

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.”¹ 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.² 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 ‘consmotheandric’ 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”.³ 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”.⁴ 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 law⁵ 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.⁶

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.⁷

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*)⁸

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.⁹ 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”¹⁰ 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.’¹¹

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.”¹²

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”¹³ – 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 period¹, namely, *Mysterium Fidei*¹⁴ 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*¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ 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.”¹⁷ 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*.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

In this passage, which is quoted again in the address given to the bishops of the United States in 1978,²⁰ 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.²¹

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.²²

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.²³ 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,'²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.²⁶

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,”²⁷ 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.²⁸

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.”²⁹ 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 love³⁰ 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 eucharist³¹ 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.³²

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.³³

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.”³⁴ 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.³⁵

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.³⁶ 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.”³⁷

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.³⁸

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 1979.³⁹ 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.⁴⁰

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.⁴¹

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.”⁴² 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 eucharist⁴³ 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.⁴⁴

In this paragraph, the pope explicitly and forcefully correlates the social responsibility of the Christian as stated in *Gaudium et Spes*⁴⁵ 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*)⁴⁶

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)⁴⁷

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.”⁴⁸

This love, which includes love of God as well as love of neighbour, finds its source in the eucharist, the sacrament of love.⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰ This changed existence is manifested, as pope Paul VI says, in ‘social love,’⁵¹ 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