

listen to our sermon. We shall not leave the pulpit under a load of flowers thrown to us by an enthusiastic public. It would be worrying if this were to happen. Probably we would have sold the word.

It is a very ordinary sermon. People may have forgotten about it by the end of the mass, but there is a fair chance that they will have enjoyed it. We have tried to preach God's word. What the result will be we do not know. Fortunately God's word is more powerful than our words. There is no need to sell God's word and we have to prevent every suggestion that God's word can be bought. We can now begin thinking about next Sunday's sermon.

## **The Eucharist: Development or Deviation—II**

by Geoffrey Preston, O.P.

The present renewal of the eucharistic liturgy can be seen as an attempt to remove some of the long-term effects of the imposition of extrinsic rites and ceremonies on the once-and-for-all given sign which is the means by which believers have access to the mystery of God in Christ. But what is that given sign? Bread and wine, certainly, but bread and wine precisely as bread and wine, in their full reality, bread demanding to be eaten to be bread and wine requiring to be drunk to become what it is. Not two substances which could be any other two substances, which could be say wood and iron, but bread and wine to be eaten and drunk. The sign is not therefore simply the two substances of bread and wine but all that these substances involve in the very understanding of them as bread and wine: people, and people to eat and drink them. The sign is the meal. The sign is the gathering of people eating and drinking the bread and wine, and the present liturgical reforms aim at making that sign as transparent as possible.

Questions can of course be raised as to just how little of such a sign there has to be in order for it still to constitute the authentic sign. What is meant by 'people'? Does there have to be anybody there at all for the sign to be the sign? And if obviously there has to be (since a sign of this sort is a sign only for people), then how many people? Three or two, or one, and any one at all or some special kind of one? And does everybody have to eat *and* drink, or can people just eat *or* drink, and if so, must anybody at all both eat and drink, and may some people neither eat nor drink? And what is meant by 'bread' and 'wine'? Will apple wine count as such, or not, and how strong does the wine have to be? All these questions can indeed be raised, but it would be a mistake to make the answers to

them the basis of a developed theology of the eucharist; that would be to narrow the sign unduly. That would not let the sign do its work as well as it might.

One of the principal difficulties some people feel with the present change in styles of worship may well be due to their having a theology which is basically casuistical: what if there were only one man? What if only these words and no others were said?—would it still work? So with the emphasis on the minimum requirements for efficacy, the sign lost its own intrinsic value and power. Even if all that happened was that one man said over a piece of bread just the words which the Lord said when he gave bread to his disciples at the last supper, the bread would still become the effective sign of the body of the Lord; and so special attention came to be paid to those particular words, and their real significance in the ongoing sweep of the eucharistic prayer could be lost. Even if there was only a very small piece of wheat flour mixed with water and baked, that would still count as bread; and so eventually people came to regard it as odd or even heretical to want to use what most other people would call bread. Even if only one person actually ate and drank at the meal, that would still count as there having been a meal; and so the others came to think that it did not matter very much whether they ate and drank at the meal or not.

If the sign is to be authentic, however, then it should be the sign not of what as an absolute minimum would count as a meal, but of what would normally count as a meal, a somewhat special meal even, for the people concerned in it. *Ut sumatur institutum*, as the Council of Trent says: it was instituted as a meal. Of that there has never been any doubt whatever in the history of the Church. Trent takes it for granted. There is a lot more to be said about the eucharist than that, but if that is not said and done, and seen and heard to be done and said, then whatever else is said about it runs the risk of being somewhat distorted. It is precisely *ut sumatur*. It is as a meal. To say that is not to deviate from the traditional understanding of the Church. It is not even to develop. It is simply to restate. A form of worship which makes that clear, which enables the meal which is the eucharist to be celebrated authentically and transparently as a meal, is simply a form which submits itself to the scriptures and the whole Catholic tradition and, in putting itself at their service, enables them to speak loud and clear.

There are indeed other things to be said about the eucharist, but these other things are not other aspects alongside the meal aspect. Whatever else anyone wishes to say about the eucharist has to be said in the context of *ut sumatur institutum*. You might wish to say, for example, and if you are a Catholic you cannot deny the statement (which does not mean that you must always be repeating it) that the eucharist is a sacrifice, is indeed the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ our Lord, 'the eucharistic sacrifice of the passover

of Christ'. But the eucharist is not a meal *and* a sacrifice. Rather, it is proper to use the language of sacrifice of that meal which is the eucharist; it is legitimate to say about this meal that it is a sacrifice. But to say that it is a sacrifice is not to inject something more into the meal. And however you define sacrifice, the sacrifice of the mass, it must not be outside the meal, at the risk of offending against the faith.

Again, you might want to say of the eucharist, and if you are a Catholic you cannot reject this way of talking, that it is to be adored, that the elements are to be worshipped with the worship of adoration, *latría*, the worship due to God alone. Yet when you say that, you have also to take care to respect the way in which the sign works, the way in which Christ has chosen to be present and to be adored. He is present with his own *sacramentaliter*, as Trent says, present sacramentally, not *iuxta modum existendi naturalem*, not in his natural way of existing, for in that way he is only in heaven and not here. He is present sacramentally, and in *this* sacramental way, the sacramental way of the eucharist. He is present as the food and drink of believers, as the bread to be broken and the wine poured out. What bread and wine do for our natural lives, that Christ is present to do for our spiritual lives. He is present according to the modes and rhythms of *this* sacrament, and whatever way we find of adoring him (and as Augustine says, not only do we not sin if we adore, but we sin if we do not adore) must be in keeping with the mode and intrinsic rhythm of this sacrament. We are adoring not God in disguise but God in sacramental sign, given as broken bread and poured out wine, given rather than hidden in this way, epiphanized as bread broken in order to be eaten and wine poured out not on the ground but into a cup in order to be drunk. The way most intrinsic to this sacrament of adoring Christ is to give oneself to the movement of the eucharist and to eat and drink the bread thus broken and the wine thus poured out in the fulness of faith that this is indeed the body and the blood of Christ.

Similar considerations apply to anything else one might want to say about the eucharist in accordance with the tradition of the Church Catholic. Whatever else one might want to say, even in the matter of those aspects of the faith which distinguish the Catholic understanding from that of the sixteenth-century Reform, everything has to be said in a way which respects the way in which God in the human will of the historical Jesus has chosen to give himself to us.

One aspect, intrinsic to the sign, which everyone can see is being strongly urged by the present liturgical renewal is that of brotherhood, of community, of that human value of solidarity, being-with rather than being-against, interaction, interdependence, reciprocity, mutuality, *koinonia*, *philadelphia*, which Fergus Kerr wrote about in

his article on the Church earlier in this series.<sup>1</sup> And here the understanding of the Church and the understanding of the eucharist come together. The point of a meal is not feeding your face, which is what the lion does roaring over its prey, but the sharing which is truly human: the bread is broken to be shared and the winecup passed round for all to drink. Eating and drinking *together*. The point of the eucharist, says the classical tradition of the Church again, is the unity of the people of God. What it's for is the unity of the Church (and further to this one has to remember that what the Church is for is the unity of the whole human race). The *res tantum*, the goal of the process, is the unity of the Church. The eucharist is not self-contained, but is for brotherhood, reciprocity, being-for rather than being-against. So the concern for an outward and visible expression of *philadelphia*, love of the brotherhood, at mass is not otiose but at the heart of what the mass is about. To experience *koinonia* and *philadelphia* at mass is to experience the mystery of the Church, the mystery of Christ.

This *koinonia*, this fellowship which is the Church, is not, however, simply an agglomeration. The mass is the action of Christ and the people of God hierarchically assembled; the Lord's supper is the assembly or gathering together of the people of God with a priest presiding (General Instruction on the New Roman Missal). But the priest who is presiding is not to do anything more than it is his job to do, nor anything less; and all the other ministers have to do nothing more and nothing less than it is their job to do. All of them are to serve one another 'with dignity and humility'.

The tridentine missal, starting from a concern for efficacy, for the absolute minimum required, in opposition to the reformers who maintained that more was required than Catholic tradition had demanded, made the private mass of a solitary priest the primary referent of the mass, the typical form of celebration, the paradigm case. For any other kind of mass, up to and including a papal high mass, what was done was to bring in other people to sing certain sections or to perform certain actions, but in the midst of all that the priest or bishop or pope celebrant went on doing everything he would have had to do had there been only a server present: he read the lessons quietly to himself even though someone else was singing them aloud to him and to the rest of the people, and so on.

Now, however, the typical mass—the so-called 'normative' way of doing it—is one in which the first place in the local church is held by the mass at which the diocesan bishop presides surrounded by his concelebrating priests and with the help of deacons, and with all the people fully participating. Everyone present is the celebrant, even though different people have different roles. The president is as it were the conductor of the orchestra which there praises God. He does not play the strings or the woodwinds, but he has an important

<sup>1</sup>Published in *New Blackfriars*, March 1970, pp. 144–154.

job which is his and his alone, at least his as representing the bishop who presides over every lawful eucharist, either personally or by a presbyter deputy. And the president is sinner with the sinners in the penitential part of mass; he is hearer with the hearers in the service of the word; he is communicant with the communicants; and in the eucharistic prayer he and the people engage in a continuous dialogue of prayer and praise. To have this experience of a hierarchically ordered celebration, with everyone doing all that pertains to him and only what pertains to him, with nobody taking over someone else's job, is to have an experience of the mystery of the Church in which there are many and various ministries, all of which are for the building up of the one body of Christ, which is a living sacrifice of praise. So those two NT images of the Church as body of Christ come to visible expression: in its togetherness, the Church as the whole Christ, as Christ; in the over-againstness, the Church as the body of Christ over against Christ as its head. But even the over-againstness is for the unity of the Church. As Augustine says: 'I am a bishop for you and a Christian with you.' And this too is not deviation nor even any real development but a new coming to expression of the one mystery of the Church of Christ.

The second aspect of the new insight which runs through the renewal in all areas of theology, an aspect which is again intrinsic to the sign in the celebration of which God gives us access to himself, is that of eschatology, looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come. Looking forward, which is an element involved in the very notion of meal as human activity. The meal is not finished when it is over but looks beyond itself to other meals, to other meetings, and creates the grounds for further unions. Whenever you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord *until he comes*. It is the death of *the Lord* that is proclaimed, the risen Jesus, the present Jesus, the present Lord of his Church. But his death is proclaimed in prospect and in function of his coming again, of that coming which is the prime analogate of all the comings of Christ and from which all other comings, including the advent and parousia of the Lord in the midst of the eucharistic assembly, take their significance. So it is appropriate that at the very heart of the eucharistic prayer we should sing, 'Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again', or 'Dying you destroyed our death; rising you restored our life; Lord Jesus, come in glory'. The point of the eucharist, the *res tantum*, what it is for, is the unity of the Church which is for the unity of the human race. The eucharist is for the future, towards the future. And so people are finding it less meaningful to linger long over it. They find it more appropriate to eat it in haste, loins girded and with their staffs in their hands as it were. The sort of thanksgiving which is most appropriate (which is not to rule out other sorts—perhaps we still have to discover a way) is, again, the sort that respects the sign value which is the means of

our access to the mystery of Christ, the sign of the meal. We thank the one who invited us and in the strength of the meal we go about our Christian work. The eucharist is for us, for our sakes, just as all the work of Christ which is represented in it is 'for us men and for our salvation'. We should not turn round and make men for the eucharist.

I have been arguing that in the matter of eucharistic theology there has been no deviation from the traditional and scriptural faith of the Church. I have done this by supposing that it is possible to discover a person's theology of the eucharist by looking at the sort of eucharist he wants celebrated, at the texts and rubrics and general remarks which he offers. Insofar as there is any modern theology which can claim to be centrally Catholic, that can only be the theology which underlies the new *Ordo Missae*, the end-product of the Council and its theology. The controversies of a few years ago over the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such terms as trans-finalization and transsignification were valuable in that they recalled attention to the scholastic dictum that *sacramenta sunt in genere signi*, and Trent's *ut sumatur institutum*. It would now be impossible to theologize about the eucharist in forgetfulness of that. But in all this there does not yet seem to have been any radically new insight into the eucharist. What there has been is much more in the way of a restoration, just as the new order of the Roman mass is basically a restoration. For a real development we will have to wait until the renewal of the classical tradition has worked its way into the hearts and minds of the whole Christian people.

## Scripture, Tradition and the Community

by Joseph Rhymer

This is not a time to be digging the old entrenched positions a little deeper and then defending them, so it is worth noting with caution that each of the terms in this title trails with it a long history of old battles and rigid attitudes. In any case, the old certainty about the meanings of the words we use is one of the new uncertainties.

There is even an implicit assumption hidden in the order in which the terms are used traditionally. We take it for granted, perhaps, that tradition is rooted in scripture, and that the community is first formed, and then grows, by a causal combination of these two prior factors. This view holds that the people of the Old Testament