true that the early church understood that his kingdom was not of this world but it was not other-worldly either. It must unfold and grow here in this world journeying towards its finality beyond this world. This demands from the Church not to create two cities and preside over only the affairs of the city of God. The two cities are distinct but not separate. The city of humans is the city of God. Therefore the evil tendencies of humans to manipulate religion, to create systems and structures whether social or political or economic must be prophetically denounced and confronted with authority and courage. .

The tendency to be indifferent to the world and its affairs seemed to have overcome the social teachings of the Church. When Pope Paul VI wrote *Populorum Progressio*, some of the Latin American Governments did not want it to reach people because the Pope wrote: "The earth's goods must be divided fairly and this right of everyone to a just share comes first. Even the right to private property, and the right to free enterprise, must yield to justice."<sup>25</sup> But sometimes the Church fails to take a definite

and clear stand against systems and powers that blatantly violate human rights and dignity. There are those who having been known to be indifferent to the socio-political situation then experienced conversion by entering into the actual life of politically and socially oppressed people. Oscar Romero, the murdered Archbishop of San Salvador wrote after such a conversion, “It is practically illegal to be an authentic Christian in our environment...precisely because the world which surrounds us is founded on an established disorder before which the mere proclamation of the Gospel is subversive.”<sup>26</sup> Paul’s exhortation to obey the authorities of the state (Rom 13:1; Tit 3:1; I Pet 2:13) does not mean an uncritical and unquestioning obedience (Mk 12: 17, Lk 13:32, Acts 5:29, 16:35 etc).

## Conclusion

The Church has to make clear choices as Jesus did. It cannot silently watch the creation of a world order that does not promote justice and does not care for the least and the voiceless. Even to be a mute witness to the disorder created by anti-kingdom forces is involvement in politics. It is a choice. But a choice that fails Jesus and his cause. The Church must take a stance against systems and structures in a non-violent way and sometimes also non-resistant way, discerning God’s purposes for humans and by a radical commitment to Gospel values. Then it can truly become a catalyst for a world order based on the radical inter-relationship of everything that exists.

## Notes

1. Sean P. Kealy, *Jesus and Politics* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press Publ., Michael Glazier Book, 1990), p.28.
2. A.M. Hunter, *The Parables Then and Now* (London: SCM Press, 1971), pp.90-91, cfr. Sean P. Kealy, *Jesus and Politics*, pp.23-24.
3. E.P.Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1984) , p. 360.
4. Josephus, the historian, informs that Judas with a Pharisee called Zadok is the founder of the fourth philosophy which accepts the doctrines of

the Pharisees besides holding on to their invincible love of liberty and accepting only God as their only Lord and Master. This philosophy would not accept any man as master. *Antiquities* XVIII.23-25. Josephus does not identify the fourth philosophy with Zealots' ideology. According to J.P.M. Sweet, "The term 'Zealot' certainly has connotations of violence in defence of the Law, but not specifically of armed resistance to Rome and its collaborators." J.P.M. Sweet, "The Zealots and Jesus," in *Jesus and the Politics of the Day*, E.Bammel and C.F.D.Moule, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge Uni. Press, 1984), p. 5

5. Josephus, War, IV. 5.3; IV. 9.11; IV.4.1
6. Sean P Kealy, *Jesus and Politics*, p.36
7. M.Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Mt 8.21f. und Jesu Ruf in die Nachfolge* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Topelman, 1968); *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*, trans. James Greig (New York: Crossroad, 1981), pp. 23f.
8. R.M.Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel* (New York: Orbis Books, 1978), p.123
9. Some Fathers of the Church thought that the name Sadducees is derived from the adjective zadik meaning 'righteous' (Epiphanius, Heresies, 1.14; Jerome, Commentary on Matthew 22.13). See Interpreter's Dictionary of Bible, Vol. IV, "Sadducees," pp.160-162
10. *Interpreters' Dictionary Bible*, Vol IV, p.162
11. Ibid., p.162
12. *Antiquities*, XVII, 2.4
13. Ibid., XII, 5,9; 10, 5-7
14. R.Panikkar, *Worship and Secular Man*, p. 31
15. J. Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1978), pp. 205-209
16. J.P.M.Sweet, "The Zealots and Jesus," in E.Bammel and C.F.D.Moule, p. 1
17. Richard J.Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke's Gospel*, p. 41.
18. J.Roloff, "Church leadership according to the NT," *Theology Digest* 44:2 (1997), p. 140.
19. H.Echegarary, *The Practice of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1984), p. 94.
20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 95.
22. Ibid.
23. George Bernard Shaw's preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, cited in Sean. P. Kealy, *Jesus and Politics* , pp. 17-18.
24. J.P.M.Sweet, p. 2
25. *Populorum Progressio*, No.22
26. *Tablet* 24/31 December, 1983, p. 1251

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