A EUCHARISTIC SPIRITUALITY IN LIFE AND WORSHIP

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The theme of a Christian life and spirituality rooted in Eucharistic life and "worship" in the Catholic tradition can be approached in many ways. It is circumscribed by its history, its theology, or theologies, its rubrics and regulations, to mention only the obvious. What is often not taken into sufficient account in these discussions, especially among the western minority of pastors and pastoral associates who provide almost all the ministry to a Catholic Church that is now majority non-western, is the issue of culture. As the Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Australia and the Pacific, I am regularly faced with the issue of "difference" in Samoa and Fiji. That "difference" becomes a multitude of "differences" in contemporary Catholic Australia.

It is inevitable that each one of us, individually and within worshiping communities, is circumscribed by our limitations. Given those fundamental truths that are not speculation, but based upon our day-to-day experience, I wish to spend my time with you dealing with matters that should form the bedrock of any Christian life and spirituality: some *universal truths* about the human condition and the Word of God that addresses that condition. My approach will be twofold: I will reflect with you initially on a biblically and theologically based anthropology, and then offer a brief sketch of the New Testament's understanding of the central act of Christian and Catholic worship, the celebration of the Eucharist.

A Christian Anthropology and Worship

For the New Testament, Christology and Christian anthropology are intimately related. It is beyond the scope of these few minutes with you to look "behind" the theological and pastoral proclamation of the various New Testament texts to discover the man whose death and resurrection gave rise to Christianity: Jesus of Nazareth, Son and Son of Man.[1] It has often been rightly said that the Earliest Church, with its New Testament, left more questions unanswered than answered. This is certainly so in the never-ending debates that continue to surround the person of Jesus. And so it must be! Any Christian anthropology – i.e., any Christian reflection upon the situation and possibilities of the human being – must have its roots in the human person, Jesus of Nazareth. Only in him has God's design for the

human condition been manifested. Only Jesus of Nazareth can be used as a basis for our reflection upon the Christian human being … the Christian person who loves and worships, but more of that later.

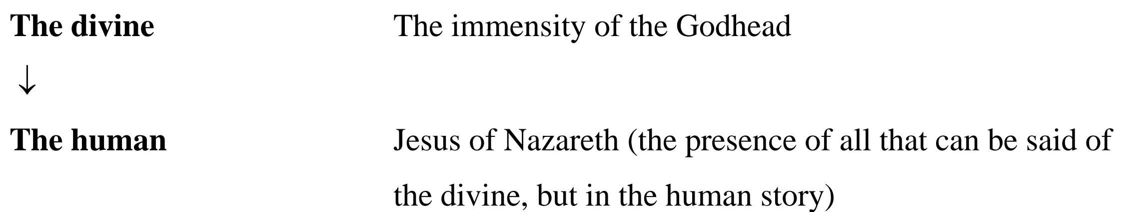
For almost five centuries, the early Church struggled with the question of the balance between the divinity and the humanity of Jesus. Already at the Council of Nicea (325 AD), an Ecumenical Council had formulated the doctrine of the Trinity, in which Jesus, the Son of God, was understood as the second person of the Trinity. If such was the case, the debate raged, how could he possibly be human? Yet, the evidence of the New Testament speaks for his profound human experience and sentiment: “Although he was son, he learned obedience through what he suffered” (Heb 5:8).

This debate divided Christians in both the Eastern and the Western Churches, and led inevitably to the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). There another Ecumenical Council defined that Jesus was both divine and human. Indeed, the major thrust of the Council of Chalcedon was to defend the humanity of Jesus. But the Fathers of the Council went further than simply affirming that Jesus was both human and divine. Equally important in their definition of faith was the insistence that the divinity of Jesus did not impinge upon the human experience of Jesus, and that the human experience of Jesus did not alter his divine status. This is the faith and teaching of our Christian and Catholic Tradition. But the Council of Chalcedon did *not* define *how this is possible*. Chalcedon insists upon the *fact* of the humanity and divinity of Jesus, but does not tell us *how* Jesus could be both human and divine. It could be claimed that theological debates over the person of Jesus since the Council of Chalcedon have always circled around this question: how can Jesus of Nazareth be – at one and the same time – both human and divine? Chalcedon did not bring debate over the person of Jesus to an end … it opened the door to centuries of further debate.[2]

What follows depends partially the work of Karl Rahner.[3] It questions the usefulness of a long-held explanation of the *way in which* the humanity and divinity of Jesus has been explained. However, please remember as I develop my Christology, and from there my Christian anthropology, that theological speculation is not Christian truth! Chalcedon told us *that* Jesus was both human and divine, but did not tell us *how* he was both human and divine. There is no formal “teaching of the Church” on *how* Jesus is both human and divine. That has

long been left to theological speculation, but the speculation that follows starts and ends with the teaching of the Christian Church: *that* Jesus of Nazareth is both human and divine.

Over recent centuries theologians started from the Johannine presentation of Jesus as the entry into the world of someone who comes *from above*, destined eventually to ascend again to *where he was before* (see John 1:1-18; 3:13; 6:62; 20:17). The Incarnation has been taught in Theology classes, and in the communication of the Christian Faith to generations as the inbreak of the divine into the human sphere. The classical presentation of this mystery can be presented with the following figure.



The difficulty with this classical position has always been to explain how Jesus of Nazareth had genuine human experiences: faith, hope, love, trust, fear, sexual desire, pain, laughter, tears, and a myriad of other experiences that are fundamental to the human condition. In terms of today's reflection, did Jesus turn to God in prayer and worship? The Gospels answer to that question is an unequivocal "yes." (see, spectacularly among many, Matt 6:7-15; Luke 11:2-4; John 17:1-26). If Jesus did not have such experiences, including his life of love and worship of God, trying to hold them all in balance during the course of his life, then he cannot be regarded as truly human. The experience that must be questioned is the cross. Did he really suffer as any other human being would suffer? Or all through that experience was he able to call upon his divine nature to overcome human pain. Did he go through the motions, knowing that he would be raised from the dead and established at the right hand of his Father? If he did, does the suffering and death of Jesus lose something of their salvific significance? I hope that what I have just said makes it clear to you that Christology and anthropology are linked. What we think of the human being must also make sense of what we think of – and how we understand – the person of Jesus of Nazareth

The great theologians who have held to this classical view over the centuries have been aware of these difficulties. They generally explained the tension created between the

contemporaneous presence of the human and the divine in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth by speculating that Jesus had several levels of consciousness. Using the stories of the Gospels as if they were all factual descriptions of what had happened, they speculated that Jesus switched in and out of his levels of consciousness at various moments in his life and ministry. His suffering and death was lived entirely at the level of his human consciousness, and thus it continues to bear the full salvific significance given to it by the Christian tradition. This biblical fundamentalism and unfortunate understanding of the person of Jesus could still be said to be the majority position among pastors and pastoral assistants. Biblical scholars and theologians have been raising these important questions for many decades, but there is little or no "reception" in the Catholic Church of the voice of its scholars.[4] Describing "those who were opposed to biblical criticism within Catholicism," Raymond E. Brown wrote more than 35 years ago:

> If the biblical scholar was going to insist upon the freedom to play with his new-fangled toys of language and literary form, he (or she) was to be kept in a playpen and not let out to disturb the good order of the theological household.[5]

If anything, the situation has worsened somehow over the past decade.

That is a pity, as a different Christological and anthropological speculation begins, not with the inbreak of the divine into the human, but with a closer look at the depths and richness of all that is human. It is here that we need to begin some anthropological reflection. While asking about Jesus' humanity, I listed some aspects that were essential to "being human." Allow me to list them again: faith and trust in other human beings, hope in the midst of difficulty, love for others, and especially the unique "other" in one's life, fear, sexual desire, pain, laughter, tears. The list could go on, but let's leave it at that. Why is it so important to love and to be loved, to feel pain at the loss, through death or physical separation, of a loved one? What makes people rise every day and face hopeless situations, yet struggle and suffer to bring about good for others? What is perhaps the more important truth is that our capacity to live, to love and to die in this fashion is what makes each one of us the unique being that we are. Only once in the history of humankind have I, or you, existed. There is only one history of each one of us, and we bear ultimate responsibility for it. We also bear responsibility for the way we have allowed others to shape it in love or hatred, and for the way we have shaped other histories in love or hatred, and the many other possible relational possibilities between those two extremes. None of this is theological speculation.

This is the way we are! A moment's quiet reflection proclaims loudly deep inside each one of us: what matters is loving and being loved, and the only unconditionally free action that we will ever perform is the gift of ourselves into the mystery of death. Our abilities as scholars, writers, teachers, athletes, musicians, etc., are not the final measure of who we are.

We are now ready to move from this reflection into our world and life of faith, i.e., to articulate what we have been sharing as a Christian anthropology. Those things that are deepest in us, which make or break us as human beings, transcend us. They are bigger than us; they overwhelm us, yet determine us as human beings. In short, they are the experienced signs of the presence of the divine within every single human being. Thus, to be authentically human means to recognize the reality of the divine within us. To be authentically Christian, is to respond to the divine that makes or breaks us, in the light of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. We are all divine, and we yearn for the divine home, for which we were created. The words of St Augustine continue to ring true: "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you."[6] Our humanity is not something negative. It is wrong to say: "Oh well, I am only human!" That is the best thing about us, not our weak point. We sin when we do not respond properly to the presence of the divine in our humanity, and we begin to act selfishly, arrogantly, jealously, proudly, satisfying the hungers of our basic urges. These responses are not "human." They belong to the instinctual response world of the animal kingdom. However, we know that our lives are often marked by such sinfulness.[7]

Let us return – ever so briefly – to our Christology. This was *never the case* with Jesus of Nazareth. Again, as the Letter to the Hebrews says: "We have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who *in every respect* has been tempted has as we are, *yet without sin*" (Heb 4:15). With this in mind, let us return to our diagram again, and suggest another possibility.

The divine	The only human being who has ever unconditionally filled the divine potential that is in *every* human being: The exalted Jesus
The human	Jesus: bringer of the Kingdom in word and person, Son and Son of Man (unconditionally open to the realization of the divine potential present in all of us)

Rather than understanding the union of the human and the divine as a divine invasion of the human, that took place only in Jesus, this model works in the opposite direction. The Gospels lead us to suggest that in Jesus the full potential of humanity has been totally realized. This means that, in and through Jesus of Nazareth, the human invaded the divine. Problems remain, as with the traditional model. How can the divine be caught up in the human? A lifetime of searching will not answer that question, and I too must fall back on the truth that here we are dealing with the mystery of the design and action of God. However, this suggestion places “mystery” where it belongs, in the divine Godhead, and not in the humanity of Jesus, something which he shares with us, and which we can experience and understand. It is here that Christology and Christian anthropology intersect.

We must be careful not to claim that Jesus is no more than a human being who did not sin, who always said “yes” to God, and thus *became* divine. That is a false understanding of the Christian tradition. Jesus brought in the reigning presence of God, and as Son responded unconditionally to God, costing the Son of Man no less than everything. But he did not do this simply because he was a good human being. While there is truth in claiming: “One of us made it!” … it is not the whole truth. Jesus realized the fullness of the divinity possible for all human beings *because he was Son*. It is his being the Son of God that engenders his response to God. Does this mean that we can never hope to do the same? On the contrary, and this is the point of this first major part of our reflection together: a Christian and Catholic anthropological reflection on prayer and worship.

We are all capable of repeating the life-style of Jesus and, in our own time, realizing our divinity in its fullness. However, we do this not because we *are* sons and daughters, but because we are *made* sons and daughters by means of our Baptism. We have been *graced*

with discipleship. To say it in somewhat technical language: Jesus was son of God *by nature*; we are sons and daughters of God *by grace*. This was what Paul was trying to convey to the Galatians and the Romans when he told them how blessed they were to be able to cry out, in the Spirit, *Abba* Father! (Gal 4:4-7; Rom 8:14-15). What I have just stated, rather bluntly, was at the heart of early Christian thought. The Greek Fathers of the Church spoke of our "divinization," our *theiôsis*. This was picked up by the Latin tradition. Listen to Blessed Isaac of Stella, Abbot of the Cistercian Monastery if Citeaux early in the Twelfth Century:

> The faithful and spiritual members of Christ can truly say that they are what he is, even the Son of God, even God. But he is so by nature, they by sharing; he of his faithfulness, they by participation. In short, what the Son of God is by birth, his members are by adoption, according to the word of Scripture: "You have received the spirit of adoptions as sons (and daughters), enabling us to cr, 'Abba! Father'."[8]

As we all know, the reality of sin is powerfully present in our lives, and we fall short of our full potential; we are less "human" than we could be! We are potentially "another Christ," and we must recognize our vocation to "life in Christ."

What is our prayer, our worship, our Eucharistic lives, if not that reaching beyond the limitations of ourselves to be at one with the God whose very nature we share. As followers of the human-divine Jesus, we are to "put on Christ" so that we might recognize our dignity. All that is noble in us: our loving, our laughter, our play, our mission as educators, our dancing, our eating and drinking, our praying, alone or with others, our search for justice and peace, our worship, both public and private, our prayer both public and private, and the many other things that we do in response to that which is deepest within us, is part of our journey to be as Jesus Christ was (see Phil 2:5-11; 4:8-9). Like Jesus, Christian disciples reach beyond themselves into the mystery of the divinity that is, at one and the same time, constitutive of our being, yet the object of our search. Augustine, as we have seen, puts it one way: "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." Rahner says it differently:

> I encounter myself when I find myself in the world and when I ask about God; and when I ask about my essence, I always find myself already in the world and on the way to God. I am both of these at once, and cannot be one without the other.[9]

Because both Augustine and Rahner are correct, and because we all know that what I have shared with you today, prayer, sacramental and liturgical celebrations are not "things Catholics do." They are at the very heart of our restless search for the divine which is at one

and the same time part of my essence, and the hunger that I wish to satisfy. With that in mind, let us turn to our Eucharistic lives and practices.

Eucharist – the Source and Summit of Christian Life and Worship

The earliest Christian witness to the practice of the Lord's Supper is found in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul addresses problems which have arisen in the community at Corinth.[10] In Paul's discussion of the Corinthians' problematic celebration of the Lord's supper he first attacks the nature of their abuse of the Eucharistic table in 11:17-22. He then reports his tradition of the Eucharistic words (vv. 23-26). More theological conclusions and recommendations close his treatment (vv. 27-34). In vv. 27-28 Paul warns against eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord in an "unworthy manner," drawing conclusions from the abuses he described in vv. 17-22. "I hear that there are divisions among you" (v. 18). These divisions are described as follows: "In eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the Church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No I shall not!" (vv. 21-22). The Lord's supper was supposed to be a common meal, but Paul has heard that this has become impossible at Corinth because such divisions between the wealthy and the poor have arisen that no one was concerned about the other. It would be better for the Corinthians to eat in their own houses, rather than pretend a unity in their Eucharistic celebration which their behavior belies. In addition to humiliating "those who have nothing," they show they hold true community in contempt. This is the "unworthy manner" of participating in the Eucharist chastised by Paul in v. 27, and the reason for the request that a man should "examine himself" expressed in v. 28.

Within this context of instruction and warning, Paul inserts his tradition of the Eucharistic words of Jesus (vv. 23-26). They are highlighted by the command, repeated over both the bread and the wine, to perform the action of breaking the bread and sharing the cup "in remembrance of me" (vv 24 and 25). While this twice repeated command may have its origins in the earliest liturgies, it is also a challenge to an appreciation of the Eucharistic nature of the Christian life. To celebrate Eucharist is to commit oneself to a discipleship which "remembers" Jesus – not only in the breaking of the ritual bread and sharing the ritual

cup – but also in “imitation” of Jesus, in the ongoing breaking of one’s own body and spilling of one’s own blood “in remembrance” of Jesus. For this reason, Paul adds: “You proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (v 26). It is in the broken body and the spilt blood of a Church of disciples who live the Eucharist which they celebrate that the Lord’s death is proclaimed in the world, until he comes again.

Paul’s call for unity in 1 Corinthians 11:17-22 is a summons motivated by the need for the Corinthian community “to remember,” to practice at the level of life what they proclaims at the level of ritual (vv 23-26). To continue in their present practice would be to eat the bread and drink the cup “unworthily” (v 27). Thus they must examine themselves carefully on these issues before approaching the Eucharistic meal (v 28). In v. 29 Paul warns the Corinthians: “Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” Not to discern the body is to fail to recognize the Lord’s presence in the Eucharist in the sense of the Lord who died for us (see v 24: “This is my body which is for [*hyper*] you).” But “body” also means the context of the community. Ignoring the “body” of Christ, present in the “body” of the community in their Eucharistic meals, the Corinthians proclaim the presence of the Lord in a lie that offends against the “rhythm” of the offering of Christ which they claim to be “remembering” in their celebration. Christians are called to repeat the self-gift of Christ in his memory both in cult and in life. Not to celebrate Eucharist in this way is to “eat and drink judgment” upon oneself (v 29). Not recognizing the sacrificed “body” of Jesus in the Eucharist, they offend against the “body’ which is the Church, called to repeat that sacrifice in its own life.

The Gospels, written decades after Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (Mark: c. 70; Matthew and Luke: c. 85; John: c. 100), continue to develop a rich understanding of Jesus’ self-gift in love in narratives that presuppose the celebration of the Eucharist. A brief selection from some well-known narratives will illustrate this. Mark 14:17-31, the account of the Last Supper in this Gospel, is an example of the practice of framing episodes. Jesus shares a meal with his disciples (14:22-25), but the episodes before and after the meal tell of his disciples’ betrayal, denial and flight (vv. 17-21; 26-31).[11] In vv. 17-21 Jesus “came with the twelve,” a group appointed in 3:14 “to be with him.” (v. 17). The setting for Jesus’ prediction of his betrayal is the meal table, a sacred place among friends. Jesus explains that the betrayer will be “one who is eating with me” (v. 18). Intimacy is heightened by the words of Jesus: “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread in the same dish with me.” A

similar attention to the closeness that exists between Jesus and his future betrayers is found in vv. 26-31. He predicts they "will all fall away" (v. 27). He uses the image of the shepherd and his sheep (v. 27), and his predictions lead to expressions of love and devotion. Peter swears an unfailing loyalty, better than all the others who may fall away (v. 29). He even claims that he is prepared to lay down his life for his master (v. 31). Peter is not alone in swearing loyalty and love: "And they all said the same."

In the centre of the passage, 14:22-26 reports Jesus' last meal with the disciples, who will betray, deny and abandon him (14:22-26). The theme of table fellowship with the betrayers opens the passage: "And as *they* were eating, he took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and *gave it to them."* (v. 22). This theme is continued in the sharing of the cup, where the same recipients are again specified: "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks *he gave it to them,* and *they all drank of it."* (v. 23). The words over the bread and the cup point to the Cross: a body given and blood poured out (vv. 22 and 24), but they also point to something beyond the day of crucifixion. The blood is to be a covenant (v. 24), and he comments that he will not "drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (v. 25). The word "until" rings out a message of trust and hope that looks well beyond the events of Good Friday. There is to be a body given and blood poured out which will set up a new covenant reaching beyond the Cross into the definitive establishment of the Kingdom. A covenant with whom? The body broken and the blood poured out sets up a new covenant with *the fragile disciples* who were the first recipients of that bread and cup. Mark has given us an account of Jesus' gift of himself unto death to set up a new and lasting kingdom with the characters in the story. Jesus loves his failing disciples with a love which is in no way matched by the love which they bear him.

The theme of a "journey" is important across the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout the Gospel, a journey leads to Jerusalem, where the paschal events take place (see especially Luke 9:51). At the beginning of Acts, the first Christian community is still in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the Spirit is given to the community, and a second journey begins, reaching out to the ends of the earth. The city of Jerusalem is the center of God's history. The early Church was founded in that city, the Holy Spirit was given there, and from there a mission began which would reach out to the ends of the earth (see Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8). In the opening remarks of the journey to Emmaus (24:13-35), in the midst of the paschal events, two disciples are going to Emmaus, "about sixty stadia *away*

from Jerusalem" (v. 13).[12] They are walking away from Jerusalem, the central point of God's story, away from God's design of the journey of the Son of God from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and of the Christian community from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. They tell him of their expectations: "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (v. 21). Jesus' way of responding to the design of God (see vv. 25-27) has not fulfilled their expectations of the one who would redeem Israel. They know of his life: Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed (v. 19). They know of his death: "Our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him" (v. 20). They know of the events at the tomb: "it is now the third day" (v. 21), women have been at the tomb early in the morning, but they did not find his body" (v. 23). They have even heard the Easter proclamation: there has been a vision of angels who said: "He is alive" (v. 23). The two disciples know everything … but him they did not see, and thus they have had enough. They continue their walk away from Jerusalem.

Jesus "interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (v. 27). At the meal they recognized him in the breaking of the bread (vv. 30-31). Jesus followed, joined, and journeyed with these failing disciples, as they walked away from God's design. He has come to meet them, to make himself known to them and to draw them back to the journey of God through opening the word of God to them, and through the breaking of the bread. Touched in their failure, the immediate reaction of the failed disciples is to turn back on their journey: "And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem" (v. 33). Once they arrive back they are told: "The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!" (v. 34). They have come back home, but only because the Lord has reached out to them in their brokenness, and made himself known to them in the breaking of the bread. As with Mark, and also with Matthew who has repeated Mark's story (Matt 26:17-35), the Evangelist Luke has no hesitation in setting the Eucharistic presence of the Lord in the midst of the broken disciples.

In John 13:1-38 Jesus' unconditional self-gift to fragile broken disciples reaches its most theological expression.[13] The footwashing and its aftermath (vv. 1-17), lead to words from Jesus (vv. 18-20). These words are followed by the gift of the morsel and its aftermath (vv. 21-38). In the footwashing (vv. 1-17) Jesus shows his love for his disciples in his gift of himself for them and in the gift of his example to them (v. 15). The passage highlights his knowledge of the ways of God (v. 3), and his knowledge of all that is about to happen (v. 11).

This series of gracious gifts of Jesus to his disciples is contrasted by the themes of the betrayer (vv. 2, 10-11), and the ignorance of the disciples (vv. 6-10). The gift of the morsel (vv 21-38), reflects the gifts of the Eucharist and the new commandment (vv. 34-35). There is the repeated reference to the betrayer (vv. 21-26a), the theme of the ignorance of the disciples (vv. 26b-29), the exit of Judas for the betrayal (v. 30) and the prophecy of the denial of Peter (vv. 36-38). Repeating the argument of vv. 1-17 in vv. 21-38, we find Jesus' love for his disciples in the gift of the Eucharistic morsel, and the gift of the new commandment of love, set in the midst of the ignorance of the disciples, the denial of Peter and the betrayal of Judas. To failing disciples Jesus has insisted: "I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you" (v. 15), and "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you" (v. 34).

It is at the center of this context of unconditional love given to failing disciples that we situate the center-piece: vv. 18-20:

> I am not speaking of you all; I know whom I have chosen: it is that the scripture may be fulfilled, "He who ate my bread has lifted his heed against me."
>
> I tell you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I AM.
>
> Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives anyone whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me.

The Fourth Evangelist has deliberately set vv. 18-20 between two flanking passages (vv. 1-17 and vv. 21-38). In v 18 Jesus speaks of having no illusions about the very ones whom he has chosen. One of the chosen will become the betrayer who has shared in the Eucharistic morsel and another will deny him. Nevertheless, in v. 20 Jesus speaks of his intention to send forth his disciples. John 13:1-38 is marked by the extraordinary love of God, revealed in Jesus, who gives himself in the footwashing and the Eucharistic morsel. He knows whom he has chosen; he is aware that one who shares his table will betray him, another will deny him and that all the others are unable to understand him, yet he loves them and sends them out to proclaim both himself and his Father. The theological significance of this message is summed up in the central statement of the whole of 13:1-38: "I tell you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I AM" (v 19). Jesus loves his own so much that he chooses them (v 18a), and sends them out as his presence (v 20). Yet, these loved ones are responsible for his death on a Cross (v 18b). It is precisely in this unconditional self-gift to people who do not love him that he reveals who he is. The Fourth

Evangelist uses the expression “I am,” an expression with a long history in the literature of Israel, to refer to the living presence of a God who is made known among the people, and applies it to the person of Jesus. John informs his readers that only when love reveals itself in such an extraordinary fashion, loving “to the end” (13:1) those who do not love, him, can one begin to understand the God whom Jesus has come to make known. When these things happen, when his disciples have betrayed, denied and abandoned him, and he is “lifted up” on the Cross (see 3:13; 8:28; 12:32), then his disciples of all times will know that Jesus is the revelation of God: “I tell you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I AM” (v 19). Or, as the Evangelist states in the final verse of his passion narrative: “They shall gaze upon him whom they have pierced” (19:37).

This brief sketch of some New Testament presentations of the Eucharist does not pretend to exhaust all the nuances found there. Even less does it pretend to touch upon the rich theological, liturgical, symbolic, cultural and ritual developments of the Church’s understanding and celebration of the Eucharist, as it has developed and emerged over two thousand years of Christian history. What has been outlined in Paul, the Synoptic Gospels and John, however, might serve as a suitable point to link the celebration and living of the Eucharist to our earlier reflections on the essential function of prayer and worship in our very “beings” as Christians and Catholics. The Eucharist is a gift of God, given in and through the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ (Mark 14:22-24; Matt 26:26-28; Luke 22:19-21; John 6:51c; 1 Cor 11:24-25).

Conclusion

As people on a never- ending journey towards the perfect humanity that only Jesus lived we involve ourselves in our in prayer and worship. Eucharist is their source and summit. Seen in this way, everything we do that is genuinely human is both Eucharistic and an act of worship. However, like everyone else who prays that God’s will be done and God’s kingdom come, as Jesus taught us (see Luke 11:2; Matt 6:10), we are called to recognize our brokenness. We are, as Henri Nouwen once so eloquently argued “wounded healers.” It is here that the Gospels’ presentation of the Eucharist rings true. As fellow-sinners, on a shared Eucharistic journey toward the parousia, we respond to our vocation to be Eucharist, and to celebrate Eucharist. “I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom (Matt 26:29. See also Mark 14:25; Luke

22:16). Our lives of worship, which have their source and summit in the Eucharist, are not primarily cult, but a worshipping way of life, breaking one's body and spilling one's blood, in memory of Jesus, until he comes again (see 1 Cor 11:26; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*).

The hunger for the transcendent is a genuine poverty that crosses all ages and all social, ethnic, religious and economic boundaries. It is to this hunger that a life of worship that is Eucharistic must respond. Worship is not made up of prayer wheels that we spin from time to time, or Benedictions highlighted by precious vessels and clouds of incense.

Our worship is not only a Mass we may even attend every morning, and certainly more solemnly on Sundays. Prayer and worship are not only cult. Above all, they are a way of life; indeed they are the grammar of a Christian life.

NOTES

[1] For an initial survey of this central issue for the basis of any Christology and Christian anthropology, see Francis J. Moloney, "The Son of Man and Christian Discipleship," *Lutheran Theological Journal* 39 (2005): 110-21.

[2] For a brilliant and precise presentation of the achievements of Chalcedon and the conflicts it generated, see Robert L. Wilkin, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought. Seekeng the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 110-35.

[3] Rahner's theological writings are voluminous and difficult to read. His seminal work on Christology can be hard to trace, as it was scattered through a number of volumes with the title *Theological Investigations*, some of which continued to appear after his death in 1984 (Volume 21 appeared in 1988). The best synthesis of his thought can be found in Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith. An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1978), 176-321.

[4] For a significant recent study on this question, see Ormond Rush, *The Eyes of Faith. The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), especially pp. 261-68.

[5] Raymond E. Brown, *The Virginal Conception and Bodily Conception of Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 1973), 6.

[6] Augustine, *Confesssions*, I, 1. Translation from Henry Chadwick, *Saint Augustine Confessions* (World's Classics; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

[7] In Daniel 7, where Jesus went to find the expression "Son of Man," those who sinfully oppose God and his plan are "animals" coming up from the sea, rendered powerless or destroyed (vv. 1-8, 9-12). The suffering figure, open to the divine is the human figure, "one like a son of Man" (v. 13-14). See the further interpretation along these lines in vv. 15-27.

[8] Blessed Isaac of Stella, *Sermon* 42 (in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completes: Series Latina* [217 Vols; Paris: Apud Garnieri Fratres, 1844-1864], 194).

[9] Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 406.

[10] For a more detailed analysis of the texts, see Francis J. Moloney, *A Body Broken for a Broken People. Eucharist in the New Testament* (Revised edition; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 165-77.

[11] For more detail, see Moloney, *A Body Broken*, 44-56.

[12] For a more detailed analysis, see Francis J. Moloney, *The Living Voice of the Gospel. The Gospels Today* (Mulgrave: John Garratt, 2006), 220-226.

[13] For a detailed commentary, see Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Sacra Pagina 4; Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 370-391.