

This series of bulletin articles on the implications of Eucharist as summit – reaching the summit – concluded last week by saying that participation in the life of Christ, a life of sacrifice, is essential for knowing Christ (“becoming Him,” in a certain broad sense), and thus being able to offer Him, which is man’s perfect worship of God, which is what fulfills man’s part of covenant. But the end of last week’s article indicated that just suffering is not enough. If a person suffers because of a crime they committed, for example, but remains prideful and unrepentant, that suffering does not unite them with the Lord. So there is an element missing yet.

Suffering, sacrifice of self, self-denial – none of these have value *in and of themselves* or by themselves. A person can sacrifice themselves for all sorts of reasons which do not lead them to union with our Lord – “career” is a good example. Someone might deny all kinds of personal desires – even good desires – in order to further themselves in some line of work. The key, then, for self-sacrifice to be of true and ultimate value is the... **Intention**, the reason / motivation / purpose of making the sacrifice. Is it for my own immediate, worldly self-interest (self-love) or for the sake of the other (love of the other). The key to making suffering and self-sacrifice a participation in Jesus’ life, thus leading us to know Him, thus uniting us to Him is to do it or bear with it, *for His sake*, out of love for Him. Intention is the link that makes personal sacrifice or suffering unitive and salvific, thus getting the person to Heaven. Notice that this includes suffering that is not chosen and can’t be avoided – the physical suffering that comes with advancing age or illness, for example, or the pain that comes with great loss, maybe the death of a loved one. The person bows their head, so to speak, and says: Lord, I willingly accept this, please accept this suffering (my offering) in reparation for my sins and the sins of the whole world. In doing so, the person imitates our Lord – what He did for us; i.e., they participate in His life and thereby know Him and what He did much better, and thus appreciate (love) Him much more.

We are now faced, however, with one more question. How can a person really, truly form this intention, free of self-interest? There is a part in the Mass called the **Anamnesis**. We could really say that the whole Mass is anamnesis but, formally, the anamnesis occurs right after the prayers of consecration, when the Eucharistic Prayer *recalls* the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord. This is the meaning of Anamnesis: **Remembering**. What is meant by remembering here, though, is not just recalling some information, like remembering someone’s name or phone number. It is a remembering that absorbs me in such a way that I’m thinking only of that person or event, I can picture the event &/or person in my mind, I can almost hear the sounds and smell the smells associated with it.

How does this anamnesis (remembering) bring about a pure intention? Well, suppose for example I knew someone who was humble, quiet, unassuming, and self-sacrificing – a person who sought (and received) no glory in this world and this life, and who lived a relatively poor life in the material sense. Maybe (in fact, in all likelihood) they were often scoffed at, mocked, ridiculed, and even stepped on by others. Suppose it’s a parent who has died and I start thinking a lot about their life. I *remember* them fondly, I see the value in their life, I see the sacrifices they made especially the ones they made for me and the rest of the family. Their sacrifice (acts of love) moves my heart, it inspires me, I want to honor them and I want to be like them. Now maybe I am tempted to act in this or that way, in some ambitious way, maybe, or in a way that will promote me in the eyes of others, or in some way gain me security in this life but it is not fitting. Then I...*remember* their life and I say no. I accept the consequences *because* of them, because it was their way of life; I do it to honor them; it is an act of love of the one who has gone before me; my sacrifice becomes an act of participation in their life and I come to know how it was for them. I now know them better through this participation in their life, which strengthens my love, my *identification*, with them. I become like a rock, immovable from the good position that I have taken, I become like the other person, to the extent that it is no longer I who live but (in the case of our Lord) Christ who lives in me. Genuine love cannot be overcome and this anamnesis is needed to build it. Parents: as one side note, notice how important it is for your kids to see this poverty of spirit. You might think your kids don’t listen, but look at your own selves and the effect your parents had on you; they probably also thought you never listened! Parents, if they truly parent, have a much bigger influence on their kids than they realize. They need you to think about these things, integrate them into yourselves, and then live them out. We

can perhaps also see now why our Lord has so often exhorted meditation on His Passion to the mystics of the Church and maybe also why the Church holds up for us the Stations of the Cross as one of its premier devotions. This remembering is a necessary part to fulfilling covenant.

We come now to the final step, the summit, the Holy Eucharist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The person has come to know our Lord, really know Him, through participation in His life, by making a sacrifice of their own life for His sake; they have made a gift of themselves to our Lord. Now if you get somebody a gift, one of the things you really want to do is present it to them. Our Lord has created a concrete, tangible way to do exactly that – it is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In Mass, our Lord makes His own sacrifice (His Passion) immediately present to us. It is as if we are standing there at the foot of the Cross with Mary, Mary Magdalene, and John. Why? It is to make an exchange of gifts – an exchange of selves, an exchange of sacrifices (love) – possible in a direct way. In Mass, our Lord comes and says: “Here I am at Calvary on the Cross, offering perfect (complete, total) sacrifice (worship) to the Father. If you want, you can come up here and be with me and do it with me. You can unite your little sacrifice with mine. This will bind you to me and then I myself will take you to the Father.” When we do that, we have united our sacrifice with the sacrifice of Christ and it becomes salvific. Union with God is at hand, covenant is fulfilled; mutual love, which is binding (unitive), is completed. At Mass you are present at the Crucifixion. What is your mindset? So many approach with indifference, having little to no thought of offering themselves to the Lord, simply coming empty-handed. There is no summit. Don’t waste your life in this way, risking eternal misery. Make a climb to the top.

This concludes this little exploration of the Holy Eucharist as summit. Perhaps it would be helpful to re-present the little **summary** at this point:

What God wants to do: relation with man	Covenant=the nature of that relation
Worship=my part of covenant	Infinite debt prevents relation God Himself will make restitution
Jesus offers perfect worship of the Father	How do I offer perfect worship? By Offering Christ
Offering Christ means Knowing Him	Know Him through Participation in His life (sacrifice of self)
Must do it with the right Intention (do it for Him)	Anamnesis (Remembering) needed to forge pure intention
I become like Him, then	I can offer Him by offering myself Mass/Eucharist = exchange of gifts of self
Covenant (<i>mutual love</i>) fulfilled	

In the space left, perhaps we can touch on one other dimension of the Holy Eucharist, namely Eucharist as mystery. Mystery, in the context of the faith, does not mean some black box where you cannot see or know anything. We can know what God has revealed about a given mystery of the faith. What mystery does mean is that while we can know something about it, we cannot *fully* grasp or comprehend it; we can always go deeper in understanding and appreciation. This applied even to our Holy Mother who knew the mysteries of the faith better than anyone ever had, has, or will.

What I really want to come to, though, is that the word mystery originates from a word meaning: to shut the mouth. How fitting this is for the things that God has revealed to man. One shuts their mouth not out of complete ignorance but rather out of awe. Imagine fighting and clawing your way through some thick jungle. The thicket is so dense you have to cut a path, claw through, and go uphill the whole way. But then all of a sudden you come to a clearing and in front of you is some unbelievable, magnificent, long-lost city – so peaceful and tranquil and with the most brilliant sights you’ve ever seen. All you can do is drop to your knees and stare in utter amazement, taking in as much as you can. This is the way we are to penetrate to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and when arriving at some little light, some little clarity of mind, all we can do is drop to our knees and say: My Lord and My God. This is contemplation of the mysteries of the faith. This is the meaning of the Eucharist as mystery. The Lord is pleased to grant everyone this, but it only goes to those who seek Him.

God bless you, Fr Kuhn.