



ALL THINGS NEW

STEADFAST IN FAITH • FORWARD IN HOPE



Created Anew

by the Body and Blood of Christ,
Source of Our Healing and Hope

EUCHARISTIC REFLECTION

CREATED FOR A MISSION

The most significant dimension of the Eucharist is that the 'Communion' it creates is for a mission. In fact, the Eucharist is Mission. Truly we see that the exchange of greetings, the reading from the Scriptures, the announcement of the Word, intercessions on behalf of the whole human family, invocation of the Holy Spirit, transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, adoration and worship, the exchange of peace and communion, the sharing of the bread, and the final greetings with the exhortation to go forth and offer to others what they have received - all of these together are a powerful proclamation of the Lord's plan for humanity. "...every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26). In and through the Eucharist, Jesus draws the whole of human society to Himself (Jn 12:32).

The Eucharist acts as the bond of togetherness and communion among Christian believers. But the love generated within a Christian family does not remain idle there; it reaches out to the entire society, going beyond differences of ethnicity, nationality, and economic background.

EQUIPS ONE FOR THE MISSION

The "GO" at the end of the Eucharist is not mere ceremonial dismissal, it is a mission-laden mandate. It echoes the parting message of Jesus: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them My disciples... and teach them" (Mt 28:19-20), after which He adds an assurance, "I will be with you." Though the mandate is clear enough, this reassurance of our Divine Savior alone can give us the courage to go beyond ourselves, and reach out to the ends of the earth. The many gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows on His people are what equip us for the mission. These diverse gifts are given to serve the diversity of God's people and bring them into an intimate relationship with the Triune God.

In an age when believers think that fidelity to the Gospel itself is strenuous enough, it calls for extraordinary courage and profound faith to take upon oneself the task of bearing Christ's Message of Hope to others. It indeed calls for profound spiritual convictions to take it to the other side of the street, to the farthest slum, to the marginalized, to people of other convictions, really to the 'periphery.'

It demands even greater determination to go and speak of Jesus to other ethnic groups, as Paul did, or to move to distant shores as Francis Xavier did, or to the 'furthest limits of human existence and human agony,' as Pope Francis invites us to do. The Eucharist is rightly called panis viatorum, nourishment for travelers. It supplies energies. It builds up inner sturdiness for the Mission.



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GIVES LIFE, SUPPLIES ENERGY

The Eucharist gives life (Jn 6:35). Jesus says: “If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever” (Jn 6:51). It gives life to the world (Jn 6:32-33) – and life in all its fullness (Jn 10:10). It offers the word of life (1 Jn 1:1; Jn 6:68). There are more Christians under stress today than any other period of history. St. Ephraem has a powerful image in this connection. He says that the one who eats this bread, eats fire and clothes himself with fire. The disciples of Emmaus felt as though fire was burning in their hearts when they heard Jesus explain the Scriptures to them. No wonder they set out on their return journey the very same night, with a sturdy sense of Mission, after they had broken bread with Him (Lk 24:32-33).

There are times when a person in the service of the Gospel feels broken and exhausted in the face of growing indifference, opposition, or outright rejection. He/she would like to give up. “Take away my life,” he would like to say with Elijah. Then suddenly, he hears an angel’s reassuring voice: “Arise and eat” (1 Kings 19:4-7). Eucharist is nourishment. Indeed, “God strengthens those who are weak and tired” (Is 40:29).

‘SELF-GIVING MISSION’

Pope Benedict XVI says: “We cannot approach the Eucharist without being drawn into the Mission” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 84). Jesus’ example of self-giving conceals irresistible motivating power within, so that everyone who derives strength from Him feels drawn to do the same (1 Jn 3:16). Faith is not an idle intellectual conviction; it is a driving force towards self-giving, even to the point of self-forgetfulness.

“My life is the continuation of my Mass,” Blessed Alberto Hurtado used to say. Yes, the Eucharist overflows into life in the form of generosity, kindness, forgiveness, sincerity, and persevering work. It adds a quality to our decisions at home, in the kitchen, in the bedroom, in places of business and entertainment; in hospitals when the elimination of an unborn child is being contemplated, in the street where human dignity is dragged to dust, in executive office where the fates of millions are being decided.

The Eucharist takes Christian hearts by surprise, urging them to hasten to the aid of marginalized groups like the migrants, minority communities, and underprivileged. The rich go out to help the poor or get them an employment, scholars reach out to the slums and remote villages to take classes for the illiterate, highly-qualified persons spend a weekend giving training to unemployed youth, teaching catechism, or preaching a retreat. Go on mission let the Eucharist surprise your own heart by giving way to the conviction it brings.