

FEATURE:

A Vincentian Reflection on the Eucharist

Presentation

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Through the initiative of Pope John Paul II, a man who had a great love for the Eucharist, we are now celebrating the Year of the Eucharist.¹ There is a moral obligation to study and know the two documents that the Pope wrote on this theme: the Encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*,² and the Apostolic Letter, *Mane nobiscum Domine*.³

John Paul II said that in order to evangelize the world it is necessary to have “expert” witnesses who are able to celebrate, adore and contemplate the Eucharist because *the Eucharist builds the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist*.⁴ Indeed, the mission of the Church is a continuation of the mission of Christ and the Church obtains her spiritual power in the communion with his Body and his Blood. The goal of the Eucharist *is the communion of mankind with Christ and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit*.⁵

¹ The Year of the Eucharist began on 17 October 2004 at the conclusion of the 48th International Eucharistic Congress (Guadalajara, Mexico, 10-17 October 2004) and will conclude on 19 October 2005 during the 11th General Assembly of Bishops that will deal with the theme of the Eucharist (Vatican City, 2-29 October 2005).

² JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 17 April 2003.

³ JOHN PAUL II, *Mane nobiscum Domine*, 7 October 2004.

⁴ JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 26.

⁵ *Ibid*, 22.

In this edition of *Vincentiana* we offer you a series of articles on the Eucharist which we hope will serve as a “Vincentian reflection on the Eucharist.” You will see profound and varied reflections, written by our confreres and offered to us as the result of their missionary experience.

We begin this edition with an article by Fr. Erminio Antonello, *The Centrality of the Eucharist in the Vincentian Vocation*. He reminds us that the Vincentian vocation is centered on the Eucharist. Mission and charity are two significant expressions that sum up the thought process, the life and the actualization of the personality of the Vincentian missionary and layperson. In the Eucharist, Vincentians find strength for their missionary and charitable work. St. Vincent exhorted the missionaries to live, internalize and celebrate the Eucharist. We follow Christ to the degree that we dwell in Christ. To be a missionary is to reflect the life of Christ.

The Eucharist and the Formation of the Clergy is an article written by Fr. Nicola Albanesi. He affirms the fact that today seminary formation offers “criteria, guidelines, and inspiring principles that allow the candidates to develop their own identity as priest-pastor.” He insists on the formation of the future pastors so that they might live and “worthily” celebrate the Eucharist. He presents the distinct figures and theological concepts of the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council. According to Trent, the priest was a “mediator” between God and the community. He was a man of the “sacred” and the Eucharist was “the sacrament of sacraments.” Vatican II views the priest as the animator of the community. Thus the priest is a “moderator” and the Eucharist is the sacrament of “unity.” Today, we insist on the formation of the assembly so that our Eucharistic celebrations might truly be a time of prayer and reflection and coming together to celebrate community. The priest today is called to be a “teacher of prayer,” a guide and one who gives witness to an encounter with the living Jesus.

Fr. Andrés Motto, in his article, *Eucharist, mission and evangelization*, tells us that the Eucharist is the source that enables us to carry out our mission. The Eucharist is an essential element in the evangelization process. He invites us to make our Eucharistic celebrations moments of true *festivity*, moments of *fraternal encounter*, moments in which we celebrate our *daily lives* and moments during which *we reflect on the Word of God* and thus commit ourselves to transform our environment for the good of our brothers and sisters, especially the poorest and those who live on the margins of society.

Two confreres, missionaries in Japan and Indonesia, offer us their personal reflections on the Eucharist. Their reflection revolves around *The Eucharist and non-Christians*. The first reflection is

entitled, *The Java Rite of Slametan*. Fr. Rafael Ishiarianto compares the Java Rite and the Eucharistic celebration. He affirms that there are various analogous aspects between both: the dimension of memorial, the community and thanksgiving. He concludes by saying that “the Last Supper of Jesus clarifies the values that from ancient times have existed in the Java Rite.” Fr. Victoriano C. Torres, in the second reflection entitled, *Celebrating the Eucharist in Japan*, delineates some of the religious values of Japanese culture: fidelity, perseverance, an intensity of faith and the clear influence of the Eucharist on the life of the individual, as well as on the family and the community.

Fr. John McKenna in his article, *Theology of Adoration*, provides us with a brief description of the practice of Communion and the origin of devotions outside of the Eucharist. He presents us with the theological roots of Eucharistic adoration and the challenge that this presents. Eucharistic devotions outside of Mass had their origins in the Liturgy. He invites us to value these Eucharistic devotions: reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, processions, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction, Forty Hours, etc. The author states that all of these help us to receive more deeply the Paschal Mystery of the Eucharist and in turn to share this Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ with the people.

Eucharist, Charity and Social Justice is an article written by Fr. Gilson Cezar de Camargo. This article examines the thought of St. Vincent and the theological and ecclesiological problems of France during the 17th century. It is an attempt to make these ideas contemporaneous; that is, he attempts to interpret and apply the Vincentian doctrine to our time. He presents some key elements of St. Vincent’s doctrine on the Eucharist (frequency, dispositions, and effects of communion), his recommendation to the Daughters of Charity and the missionaries and examines the pastoral and social implications of all of this for a strong Eucharist life.

Finally, Fr. Luigi Nuovo, in his article, *Giuseppe Alloati (1857-1933). An Apostle of the Eucharistic Cult*, offers us a brief overview of Giuseppe Alloati. He was a Vincentian missionary from Italy who dedicated his life to the Catholic mission in Bulgaria. He, together with his sister, founded the Sisters of the Eucharist. It can be said that he was truly in love with the Eucharist.

Dear readers, we hope that you enjoy this edition of our magazine. The Pope said that we could feel truly satisfied if, during this Year of the Eucharist, we achieved two objectives: **value the Eucharistic celebration**, especially the Sunday celebration, and **intensify our adoration of the Eucharist**. He hoped that this would enable the faithful to discover “*the gift of the Eucharist as light and*

strength for our daily lives in the world, in the exercise of our respective professions amid so many different situations.”

We hope that we are able to renew our love, respect and adoration of the daily Eucharist and that this in turn enables us to adore Jesus in the person of the poor. May God grant our communities and provinces the grace to become Eucharistic communities and provinces. If we achieve this, the Congregation will also be a Eucharistic Congregation. Let us live the Eucharist!

(CHARLES PLOCK, C.M., translator)