



Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

In This Issue:

- This issue of *Word on Worship* concludes our focus on the Year of the Eucharist. The cover article is a reprint of the homily given by Pope Benedict XVI on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, May 29, 2005, in Bari, Italy. The Holy Father was visiting Bari on the occasion of the closing of the 24th Italian National Eucharistic Congress.

The scripture texts are:
Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a,
Psalm 147, 1 Corinthians
10:16-17, John 6:51-58

- Sunday Eucharist as the Heart of the Lord's Day
- Doing It Right: Who Can Minister Communion?

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"Glorify the Lord, Jerusalem; Zion, praise your God. (Responsorial Psalm)

The invitation of the Psalmist that is also echoed in the Sequence expresses very clearly the meaning of this Eucharistic Celebration: we are gathered here to praise and bless the Lord. This is what urged the Italian Church to gather here in Bari on the occasion of the National Eucharistic Congress.

I also wanted to join all of you today to give special emphasis to the celebration of the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, thus in the sacrament of his love and at the same time to strengthen the bonds of communion that bind me to the Church in Italy and to her pastors. My venerable and beloved Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, would also have liked to have been here at this important ecclesial event, as you know. We all feel that he is close to us and with us is glorifying Christ, the Good Shepherd, whom he can now contemplate directly.

The intention of this Eucharistic Congress, which ends today, was once again to present Sunday as the "weekly Easter," an expression of the identity of the Christian community and the centre of its life and mission.

The chosen theme - "*Without Sunday we cannot live*" - takes us back to the year 304, when the Emperor Diocletian forbade Christians, on pain of death, from possessing the Scriptures, from gathering on Sundays to celebrate the Eucharist and from building places in which to hold their assemblies.

In Abitene, a small village in present-day Tunisia, 49 Christians were taken by surprise one Sunday while they were celebrating the Eucharist, gathered in the house of Octavius Felix, thereby defying the imperial prohibitions. They were arrested and taken to Carthage to be interrogated by the Proconsul Anulinus.

Significant among other things is the answer a certain Emeritus gave to the Proconsul who asked him why on earth they had disobeyed the Emperor's severe orders. He replied: "*Sine dominico non possumus*": that is, we cannot live without joining together on Sunday to celebrate the Eucharist. We would lack the strength to face our daily problems and not to succumb.

After atrocious tortures, these 49 martyrs of Abitene were

killed. Thus, they confirmed their faith with bloodshed. They died, but they were victorious: today we remember them in the glory of the Risen Christ.

The experience of the martyrs of Abitene is also one on which we 21st-century Christians should reflect. It is not easy for us either to live as Christians, even if we are spared such prohibitions from the emperor. From a spiritual point of view, the world in which we find ourselves, often marked by unbridled consumerism, religious indifference and a secularism closed to transcendence, can appear a desert just as "*vast and terrible*" (Dt 8: 15) as the one we heard about in the first reading from the Book of Deuteronomy. God came to the aid of the Jewish people in difficulty in this desert with his gift of manna, to make them understand that "*not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord.*" (Dt 8: 3)

In today's Gospel, Jesus has explained to us, through the gift of manna, for what bread God wanted to prepare the people of the New Covenant. Alluding to the Eucharist he said: "*This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and died nonetheless, the man who feeds on this bread shall live forever.*" (Jn 6: 58)

In taking flesh, the Son of God could become Bread and thus

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

SOLEMNITY OF THE

BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST



**We need
a God
who is
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hands
and who
loves us.**

be the nourishment of his people, of us, journeying on in this world towards the promised land of Heaven.

We need this Bread to face the fatigue and weariness of our journey. Sunday, the Lord's Day, is a favorable opportunity to draw strength from him, the Lord of life.

The Sunday precept is not, therefore, an externally imposed duty, a burden on our shoulders. On the contrary, taking part in the celebration, being nourished by the Eucharistic Bread and experiencing the communion of their brothers and sisters in Christ is a need for Christians, it is a joy; Christians can thus replenish the energy they need to continue on the journey we must make every week.

Moreover, this is not an arbitrary journey: the path God points out to us through his Word goes in the direction inscribed in man's very existence. The Word of God and reason go together. For the human being, following the Word of God, going with Christ means fulfilling oneself; losing it is equivalent to losing oneself.

The Lord does not leave us alone on this journey. He is with us; indeed, he wishes to share our destiny to the point of identifying with us.

In the Gospel discourse that we have just heard he says, "*He who feeds on my flesh*

and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him." (Jn 6: 56) How is it possible not to rejoice in such a promise?

However, we have heard that at his first announcement, instead of rejoicing, the people started to murmur in protest: "*How can he give us his flesh to eat?*" (Jn 6: 52) To tell the truth, that attitude has frequently been repeated in the course of history. One might say that basically people do not want to have God so close, to be so easily within reach or to share so deeply in the events of their daily life.

Rather, people want him to be great and, in brief, we also often want him to be a little distant from us. Questions are then raised that are intended to show that, after all, such closeness would be impossible.

But the words that Christ spoke on that occasion have lost none of their clarity: "*Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.*" (Jn 6: 53) Truly, we need a God who is close to us. In the face of the murmur of protest, Jesus might have fallen back on reassuring words: "Friends", he could have said, "do not worry! I spoke of flesh but it is only a symbol. What I mean is only a deep communion of sentiments."

But no, Jesus did not have recourse to such soothing

words. He stuck to his assertion, to all his realism, even when he saw many of his disciples breaking away. (cf. Jn 6: 66) Indeed, he showed his readiness to accept even desertion by his apostles, while not in any way changing the substance of his discourse: "*Do you want to leave me too?*" (Jn 6: 67), he asked. Thanks be to God, Peter's response was one that even we can make our own today with full awareness: "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*" (Jn 6: 68) We need a God who is close, a God who puts himself in our hands and who loves us.

Christ is truly present among us in the Eucharist. His presence is not static. It is a dynamic presence that grasps us, to make us his own, to make us assimilate him. Christ draws us to him, he makes us come out of ourselves to make us all one with him. In this way he also integrates us in the communities of brothers and sisters, and communion with the Lord is always also communion with our brothers and sisters. And we see the beauty of this communion that the Blessed Eucharist gives us.

We are touching on a further dimension of the Eucharist that I would like to point out before concluding.

The Christ whom we meet in the Sacrament is the same here in Bari as he is in Rome, here in Europe, as in America,

Africa, Asia and Oceania. He is the one same Christ who is present in the Eucharistic Bread of every place on earth. This means that we can encounter him only together with all others. We can only receive him in unity.

Is not this what the Apostle Paul said in the reading we have just heard? In writing to the Corinthians he said: "*Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*" (1Cor 10: 17)

The consequence is clear: we cannot communicate with the Lord if we do not communicate with one another. If we want to present ourselves to him, we must also take a step towards meeting one another.

To do this we must learn the great lesson of forgiveness: we must not let the gnawings of resentment work in our soul, but must open our hearts to the magnanimity of listening to others, open our hearts to understanding them, eventually to accepting their apologies, to generously offering our own.

The Eucharist, let us repeat, is the sacrament of unity. Unfortunately, however, Christians are divided, precisely in the sacrament of unity. Sustained by the Eucharist, we must feel all the more roused to striving with all our strength for that full unity which Christ ardently desired in the Upper Room.

Precisely here in Bari, fortunate Bari, a city that preserves the bones of St. Nicholas, a land of encounter and dialogue with our Christian brethren of the East, I would like to reaffirm my desire to assume as a

fundamental commitment working with all my might for the re-establishment of the full and visible unity of all Christ's followers.

I am aware that expressions of good will do not suffice for this. We need concrete acts that penetrate souls and shake consciences, prompting each one to that inner conversion that is the necessary condition for any progress on the path of ecumenism.¹

I ask you all to set out with determination on the path of that spiritual ecumenism which, through prayer, opens the doors to the Holy Spirit, who alone can create unity.

Dear friends who have come to Bari from various parts of Italy to celebrate this Eucharistic Congress, we must rediscover the joy of Christian Sundays. We must proudly rediscover the privilege of sharing in the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of the renewed world.

Christ's resurrection happened on the first day of the week, which in the Scriptures is the day of the world's creation. For this very reason Sunday was considered by the early Christian community as the day on which the new world began, the one on which, with Christ's victory over death, the new creation began.

As they gathered round the Eucharistic table, the community was taking shape as a new people of God. St. Ignatius of Antioch described Christians as "having attained new hope" and presented them as people "who lived in accordance with Sunday" ("*iuxta dominicam viventes*"). In this perspective, the Bishop of Antioch wondered: "How will we be able to live without him, the One whom the

prophets so long awaited?" (*Ep. ad Magnesios*, 9, 1-2)

"How will we be able to live without him?" In these words of St. Ignatius we hear echoing the affirmation of the martyrs of Abitene: "*Sine dominico non possumus.*"

It is this that gives rise to our prayer: that we too, Christians of today, will rediscover an awareness of the crucial importance of the Sunday celebration and will know how to draw from participation in the Eucharist the necessary dynamism for a new commitment to proclaiming to the world Christ "*our peace.*" (Eph 2: 14) Amen!

Pope Benedict XVI

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¹ cf. *Message to the Universal Church*, Sistine Chapel, 20 April 2005; *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 27 April, p. 3.

SUNDAY EUCHARIST AS THE HEART OF THE LORD'S DAY

DIES DOMINI REVISITED

The purpose of this article is to examine the intrinsic relationship between the celebration of Sunday Eucharist and the theology of Sunday itself as the Lord's Day. Recourse throughout will be made to Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini* published on Pentecost Sunday, 1998, rich as it is in explicating what this day is and implies from the Church's biblical, liturgical and theological tradition.

This letter is divided into five chapters:

Chapter One entitled *Dies Domini* deals with the "Celebration of the Creator's work."

Chapter Two entitled *Dies Christi* deals with the "Day of the Risen Lord and the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Chapter Three entitled *Dies Ecclesiae* deals with the "Eucharistic Assembly: Heart of Sunday."

Chapter Four entitled *Dies Hominis* deals with "Sunday: Day of Joy, Rest and Solidarity."

Chapter Five entitled *Dies Dierum* deals with "Sunday: the Primordial Feast, Revealing the Meaning of Time."

The particular focus in this article will be chapter three,

Dies Ecclesiae. (But as will become apparent, a number of themes touched on in this chapter are more fully developed in other parts of the letter.) In effect, if Sunday Eucharist is the heart of the Lord's Day, chapter four of *Dies Domini* on *Dies Ecclesiae* is the heart of this letter. As is asserted in the prefaces for "Sundays in Ordinary Time X" in the Italian Sacramentary, *Messale di ogni giorno*, Sunday is a special feast day when God assembles the Church as his family to hear the word and share communion from the one broken bread in order to make memory of the Lord's resurrection until that eternal Lord's day when the whole human family will enter into eternal repose.²

Reference will also be made to other contemporary Church documents and canon law, for two principal reasons. The first is to explore how what these documents say about Sunday Eucharist being the heart of the Lord's Day can help to uncover the uniqueness of Sunday Eucharist. The second is to glean what contemporary cultural and ecclesial phenomena are addressed by these documents and the way they are dealt with. In effect the method to be employed here reflects that of *Dies Domini* (and other contemporary Church documents) in drawing on the Church's traditional sources of

teaching and legislation as these help to address particular contemporary practices that require theological insight and catechesis.

COMMUNIO

While it is certainly true that "in itself, the Sunday Eucharist is no different from the Eucharist celebrated on other days" (*Dies Domini*, 34) John Paul II repeatedly refers to classical biblical and liturgical sources to emphasize significant aspects of the theology of Sunday Eucharist per se. Christians "re-live with particular intensity the experience of the Apostles on the evening of Easter when the Risen Lord appeared to them when they were gathered together (Jn.20:19)" and the gift of his peace noted especially a week later (on Sunday) when he said "peace be with you." He notes that the event when the disciples on the road to Emmaus eventually recognized the Risen Lord (Lk. 24:13-35) occurred on Sunday. He applies these insights to the ecclesiology of Sunday Eucharist when he states that, "by its very nature the Eucharist is most powerfully expressed when the diocesan community gathers in prayer with its Pastor." (*Dies Domini*, 34)

In his recent encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church) John Paul II summarizes a

central insight from *Dies Domini* when he asserts that, "The Eucharist's particular effectiveness in promoting communion is one of the reasons for the importance of Sunday Mass. I have already dwelt on this and on the other reasons which make Sunday Mass fundamental for the life of the Church and of individual believers in my Apostolic Letter on the sanctification of Sunday *Dies Domini*. There I recalled that the faithful have the obligation to attend Mass, unless they are seriously impeded, and that Pastors have the corresponding duty to see that it is practical and possible for all to fulfill this precept. More recently, in my Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, in setting forth the pastoral path which the Church must take at the beginning of the third millennium, I drew particular attention to the Sunday Eucharist, emphasizing its effectiveness for building communion. 'It is...the privileged place where communion is ceaselessly proclaimed and nurtured. Precisely through sharing in the Eucharist, *the Lord's Day* also becomes *the Day of the Church*, when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity'." (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 41)

These assertions are at the heart of John Paul II's theology of the Eucharist. The very title of the encyclical "On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church" speaks to this, as does the title for the Eleventh Synod on the Eucharist: "The Eucharist: Summit and Source of the Mission of the Church" (Oct. 29, 2005). *Dies Domini* goes into great depth when it discusses this, specifically by emphasizing "the Eucharistic assembly" (*Dies Domini*, 32-33) at "Sunday Eucharist" (*Dies*

Domini, 34) on the "day of the Church" (*Dies Domini*, 35-36) whose assembly is always "a pilgrim people." (*Dies Domini*, 37) His repeated use of St. Cyprian's phrase that the Church is the *sacramentum unitatis* "the sacrament of unity" summarizes this key insight. At the same time he uses it to explain (*Dies Domini*, 36) that "the Church [is] a people gathered 'by' and 'in' the unity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Theologically what is underscored is that the Church is not a gathering of its own making; it is an assembly drawn together by God, to worship God, to grow in holiness and grace and to be sent forth to witness in the world to what has been celebrated. The petition in the third Eucharistic prayer *votes huius familiae, quam tibi astare voluisti* (hear the prayers of the family you have gathered here before you³) is a most helpful reminder of this foundation for all liturgy.

The discussion of the "diocesan community" (*Dies Domini*, 34) as "the paradigm for other Eucharistic celebrations" underscores how every Eucharist celebrated anywhere in a diocese is always related to the whole diocese and the Church universal. The caution about not encouraging "small group masses" on Sunday (*Dies Domini*, 36) is yet another way of expressing the value of appreciating Sunday Eucharist as celebrated by, with and for the whole local assembly. In effect Sunday Eucharist is both similar to the Eucharist celebrated on other days, but it should be appreciated as a unique and qualitatively distinct kind of celebration.

REST, RECREATION, LEISURE

It is not surprising that in *Dies Domini* Pope John Paul II would write compellingly of the anthropological and social context for Sunday Eucharist by emphasizing (*Dies Domini*, 4) how Sunday, "The Day of Humanity," should be a day of leisure and rest. (*Dies Domini*, 55-67) His seminal insights on human labor and work in his encyclical *Laborem exercens* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis* should serve as background for appreciating the concern he has for those whose work is oppressive, especially the exploitation of those in (even) "economically more developed societies..." (*Dies Domini*, 66)

He notes that prior to the fourth century, Sunday was a day for worship and that only after the civil law of the Roman Empire changed could Sunday become a day of leisure as well. (*Dies Domini*, 64) Making a clear distinction between Sabbath proscriptions and a theology of Sunday as the Lord's Day has been a legitimate concern of several contemporary authors.⁴ At the same time placing an over emphasis on worship on Sunday to the neglect of encouraging rest, leisure and contemplation on the *magnalia Dei* (see *Dies Domini*, 67) can lead to a diminishment of the "re-creative" and "re-creating" nature of this day. In addition to John Paul II's profound anthropological insights one can also detect his passion for Jewish – Catholic dialogue and relations which can form a basis for a reappropriation of the value of and customs related to making the Sabbath a day of rest. This is certainly important in some industrialized countries where Sunday has become a day of commerce alongside the other days of the week. It is also poignantly reflected in the way

such cultures (dare to) presume that one can now work for inordinate amounts of time by means of the internet and computer access.

Among the cultural presumptions in the way time is structured (especially in more industrialized societies) is the phenomenon of the "week-end" as opposed to Sunday as the pivotal day for non-work related activities. Another cultural factor that can add to the diminishment of appreciating Sunday as the Church's central feast day is the way some contemporary cultures have changed the way they commemorate civil events, anniversaries or holidays. Certainly the shift from a determined day to commemorate civic holidays on a Monday in order to extend the weekend is a case in point. (E.g. in the United States Columbus Day was October 12th, now it is the second Monday in October. Similarly the anniversary of the births of presidents Abraham Lincoln on Feb. 12th and George Washington on Feb 22nd are now combined and celebrated on the third Monday in February.) Such culture changes can easily mitigate the notion of stability and repetition upon which both cultural and religious observances are based.

John Paul II's use of insights from Abraham Heschel's *The Sabbath, Its Meaning for Modern Man* is helpful in this regard. In addition to the reference to Heschel that John Paul II makes,⁵ we can also point a particular summary assertion in this same section of Heschel's book when he states that "the meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become

attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world."⁶

In a very real sense the celebration of Eucharist on Sunday should be coupled with an appreciation of Sunday as reflecting a qualitatively different notion of time. For Christians, Sunday, especially through the celebration of Sunday Eucharist, should be the day that puts the other days of the week into proper perspective, theologically, anthropologically and spiritually.

SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST

While the Holy Father repeatedly insists on the central value of celebrating and participating fully in the Sunday Eucharist (*Dies Domini*, 51) at the same time it is simply the case that in many areas in the Church (both in history and today) there are places where the lack of priests make it impossible for the faithful to participate in Sunday Mass. This has led to the contemporary phenomenon called *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*. It is to be noted that in the revising of the code of Canon Law the second part of canon 1248 was added relatively late in the process of editing and finalizing the Code, recommending that in the absence of a sacred minister (*si deficiente ministro sacro...*) the faithful take part in a liturgy of the word celebrated in the parish church, or that families or groups of families come together for appropriate prayer. What is not stated in the Code, but which is stated in *Christi Ecclesia* (published

in 1988), the *Directory for Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest* (20) is that "among the forms of celebration found in liturgical tradition when Mass is not possible, a celebration of the word of God is particularly recommended, and also its completion, when possible, by Eucharistic communion."

Clearly both the Code and the *Directory* want to uphold the Church's presumed association of Sunday with the celebration of the Eucharist. That this is not always possible is reiterated in other contemporary documents. For example in *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* John Paul II addresses this same issue at greater length with some passion when he states "how distressing and irregular is the situation of a Christian community...that does not have a priest to lead it." (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 32) He then specifies that the Eucharist "requires the presence of a presbyter who alone is qualified to offer the Eucharist *in persona Christi*. When a community lacks a priest, attempts are rightly made somehow to remedy the situation so that it can continue its Sunday celebrations..." But then he speaks about the "sacramental incompleteness of these celebrations." While adjustments to these situations need to be made, John Paul II is clear to emphasize how the celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of Sunday and that a liturgy of the word, even with the reception of communion, is sacramentally "incomplete." Nowhere does it state that the celebration of the Eucharist on a weekday can substitute for the celebration of Eucharist on Sunday.

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FEAST DAYS ON SUNDAY

Canons 1246-1248 in the 1983 Code of Canon Law deal with "Feast Days." These canons assert that the chief of feasts is Sunday and that Eucharist is central to the theology of this day. The canons underscore the liturgical priority which Sunday should receive and state clearly the obligation to participate in the Eucharist on Sunday. From a liturgical and theological perspective it is notable that canon 1247 uses *Missam participandi* ("are bound to participate in the Mass") as opposed to the phrasing of the 1917 Code "to hear Holy Mass." This obligation is reiterated in *Dies Domini* (47, 82) and cited as "grave." Comments on the kind of liturgical participation to be presumed by the faithful is spelled out carefully and fully in *Dies Domini*, 51.⁷

This entire section of *Dies Domini* (46-51) offers a helpful summary of important theological insights about the meaning of Sunday Eucharist and the privilege of participating in it.

What is of particular interest regarding contemporary phenomena associated with holy days is the way canon 1246 deals with the possibility of abolishing the obligation of participating at Mass on these days or transferring them to a Sunday. Among the matters at issue here is the concern of how to respect the theology of Sunday as articulated in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 106, *Dies Domini* and other such documents which assert how Sunday is the day when the Church celebrates the paschal mystery through its participation in the Eucharist while then determining

whether a "feast day" should be celebrated on a Sunday. For example the transfer of the Epiphany from January 6th can mitigate the length of the season from Christmas through Epiphany and the Eucharist on "Epiphany Sunday" could tend to be less explicitly paschal because of the use of the readings and prayers proper to Epiphany. On the other hand the transfer of the Ascension to a Sunday (while admittedly jarring in terms of the "forty days" after Easter chronology from Acts 1:3) could be less awkward theologically simply because of the intrinsic relationship within the paschal mystery of resurrection, ascension and second coming. Interestingly, one of the particular features of the Roman Canon has been the way the ascension has been explicitly cited *sed et in caelos gloriosae ascensionis* ("and his ascension into glory"⁸).

FROM 'MISSA' TO 'MISSIO'

What is found in a number of John Paul II's other writings is explicitly found in *Dies Domini* (especially 45) where he asserts that the Eucharist returns us to daily life to evangelize and bear witness in our daily lives to what the Eucharist means and implies. He draws on the structure of the liturgy of the Eucharist and insists that the final blessing and dismissal need to be better valued and appreciated. He refers to how the disciples at Emmaus returned to share their meeting with others (Lk. 24:30-32) and that as a consequence of participating in the Eucharistic sacrifice one necessarily has to make their whole life "a spiritual sacrifice pleasing to God." (Rom. 12:1) This important complement to Eucharistic participation could also be an appropriate critique to those cultures where the presumption about spirituality

is the self and where a consumerist mentality about the Mass can make this unique communal experience of salvation something that seems to be of benefit for individuals only. Communal self-transcendence is the logical expression and consequence of celebrating the Sunday Eucharist.

Particular practices are noted in *Dies Domini*, 69: works of charity, of mercy and apostolic outreach. He cites the Pauline challenge that the Sunday gathering should also be a moment of fraternal sharing with the very poor. (1 Cor. 16:2) He calls for a "culture of sharing"⁹ to be lived not only among the members of the community itself but also in society as a whole. Here he refers to Justin's *First Apology*, 67, which same chapter refers to the gathering for Eucharist on Sunday.

This challenge is made even more intense when John Paul II quotes St. John Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew* (*Dies Domini*, 71) "do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked." "He who said 'This is my body' is the same One who said 'You saw me hungry and you gave me no food...'" Eucharistic participation on Sunday must necessarily become "practical solidarity" "through the generous gifts from the rich to the very poor." It is most notable that in an apostolic letter that offers a rich theology of what it means to assemble on the Lord's Day (especially in *Dies Ecclesiae*, Chapter Three) would also be the letter which offers such important challenges about what the Eucharist implies in terms of moving "from Mass to mission." (*Dies Domini*, 45)

CONCLUSION

During the fourth century persecution of Diocletian during the celebration of the Eucharist on a Sunday, some Christians in Abythinia were rounded up and taken before civil magistrates. These forty nine Christians proudly went to their death rather than to renounce the faith or to diminish in any way their commitment to the Eucharist. They asserted that "we are unable to live without the celebration of [the Eucharist on] the Lord's day."¹⁰ This traditional assertion has characterized how the Church in every age has appreciated Sunday Eucharist. This is part of the background to the words in the prayer to bless water at the beginning of Sunday Mass in the present Order of Mass:

*quaesumus, hanc aquam
benedicere,
qua volumus hac die tua,
Domine, communiri*

we ask you now
to bless this water,
and to give us your
protection on this day
which you have made your
own.¹¹

Among the purposes which the reflections in *Dies Domini* can serve is to help the Church in our age make this "day of days" our own in terms of celebrating the Eucharist and living what this Sunday celebration in its uniqueness implies.

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¹ *Dies Domini*, AAS 90 (1998) 731-746.

² *Mesale di ogni giorno*. (Milano: Ancora, 1984) 654: *Padre santo, sorgente della verita e della vita, Perche in questo giorno di festa ci hai convocato nella tua casa. Oggi la tua famiglia, riunita nell'ascolto della parola E nella comunione dell'unico pane spezzato, Fa memoria del Signore risorto nell'atesa Della Domenica senza tramonto, Quando l'umanita intera entrera nel tuo riposo.*

³ English translation prepared by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, *Sacramentary for Mass* (New York, 1985) 554.

⁴ Among others see, W. Rordorf, *Der Sonntag. Geschichte des Ruhe-und Gottesdiensttages im altesten Christentum* (Zurich, 1962).

⁵ See *Dies Domini* n. 16, fn. 13 where he cites A.J.Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1951 orig., 26th printing, 1998) 3-24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷ The references in the footnotes 93-94 accompanying n. 51 are particularly instructive, especially to *Lumen Gentium* nn. 10-11.

⁸ *Sacramentary for Mass*, 546.

⁹ Italics in the original text.

¹⁰ See, among others, Matias Auge, *La Domenica. Festa primordiale dei cristiani*. (Milano, 1995) 6.

¹¹ *Sacramentary for Mass*, 358

DOING IT RITE

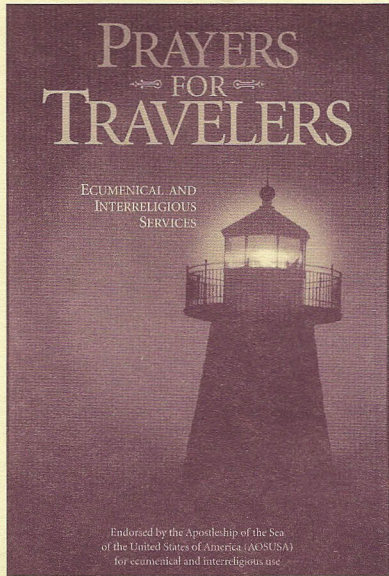
WHO CAN MINISTER COMMUNION?

A question frequently posed to the Worship Office is: "What is the age requirement for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion?" Following is the policy in the Archdiocese of Newark for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be a practicing Catholic.
- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church, that is, they must have received all of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion)
- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be aware of the sacredness of the Body and Blood of Christ, particularly as found in the Eucharistic elements of Holy Communion.
- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must have proper training for distributing the Body and Blood of Christ in the particular parish or worshiping community for which the mandate is given.
- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be eighteen (18) years of age or older to serve in this ministry.
- An Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must be mandated by the Archbishop of Newark. This mandate only applies to the worshiping community in which the minister serves. If a minister wishes to serve at another worshiping community, even within the Archdiocese of Newark, he or she must receive an extension of their mandate to do so.

The only exception to the age requirement for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion is as follows:

- A senior in a Catholic High School who is seventeen (17) years of age and who will turn eighteen (18) years old during the academic school year may be mandated as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
- This mandate applies only to Eucharistic liturgies celebrated at the school and not to the parish where the student resides.
- Upon turning eighteen, the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion may receive an extension to serve in his or her local parish at the request of the minister's pastor.



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