

Week 5 Session Talk Notes

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: *Communion* / *the* / The Concluding Rite

A, Communion Rite

1. The Lord's Prayer: "...we dare to say..."
 - a. God as our *Father*
 - i. Mark 14:36 (Aramaic would have been "Abba")
 - ii. 1 John 3:1 "and so we are"
 - iii. Divine life dwelling in us; sanctifying grace • Catholic understanding of grace
 - b. God as *our* Father - communal dimension

2. "For the Kingdom. The power, and the glory are yours..."
 - a. Not in the prayer Jesus prayed (Matthew 6, Luke 11)
 - b. Words used very early on (see *Didache*: prayer of thanksgiving)
 - c. Old Testament background: 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

3. Sign of peace

4. *Agnus Dei* lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world"
 - a. **Recalls Passover lamb (Exodus 12)**
 - b. Isaiah 53:7-11: suffering servant
 - c. John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God..."

5. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9) a.
 - Passover / Eucharistic imagery i. "Alleluia" 4x in vs. 1-6
 - Recalls Hallel Psalms and Jewish feasts that use them ii.
 - "Supper of the lamb" = Passover

- b. Marital imagery: the Passover feast as wedding feast
 - c. Old Testament images of God and people as Bridegroom and Bride
 - d. At Communion - we are the Bride, Jesus the Bridegroom
6. Period of silence
- a. John Paul II's reflection on Mary anticipating Eucharistic faith¹

Concluding Rite

1. "The Mass" (Lat. *Missa*) - connected with *missio* ("sending forth;" see *Catechism* No. 1332)

Closing Notes:

All of the Handouts are available on line at our Parish website:

<http://visitationchurch.com/biblestudy.htm>

The Visitation Adult Faith Formation Team thanks you for your participation. Please watch our web site <http://visitationchurch.com> for future programs. If you would like to be notified by Email please send your Email address to visitationweb@comcast.net

Week 5 Session Responses

THE MASS

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: Communion Rite; The Concluding Rite

Liturgy of the **Eucharist: The Communion Rite**

The Lord's Prayer: "Our Father..."

1. How could we mere creatures—and sinful creatures at that!—dare to call the Almighty, All-Holy God, our Father? Yet, God has called us to an intimate, personal relationship with him as his children. He lovingly sent his Son to die *for* our sins and gave us the Spirit of his Son in our hearts so that we can cry out, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:4-6). Indeed, we have truly become God's children by grace (see 1 John 3:1)—by virtue of the Spirit of the Son dwelling in us. Thus, united in this way to the Son of God himself, we can dare to call God what no other creature in the universe could ever call him: Father.

The Fraction: Breaking Bread

2. a. In mentioning the breaking of bread, Paul is referring to the participation in Christ's body in the Eucharist. That Paul has the Eucharist in mind becomes even clearer in the next chapter (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), where Paul recounts Christ's institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.
- b. This ritual at Mass follows the biblical tradition of breaking bread in ancient Judaism, in Christ's ministry, and in the early Church. Since in some New Testament passages breaking bread is associated with worshiping God in the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 10:16-17), the priest doing this at this moment in the Mass helps point to the fact that we are about to reach the climax of our Eucharistic worship: Holy communion.

Agnus Dei: Lamb of God

3. a. The Bible says these things about Jesus the Lamb:
 - i. John 1:29 - He takes away the sins of the world.
 - ii. Revelation 5:6 - He stands as though slain (like a lamb that has been sacrificed).
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 - He is the Passover lamb that has been sacrificed. This sacrifice is to be celebrated as a great feast. (For Paul in 1 Corinthians, this feast is the New Passover of the Eucharist - see 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 11:23-26).
 - iv. Revelation 7:9-10 - Here, the Lamb is worshiped and praised by a great multitude from every nation.

Isaiah 53:7-12 (an Old Testament foreshadowing of Jesus in which the redeemer is described as "a lamb led to the slaughter") - The lamb will be sacrificed as an offering for sin (53:10). He will bear the people's sins as he pours out his life, and as a result, many will be made righteous (53:11-12)
- b. From a biblical perspective, calling Jesus "Lamb of God" in the Mass affirms that Jesus is the one who takes away sin (John 1:21; Isaiah. 53:7-12) and that he did this by being slain as the new Passover lamb (Revelation 5:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7). He is thus worthy of all praise and thanksgiving (Revelation 7:9-10).

4. a. God told the Israelites to have each family select a Passover lamb and sacrifice it.
- b. There are a number of parallels between Jesus' death on the cross and the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, including these:
 - i. Jesus was handed over to be crucified at the sixth hour (meaning noon) on the Day of Preparation for the Passover. This was the same time when the Passover lambs were sacrificed in the Temple.
 - ii. John's gospel notes that the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs when they brought him down from the cross. John also explains why this detail is important—He quotes a verse from Exodus that notes that the Passover lambs were not to have their legs broken: "you shall not break a bone of it" (Ex. 12:46).
 - iii. When Jesus thirsted on the Cross, the soldiers gave him a sponge of vinegar to drink from, which they raised up to him on a hyssop branch. This was the same kind of branch used to mark the Israelites' doorposts with the blood of the Passover lamb. This is another example underscoring how Jesus' death on Calvary was like the sacrifice of the Passover lambs.
- c. In light of all this: by addressing Jesus as "Lamb of God" in the Mass, we recognize him as the New Passover lamb who die for our sins. Just as the Passover lambs in Egypt were sacrificed to spare the first-born sons of Israel, so Jesus as the new Passover lamb was sacrificed to spare the lot of all humanity.

Holy Communion: the Wedding Supper of the Lamb

5. a. The angel in Revelation 19 invites St. John to a wedding supper.
- b. To understand how the Eucharist is like a marriage feast, and how holy communion is similar to communion between husband and wife, recall this excerpt from *A Biblical Walk through the Mass*, p. 141:

Indeed, holy communion has a marital dimension. Husbands and wives give themselves to each other in the marital act, uniting their bodies in the most intimate way possible. Similarly, our divine Bridegroom comes to unite himself to us in the most intimate way possible here on earth, giving his very body and blood to us in the Eucharist. This is why the tradition of thanksgiving after communion is so important. We should want to rest with Our Lord, to talk to him and thank him at many points in our lives, but most especially as He is dwelling within our souls in those moments after holy communion. No good husband would run off to check email or cut the grass immediately after having intimate relations with his wife. And we should not be so eager to race out of the parking lot, talk to friends or get coffee and donuts as our Bridegroom is intimately dwelling within us. This is the time for us to rest with our Beloved, to give him our tender attention and thanksgiving, and to express our love for him.

In this light, the Mass really is a wedding feast. Like a bride who longs to be one with her groom, so our hearts should be filled with ardent longing for holy communion with our divine Bridegroom, whose very Eucharistic body enters into ours in the most intimate way possible.

Lord, I am not worthy

6. a. The centurion exhibits faith **by approaching Jesus** with confidence. He believes Jesus can heal his servant from a distance, simply by **his word**.
- b. The centurion exhibits humility by recognizing **his** unworthiness to have Jesus come under the roof of his house. He may have felt particularly unworthy because as a centurion (a Roman officer in charge of 100 soldiers who helped administer the Roman oppression of the Jewish people), many

Jews would have seen him as an enemy. Thus, it is a sign of great humility that he says, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."

7. a. What Jesus offered to do for the centurion is similar to what he actually does for those who receive him in holy communion: In Matthew 8, Jesus offers to go to the centurion's house to bring healing there. At Mass, Jesus lovingly comes to us in the Eucharist to bring healing to our souls and fill us with his life.
 - b. We should imitate the centurion's response by approaching the reception of holy communion with the same reverence and humility that the centurion exhibited when he approached Jesus. Just as he did not feel worthy to have Jesus come to him, so we should recognize that we are unworthy to have Jesus dwell within us in holy communion. It is a great privilege to be called to this intimate union with Our Lord and we should never take it for granted.
8. We have seen throughout the Mass the faithful expressing the need to be healed spiritually as they prepare themselves for encountering God in his word and in the Eucharist. In a final preparation for receiving Our Lord in the Eucharist, we acknowledge our unworthiness for this great gift and ask Him to forgive our sins and heal our souls: "...but only say the word and my soul shall be healed." (Note: *Catechism* No. 1385 explains that "Anyone conscious of grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion.")

Concluding Rite: "Go Forth, the Mass is Ended"

9. a. In these passages, Jesus sends his followers to:

L Matthew 28: 19-20 -make disciples of all nations, teach them all that he taught them, and baptize.

ii. John 20: 21-23 - continue the mission that the Father gave to him: to share God's love and forgiveness of sins to the world.

iii Acts 1: 8 - to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the Earth.

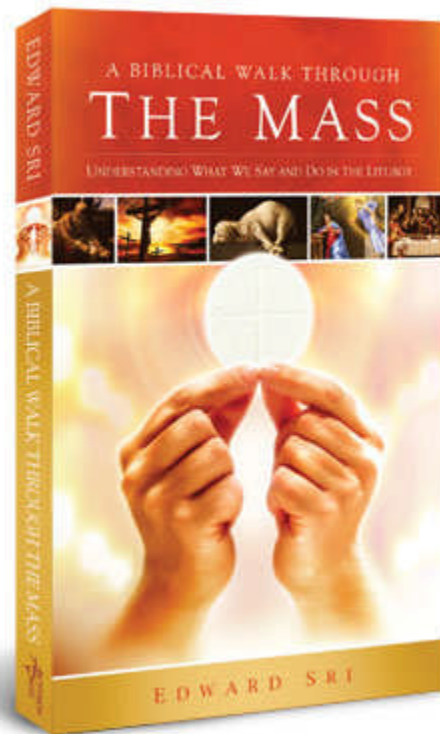
- b. Having joined ourselves to Christ's sacrifice in the Mass and having received him in holy communion, we are sent into the world to be the witnesses of the mysteries we have just participated in—the mysteries of Christ's saving death and resurrection. We do this through teaching, by example, and most of all, by fulfilling God's will in our daily lives.

If you would like to order a copy of the book you can do so on line by going to

<http://www.ascensionpress.com/shop/Scripts/prodView.asp?idProduct=651>

A Biblical Walk Through the Mass Book

by Edward Sri



As Catholics, the Mass is the center of our Faith. We celebrate it every day. We know all the responses. We know all the gestures. But do we know what it all means?

In *A Biblical Walk Through the Mass*, Dr. Edward Sri takes us on a unique tour of the Liturgy. Based on the revised translation of the Mass which goes into effect Advent, 2011, this book explores the biblical roots of the words and gestures we experience in the Liturgy and explains their profound significance. This intriguing look at the Mass is sure to renew your faith and deepen your devotion to the Eucharist.

This book is used as the text for the Adult Faith Formation Program, but may also be purchased separately at steep bulk discounts. For parishes not doing a study, this is a perfect resource for catechizing adults on the true meaning of the Mass, and why it is so central to our faith.

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