

Personal Notes  
050403 Second Sunday of Easter 43A  
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The Eucharist is the core of Catholicism. The more the Faithful flesh out how the Eucharistic celebration developed, the more readily will they be other Christs. Knowledge of the historical development sets the stage for personal and communal development.

When the Faithful go to Communion, they receive, as Saint Augustine puts it “what you are,” the Body of Christ. The risk in fleshing out the Eucharist rests in disturbing what the Faithful thought sacred and absolute. There is no sense upsetting the Faithful needlessly. While the Church does have a right to set conventions, the Faithful have a right to know and examine those conventions and beyond.

The issue for these Notes is to show courage that comes from Faith in the face of uncertainty emanating from differences in the Lectionary readings and beyond. Thoughts from Robert J. Daly, S.J., “Eucharistic Origins: From the New Testament to the Liturgies of the Golden Age,”<sup>1</sup> drive my thinking. Daly, in turn, takes a great deal from Bruce Chilton.<sup>2</sup> I have added my own sense of reverse engineering, beginning with the Fourth Century Patristic conclusions to search for the premises upon which those conclusions may have been built.

A careful look at the record upsets the implicit certitude emanating from the Eucharistic prayers at Mass. While there is a sense in which the Mass does do what happened at the Last Supper, there is another sense in which the accouterments and ambience of the events is markedly different. From the beginning, Eucharistic celebrations were different. The Latin Rite offers but one version.

To begin, the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church does recognize other conventions or rites, such as the Chaldean Anaphora of Addai and Mari that omits the words of Eucharistic institution altogether. Furthermore, the Church took about four centuries, through the golden age of patristic theology, to develop exactly what happened with the institution of the Eucharist. Saint Basil the Great (330-379) and Saint John Chrysostom (354-407) institutionalized how the Church would celebrate the Eucharist through the classical Eucharistic Prayers. Since Basil and Chrysostom

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<sup>1</sup> The whole thrust of these notes draws heavily from Robert J. Daly, S.J., “Eucharistic Origins: From the New Testament to the Liturgies of the Golden Age,” Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 1 (March 2005) 3-22.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Chilton, unpublished paper: “Eucharist: Surrogate, Metaphor, Sacrament of Sacrifice,” The temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program within a Cultural History of Sacrifice (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1992), A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through Johannine Circles (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994) in Robert J. Daly, S.J., “Eucharistic Origins: From the New Testament to the Liturgies of the Golden Age,” Theological Studies, Vol. 66, No. 1 (March 2005) page 7, fn. 11.

are two of the Four Great Eastern Doctors of the Church, the Eucharistic Prayers said daily at Holy Mass originally emanate from Caesarea and Constantinople, rather than Rome.

The history of what happened between the Last Supper and the Fourth Century institutionalization of the celebration is fraught with difficulty. There are as many as six versions of religious table fellowship, if not Eucharistic celebrations, particularized as the Last Supper. Last Supper is capitalized because the Gospel descriptions of what happened do not fit the traditional Pascal meal.

Six stages of development can be imagined: (1) Jesus opening his table to sinners as he walked this earth; (2) Jesus transforming the nature of his meals after cleansing the Temple; (not a stage of development) the institution of the Eucharist before the Resurrection; (3) a Jewish focus on bread, rather than bread and wine; (4) Petrine exclusion of outsiders from the Eucharistic celebration (Acts 2:46-47); (5) a Pauline and Synoptic type of Eucharist; (6) a Johannine type of Eucharist, a full break with Judaism with the recognition of the Eucharist as a sacrament. There also seems to have been a yearly Seder practice with Saint James. So, maybe there are seven rather than six strands.

Each of the Four Evangelists has a slightly different description of the institution of the sacrament, differing from what the primitive Church did in Acts 1:12-26; 2:46; and 3:1—4:37. Acts reflects more of the institution of the Eucharist as described by Saint John, rather than the Synoptics. Luke has two descriptions, including what he presents in the readings for today at Acts 2:46. Focusing on the words that transmit the tradition can miss the point of personal transformation as part of the Eucharist.

The completion of the sacrament does not occur with the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus or its disintegration and return to its original cosmic elements. The completion of the sacrament occurs when the Faithful leave the Communion table to engage the world. As Acts 2:42 puts it, *they devoted themselves ... to the communal life.*

The Greek for *devoted* also applies to verse 46, *they devoted themselves ... to breaking bread.* Such devotion is applicable to leading the Christ-life apart from private devotion into public engagement. The first Christians devoted themselves to the Temple area, a place suited for public engagement. The notion of what constituted the Temple area gradually changed from only a public to also a private place for engagement of the Christ-life.

Jesus proceeded by driving the merchants out of the Temple area. The religious leaders retaliated by figuring out how to kill him. However, what may Jesus have been doing in the meantime, between the plot and its execution? Did Jesus begin to change his meals from sustenance for the body only into sustenance for the soul as

well? Did Jesus begin to suggest that the bloody sacrifices at the Temple lost significance in favor of what eventually became the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass? Did the transformation of the human spirit through the Eucharistic celebration gradually become more important than the transformation of animal flesh into a holocaust honoring God? To ask such questions is not to answer them, but to flesh out the possibilities for the meaning of the Mass.

A major question of piety concerns the presence of Judas at the Last Supper. If Jesus were reaching out at his table fellowship, then the sinner Judas would have been present. Freedom from sin would not be an inhibition to reception of Holy Communion. Inhibition due to venial sin was reduced during the Twentieth Century, beginning with Pope Pius X (1835-(pope1903-1914)).

Where was the wine in the home-Masses of Acts 2:46? How did these first Christians both worship constantly in the Temple and enjoy *favor with all the people*? Just what was the nature of this Eucharist in Acts 2:46? What about exclusivity as reflected in Acts 2:47, *those who were being saved*? Acts 2:47 implies that there were others who were both not being saved and gave favor to those who were being saved. This apparent contradiction merits contemplation.

If the primitive Christians reached out to their fellow non-Christian Jews in the Temple with the Eucharist, then the Eucharist might become a sacrament of unity rather than a sign of disunity among Christians. To the contrary, Jan Hus (1372/3-1415), the Bohemian religious reformer, died at the stake over the issue of the Faithful receiving both consecrated bread and wine, rather than just consecrated bread alone. History has a potential for softening the sharp edges of self-righteousness.

The sense of happy rejoicing in the midst of the troubles of the world helps transform the Faithful into other Christs. The reading from one Peter 1:7 explains the purpose of suffering, *for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ*. These Notes describe Psalm 118 elsewhere, earlier, in the places mentioned below.

The doubting-Thomas Faith called for in the reading from John 20:27-29 applies to Eucharistic Faith. John 20:31 explains the purpose for which he wrote, *but these [signs] are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.*<sup>3</sup> Catholics are different in that we believe both in the physical presence of Jesus and in the unbloody sacrificial nature of the Mass. Others regard the Eucharist as symbolic and non-sacrificial.

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<sup>3</sup>Debbie Hunn, "Who Are 'They' in John 8:33?" the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No 3 (July 2004).

Symbol, which the Eucharist is not, at least not entirely, is not far from the signs that permeate John. The function of signs in John is to enable those who accept the signs to believe, while those who do not accept the signs pass by. According to John, signs are necessary for those who believe, though it is still possible to see the signs without believing.<sup>4</sup> The sign of the Eucharist is the main way the Church evangelizes the Faithful.

Within the overall context of Easter, however, the resurrection is the parallel sign to the Exodus, whereby Jesus shows the way through suffering and death to everlasting life. John develops a pattern similar to the Book of Wisdom as an interpretive key for understanding. The Exodus and Easter are both culminations of Wisdom.<sup>5</sup> In the Eucharist rests the culmination of Wisdom.

The Eucharist is not the only sacrament celebrated in these readings. The other special sacrament is Reconciliation or Penance.<sup>6</sup> See below for where this sacrament is written up elsewhere, earlier. Reconciliation is often regarded as a pre-condition for participation in the Eucharistic meal.

To recapitulate, the religious leaders of his day challenged Jesus for opening his table to sinners. After Vatican II, Holy Communion itself received more attention for its ability to cleanse venial sin. In the wake of that, as frequent Communion has increased, frequent Confession has subsided. Finding frequent Confession in the primitive Church would have to include John 20:23, read today, [Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained](#).

The theme through these Notes is completing the Eucharistic consecration of bread and wine through a personal self-consecration. Acts presents a primitive Christian community getting along with everyone, worshipping in the Temple, though destined to develop opposition from others who did not approve. Psalm 118:22 implies a threat of judgment for those rejecting the building stone, Jesus Christ, present in the daily sacrifice of the Mass.

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<sup>4</sup> Loren L. Johns and Douglas B. Miller, "The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 3 (July 1994) 521, 526, 532-535.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas K. Clark, "Signs in Wisdom and John," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 201-202, 205, 208.

<sup>6</sup> Joel Marcus, "The Gates of Hades and the Keys of the Kingdom (Matt 16:18-19)," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 50, No. 3 (July 1988) 450.

1 Peter extends the Eucharistic celebration into the full lives of the Faithful. Finally, the Gospel of John is about the Holy Eucharist as a sign visible to the eyes of the soul, generally different for Catholics and Protestants. Catholics become the sign through grace; Protestants witness the sign as a symbol that they then become through the same grace. Transubstantiation begins by transforming bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus, proceeds by transforming the Faithful through grace, and culminates in eternal life.

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Scriptural references to the Lectionary follow. Since the main purpose of these Notes is annotating the scriptural references in the index at [www.western-civilization.com](http://www.western-civilization.com), references pertinent, but not fitting the flow imposed above, are included below. I do not assume that the reader is following the readings cited either in the Lectionary or in the Bible. Like the footnotes, the citations are for reference purposes for anyone interested. The large, bold letters facilitate locating exactly what the Lectionary presents for these Notes.

### **Acts 2:42-47**

Acts 2:45 shows that owning property was present in the primitive church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Gundry, "Mark 10:29: Order in the List," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 59, No. 3 (July 1997) 472.

## Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

This is the first time these Notes observe that Psalm 118:15 is incomplete, both here in Cycle A and in Cycles B and C. Sloppy scholarship.

Verse 15c

Lectionary (1998):

- (a) The Joyful shout of Victory
- (b) In the tents of the just.
- (c) ... The Lectionary does not note (c) is missing.

The Vulgate (circa 410):

- (a) Vox iubilationis et salutis
- (b) In tabernaculis iustorum:
- (c) "Dextera Domini fecit virtutem!

Douay-Rheims (1582-1610):

(Psalm 117)  
The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the just.  
(verse 16)

The right hand of the LORD hath wrought strength: the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me: the right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength.

King James (1611):

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

Jerusalem (1966):

Shouts of joy and safety  
In the tents of the virtuous:

New American (1970):

Yahweh's right hand is wreaking havoc,  
(a) The joyful shout of deliverance  
(b) Is heard in the tents of the victors:  
(c) "The LORD's right hand strikes with power;

New Jerusalem (1985):

(a) Shouts of joy and salvation,  
(b) In the tents of the upright,  
(c) Yahweh's right hand is triumphant,

Verse 16 is included in the Douay-Rheims version because verse 16a is verse 15c in the other versions. There is a problem translating the poetry of the original into the prose of the English. Where translators solved this problem by indenting the lines, I inserted the appropriate (a), (b), and (c). Otherwise, I omitted (a), (b), and (c). Also, note that the Douay-Rheims Psalm is 117, not 118. The Lectionary is accepting the mainstream numbering of the psalms and, when it does, it may not use the omitted verse in Douay-Rheims to justify excluding the same in its own enumeration.

Funeral Rites uses Psalm 118 once.<sup>8</sup>

These Notes also comment on Psalm 118 at  
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Study040411\_Easter\_42ABC.doc

To recapitulate somewhat, the Lectionary uses this Psalm as follows.

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in</u> <u>Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>		
41ABC	341	1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(alleluia)	Easter vigil
42ABC	346	1-2, 16-17, 22-23	(24 or alleluia)	today
43A	350-351	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
44B	356-357	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
45C	362-363	2-4, 13-15, 22-24	(1 or alleluia)	Easter 2
50B	394-395	1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29	(22)	Easter 4

## 1 Peter 1:3-9

The term *miser cordia* may be translated either *love* or *mercy*. In the Lectionary, 1 Peter 1:3 translated *miser cordia* as *mercy*. I think *love* more suited to the Eucharistic celebration, in this instance.

Pastoral Care of the Sick uses this reading.<sup>9</sup>

## John 29:29

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<sup>8</sup> International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 275.

<sup>9</sup> The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: Approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 278.

## **John 20:19-31**

These Notes also comment on this passage at:

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E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study1 2004\Bible Study040418\_Second Sunday of Easter\_45C.doc

This passage concludes the Book of Glory in John.<sup>10</sup>

For more on sources see the Appendix file.

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<sup>10</sup> Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., “Raymond Brown’s New *Introduction to the Gospel of John*: A Presentation—And Some Questions,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 65 No. 1 (January 2005)11.