

Introduction to the Theology of the Catholic Mass

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Session Three Outline

I. Review of Session Two

- A. The Reverberating Ideas
- B. Essence & Purpose of Liturgy
- C. Repentance to Revelation (Confessing Revelation) to Reception
- D. Any Lingering Questions?

II. The First Conference (15-Minutes)

- A. Term 'Transubstantiation'
- B. Comparing the Jewish Seder Ritual to the Eucharistic Prayers

▪ BREAK & DISCUSSION

III. The Second Conference (20-Minutes)

- A. Transition to a Minuet
- B. (the theology of the body in the offering rite) – the Sursum Corda (Preface Dialogue)

▪ BREAK & DISCUSSION

IV. The Third Conference (15-Minutes)

- A. The Theology of the Pater Noster (The Our Father Prayer)

▪ BREAK & DISCUSSION

V. The Fourth Conference (15-Minutes)

- A. The History and Theology of the Sign of Peace/Kiss of Peace
- B. The History and Theology of How Communion is Received

▪ Preview of Next Class

Review of Session Two

- The Primordial Questions and Two New Terms
- Liturgy as a Divine Symphony
- The Principle Purpose of the Liturgy is to Bless Us by Making us Blessing for Others / Law & Blessing
- Method of Liturgy is Pedagogical
- Placement – from food to food (teflin) in this sentence
- The Purpose of Revelation – from repentance to revelation to confession

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Transubstantiation

- **Carolingian Liturgical Reforms**
- One of earliest uses of the term by Hildebert de Lavardin, Archbishop of Tours in 1079
- Most prominent heretic was Berengarius of Tours; several others denied that the Bread became/converted into the very body which was born of Mary and crucified (but that Christ was truly present spiritually) .
- Berengarius signed various professions of faith at a number of non-Ecumenical Councils in the 11th century, but later would rail against the profession; seemingly a game to avoid the death penalty, reserved for heretics like him. Signed a final profession of faith at Council of Bordeaux in 1080 and then retired in solitude on the island of St. Cosme where he died in union with the Church.
- 1215 – Fourth Lateran Council's Profession of Faith, "There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been transubstantiated, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us."

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Saint Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Part III (1485)

FOURTH ARTICLE [III, Q. 75, Art. 4]

Whether Bread Can Be Converted into the Body of Christ?

“And this is done by Divine power in this sacrament; for the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ’s body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance of Christ’s blood. Hence this is not a formal, but a substantial conversion; nor is it a kind of natural movement: but, with a name of its own, **it can be called “transubstantiation.”**”

EIGHTH ARTICLE [III, Q. 75, Art. 8]

Whether This Proposition Is False: “The Body of Christ Is Made Out of Bread”?

But because in creation one of the extremes does not pass into the other, **we cannot use the word “conversion”** in creation, so as to say that “non-being is converted into being”: we can, however, use the word in this sacrament, just as in natural transmutation. But since in this sacrament the whole substance is converted into the whole substance, on that account this conversion is properly termed transubstantiation.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

- Transubstantiation (pronounced as a dogma)
 - 13th Session of the Council of Trent – October 1551
 - CHAPTER IV
TRANSUBSTANTIATION

“But since Christ our Redeemer declared that to be truly His own body which He offered under the form of bread,[20] it has, therefore, always been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy council now declares it anew, that by the consecration of the bread and wine a change is brought about of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood.[21] This change the holy Catholic Church properly and appropriately calls transubstantiation.”

20 Luke 22: 19; John 6:48 ff.; 1 Cor. 11: 24.

21 Cf. c. 55, D. II de cons.; <infra>, can. 3.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Summary

- Transubstantiation is the scholastic term used to designate the unique change in the Holy Eucharistic bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus. Transubstantiation indicates that through/after the consecration/confection of the bread and the wine by the Priest at Mass, a change occurs in which the entire substance of the bread becomes the substance of the Body of Christ and the entire substance of the wine becomes the Blood of Christ - even though the appearance or 'species' of bread and wine remain (Cf. CCC 1376). In other words, the substance (the essence; gist; matter) of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the Christ. What is not changed is that which is not a part of the substance; that is, the color, shape, appearance, smell, taste, and etcetera. Through consecration (Christ Jesus working through His Priest), the substance is transferred but not exchanged, meaning the bread and wine truly becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and what was formerly the substance of the bread and wine is no more. Transubstantiation is a miracle, brought about by the loving and creative power of the Divine Word.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– The Fulfillment of the Seder Ritual

- The First Criteria

- Did it take place on the Fourteenth Day of Nisan

- The orthodox Jewish response is that if the Seder did not take place on the prescribed day reserved for it, then it was not valid. Fortunately, the Gospel of Mark clearly states that “On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, “Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– The Fulfillment of the Seder Ritual

▪ The Second Criteria

– Did the celebration take place in Jerusalem

- Continuing in the Marcan account, "He sent two of His disciples and said to them, *"Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there."* The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover." There is every indication in sacred Scripture that the 'city' being referred to here is the city of Jerusalem.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– The Fulfillment of the Seder Ritual

▪ The Third Criteria (prayer and first cup)

- According to Jewish tradition, there are four cups of wine that are poured and drunk during Seder with the first cup being mixed (wine cut with water) during the Kiddush, in which various traditional prayers and sanctifying events take place.
- The Synoptic Gospels do not tell us whether any elements of the Kiddush had taken place, but because the Gospels do not indicate that any prayers were offered before they began eating, it would not be unreasonable for us to believe that these thirteen Jewish men did offer some form of thanksgiving praise to God before they ate. That is, the absence of the Kiddush in Scripture does not mean that it did not take place, but rather because it was such a standard element in all Jewish liturgy, it leads us to believe that it did take place, especially if we can point to evidence of a significant number of other elements of the Seder being present at this feast.
- After the Kiddush, they would have eaten lettuce dipped in salt water or vinegar, vegetables together with the cake of matzah, and two cooked things. Afterward, the second Seder cup would have been mixed.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– The Fulfillment of the Seder Ritual

▪ The Fourth Criteria (Passover purpose)

– The Liturgy itself

- *The second cup is mixed. The son asks his father the four questions, and if the son does not have enough knowledge his father teaches him how to ask: "Why is this night different from all other nights? On the other nights, we eat leavened or unleavened bread, but this night only unleavened. On all other nights, we eat a variety of vegetables, but on this night only bitter herbs. On all other nights, we may eat meat which has been roasted, stewed, or boiled, but this night only roast meat. On all other nights, we dip our food only once, but on this night twice." The father then instructs him according to his son's level of knowledge. He begins with the disgrace and ends with the glory [[story from the Haggadah]], and he expounds from "A wandering Aramean was my father..." (Deuteronomy 26:5), until he finished the whole story.*

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– The Fourth Criteria continued

- *Rabban Gamaliel used to say: Whoever has not spoken of these three things at Passover has not fulfilled his obligations: Pesah, Matzah, and Maror. Pesah, because God passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt. Matzah, because our fathers were redeemed out of Egypt. Maror, because the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt. In each and every generation, a man must think of himself as if he came out of Egypt, as it is written: "And you shall tell your son on that day saying, it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Exodus 13:8). There-fore, we are required to give thanks, to praise, to glorify, to honor, to exalt, to extol, and to bless Him who performed all those wonders for our fathers and for us. He brought us from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to gladness, from mourning to Festival, from darkness to great light, and from slavery to redemption. Let us say before Him: Hallelujah.*

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Fourth Criteria Fulfilled in Christ

- Likewise, in the Scriptures we witness Jesus giving an actual and liturgical fulfillment of this tradition when He foretells the New Covenant exodus. When Jesus took His place among the Apostles and said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God,” He instantly met and fulfilled the prescribed ritual of the Seder by telling His Apostles how this night is different from every other night. That is, He points to Himself as being the new Pesah that will suffer and die for the sins of many. Later during the feast, He will also point to Himself as being the new and true Matzah (manna) that gives eternal life, and as the new Maror whom the world will make things bitter for, and bitter for those who are members of His body.
- The fulfillment of what Rabbi Gamaliel said is true. In the New Covenant Seder, we are commanded by Christ Jesus Himself to give thanks, to praise, to glorify, to honor, to exalt, to extol, and to bless Him who performed all those wonders for our fathers and for us. We offer precisely these things at the Catholic Mass every day when we offer the sacrifice in anemeno of our Risen Lord. What Rabbi Gamaliel did not know is that Christ Jesus is the one who brought us out of bondage to true freedom, from sorrow to true gladness, from mourning to true festival, from darkness to true light, and from slavery to true redemption. Indeed, before our Lord Jesus, we always say Hallelujah.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Fifth Criteria (drinking second cup)

- After Jesus told His Apostles about the new exodus, they would have drunken the second cup of wine and entered into the third section of the Seder, which is the actual feast, commencing with 'the Breaking of Bread.' We can see this portion of the Seder clearly in all of the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them saying, "*This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in anemeno of Me.*"

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Sixth Criteria (drinking third cup)

- According to the Mishnah, after the feast, the third cup would have been mixed and blessed:
 - *After the third cup has been mixed, the leader says the blessings after the feast. Before the fourth cup, he completes the Hallel and then says the blessing over the song. If he wishes to drink wine between the cups, he may do so. But he may not drink between the third and fourth cups.*
 - Again, sacred Scripture confirms that this requirement of the Seder took place on the night before Jesus was crucified, in saying, *"And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my Blood, which will be shed for you."*

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

– Seventh Criteria (drinking fourth cup)

- Concerning the fourth cup, Matthew informs us that after they had eaten the Passover feast, they sang a hymn and "*went out to the Mount of Olives.*" We know from the Mishnah (as cited above) that the third cup of wine was drunk immediately after the feast. Therefore, being that so many requirements of the Seder had already been met, there is no reason to believe that the fourth cup was not drunk after the Hallel (traditionally Psalms 112 through 118) was sung and the final blessing was given. (see notes for problems with fourth cup not being drunk)

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

- **Summary Point 1 of 3 of the Old Covenant Passover sacrifice feast being fulfilled by Christ Jesus in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist that should be taken with us:**
 - 1. Whereas, in the Old Covenant, soon before the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt, God commanded them to do this (the Passover sacrifice and feast) forever in memory of when the Lord spared the Israelites by passing over their houses, but struck down the Egyptians, now in the New Covenant, soon before those who were in the bondage to sin and death were delivered from it, by the way of the Cross, they were commanded by Christ to "Do this in anemeno of Me." God commanded His people to offer this memorial sacrifice and feast forever, and it has never ceased in the Catholic Church.

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

- Summary Point 2 of 3 of the Old Covenant Passover sacrifice feast being fulfilled by Christ Jesus in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist that should be taken with us:
 - 2. Whereas in the Old Covenant, the roasted flesh of the lamb was eaten with unleavened bread, now, the New Covenant, we are commanded to eat the Flesh of Christ Jesus under the guise of unleavened bread. “Then He took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in anemeno of Me.”

first Conference

(the eucharistic prayers)

- Summary Point 3 of 3 of the Old Covenant Passover sacrifice feast being fulfilled by Christ Jesus in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist that should be taken with us:
 - 3. Whereas, in the Old Covenant, God commanded the Israelites to apply the blood of the lamb to the two doorposts and lintel of every house in which they partook of the lamb, so that they would be passed-over, now, in the New Covenant, we are commanded to drink the Blood of the true lamb under the guise of wine; taking it into ourselves, so that we will be passed-over (have eternal life). “And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood, which will be shed for you.”

first Conference

(the singularity of the Holy Eucharist)

1. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament where an actual transfer of matter occurs. That is, what was the matter of bread and wine are no more, and all that remains is the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ Jesus. That happens only at the Mass.
2. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament where there is a change from something truly dead into something truly alive. What this reminds us of at Mass is that if Christ can change a dead thing (bread and wine) into a living thing (Himself), then by the power of His word, then how much more can He do with us?
3. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament which most clearly reminds us of who Christ actually is. It is only at the Mass where we get to perceive with our senses the Real Presence of Christ.
4. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament that represents the quality of transformation that our own lives are meant to undergo. That is, the bread and wine that becomes Christ Jesus is representative of that same grace that is working within us in conforming man to His image.

first Conference

(the singularity of the concluding rite)

5. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament that constitutes the most compelling evidence of the Christ in the Universe. In other words, if you want to know if Jesus Christ actually exists then come to the Sacrifice of the Mass to see Him for yourself.

6. Of all the four presences of God at the liturgy (i.e., God present in His written Word, God present in this People at Prayer, the Priest in Persona Christi, and the Holy Eucharist – the Real Presence of Christ Jesus), the most unique of these is the Holy Eucharist, because it is the only one of the four presences that only comes to be through the liturgy of which it is inseparable from.

7. The Holy Eucharist is the only sacrament that is food and is corporeal. You shouldn't attempt to eat or digest the other three presences of Christ at the Mass, but the Eucharist you ought to. In this way, it reminds us of our dependence on God as the sustenance of your life.

BREAK & DISCUSSION

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

After the Universal Prayers there is a great transition taking place – lots of movement! It appears to be the start of a minuet.

- A minuet (based on the old courtly dance), then made popular in the courts of King Louis XIV. When not having to contend with dancers, the originally short $\frac{3}{4}$ pace of the minuets kept speeding up over time, and it was eventually replaced by the scherzo (i.e., joke or play), which were composed as livelier and often lighthearted tunes. Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809), the Father of the Symphonic form and of the String Quartet.

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)



Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

- Notice that from 'the Preparation of the Gifts' to 'the Communion Feast', the dramatically increased level of participation of the People of God during every subject of this rite points to the dangerous beautiful reality of our salvation; that "the God who created you without your cooperation, will not save you without your cooperation."
- In that way, this real dialogue between the whole person of Jesus Christ and the whole person of the Baptized at Mass, is also characteristic of the choreographed and restrained dances found in the European courtly society.
- As with the minuet, the Third Movement becomes VERY bodily – Christ who says 'This is my Body, given up for you,' we too in a way acclaim – 'This is my Body, give to/back to you.'

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

- Noted in the English translation of the Roman Missal, "It is desirable that the faithful express their participation by making an offering, bringing forward bread and wine for the celebration of the Eucharist and perhaps other gifts to relieve the needs of the Church and of the poor." In chapter sixty-seven of this *First Apology*, Saint Justin Martyr attested to 'The Offertory' practice in the memorial sacrifice:
 - *"There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. "*

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

THE PREFACE DIALOGUE

- The Sursum corda (Lat. for "lift up your hearts" or literally, "Hearts lifted") is one of the oldest periodic phrasings in the Divine Symphony, and it remains today as the preface of 'the Eucharistic Prayers' preceding 'the Sanctus' in every Catholic liturgy, and even those of the Eastern traditions. Its first recorded mention comes from *The Apostolic Tradition*, by Saint Hippolytus of Rome (ca. 215 AD):
 - The Deacons shall then bring the offering to him [the Bishop]; and he, imposing his hand on it, along with all the presbytery, shall give thanks, saying: "The Lord be with you."
 - And all shall respond, "And with your spirit."
 - [Bishop] "Hearts aloft!"
 - [All] "We keep them with the Lord."
 - [Bishop] "Let us give thanks to the Lord."
 - [All] "It is right and just."

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

THE PREFACE DIALOGUE

- [Bishop] "Hearts aloft!" (Lift up your Heart)
- [All] "We keep them with the Lord."
- [Bishop] "Let us give thanks to the Lord."
- [All] "It is right and just."

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem in his twenty-third of twenty-four Catechetical Lectures (350 A.D.) wrote of how this periodic phrasing calls us to devote ourselves to the principal matter of the Sacrifice of the Mass:

After this, the Priest cries out: "Your hearts aloft!" For truly, in the most solemn hour, it behooves us to have our hearts aloft with God, and not below, with the earth and earthly things. It is, then, as if the Priest instructs us in that hour to dismiss all physical cares and domestic anxieties and to have our hearts in Heaven with the benevolent God. Then you answer: "We keep them with the Lord," giving assent to it by the avowal which you make. Let no one come here, then, who could say with his mouth, "We keep them with the Lord," while he is pre-occupied with physical cares."

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

- [Bishop] "Let us give thanks to the Lord."
- [All] "It is right and just."

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem continues:

"Then the Priest says, "Let us give thanks to the Lord." Surely, we ought to give thanks for His having called us, unworthy though we are, to so great a grace; for His having reconciled us when we were His enemies; for our having been deemed worthy of the adoption of sons by the Spirit. Then you say, "Worthy and just;" for in giving thanks, we do a worthy thing, and just. But what he did in accounting us worthy of such great benefits was not merely just, but more than just."

Second Conference

(the theology of the body in the offering rite)

The matter of the heart first addressed (during the collection of offerings):

26. After this, the Priest, bowing profoundly, says quietly:

With humble spirit and contrite heart
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day
be pleasing to you, Lord God.

The prayer is a loose quotation of the Prayer of Azariah while they were in the white-hot furnace, Daniel 3, 40-41, which refers to the sacrifice only of living beings: "That we may find Thy mercy: nevertheless in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted. As in holocausts of rams, and bullocks, and as in thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be made in thy sight this day, that it may please thee."

BREAK & DISCUSSION

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

The assembly praying the 'Our Father' together is rather new. It was not until the Sacred Congregation for Rites issued *De musica sacra et sacra liturgia* (Instruction on Sacred Music and Sacred Liturgy) on September 3, 1958, that the People of God were even given permission to pray 'the Pater Noster' in unison with the Priest:

"Since the Pater Noster is a fitting, and ancient prayer of preparation for Communion, the entire congregation may recite this prayer in union with the Priest in low Masses; the Amen at the end is to be said by all. This is to be done only in Latin, never in the vernacular."

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

The People join the Priest in praying 'the Our Father' because it disposes them to receive all that the memorial sacrifice proposes. In praying 'the Our Father,' the Priest and the People together summarily and succinctly pray and confess all that they have prayed for and confessed up this moment. Tertullian had this to write about the fullness and breadth of this prayer: "The Lord's prayer truly is a summary of the whole Gospel." Similarly, Saint Thomas Aquinas agreed with Saint Augustine of Hippo, in writing, "The Lord's Prayer is most perfect, because, as Augustine says (*ad Probam Ep. cxxx, 12*), *"if we pray rightly and fittingly, we can say nothing else but what is contained in this prayer of our Lord."*

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

Beginning with, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven," we confess what we have already confessed in opening of 'the Creed'; what Your People have always said in the Shema, and what Your first commandment obliges us to believe. Moreover, Lord, by this confession we believe and know that we are nothing in comparison to You O' Lord. We are small, and You are entirely other in Heaven. Our name is nothing, but Your name is holy, holy, holy. Our word has the power to do nothing, but Your creative word can do all things on Earth and in Heaven.

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

In petitioning, **"Give us this day our daily bread,"** we beg that Your word be true again, O Lord, and in our total dependence on Your mercy, we pray that You will sustain our life daily by giving us the bread of life. We beg of You to sustain us as You sustained Your People in the desert. Give us, Eternal Father, not a storehouse full of this bread, that we might grow boastful and independent, but give us the manna we need daily so that we might always be reminded that we are Your children.

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

In praying, “**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors;** and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” just as we asked of You in ‘the Confiteor’ and our Priest has interceded for us throughout this memorial sacrifice, forgives us of all our sins and of all our offenses against You, our neighbor, and our-selves, so that we might worthily receive our daily bread; Your Son Jesus Christ. O’ Lord, hand us not over to the tests of Satan, as You handed over Job, but, rather, order our steps and may Your Word be a light to our path according to the purpose for which You created us so that we might always cooperate with Your holy will, and never with the Evil one.

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

As he has done times before in the liturgy, with his arms remaining outstretched, the **Priest takes up our humble cry into his office of intercession, saying, "Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ."** To which the People offer a doxology in glory of their Eternal Father's name, the coming of His reign, and the power of His saving will; signifying their total dependence upon Him and their total rejection of the false kingdom of the Evil One, saying, "For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever."

Third Conference

(the theology of the Pater Noster)

That concluding acclamation of 'the Pater Noster' is rooted in the public blessing that King David offered the Lord in testimony that all gold, silver, bronze, iron, and precious stones that the People offered to build the Temple came from God (*1 Chronicles 29:10-20*):

Blessed are you, Lord, God of Israel our Father, from eternity to eternity. Yours, Lord, are greatness and power, glory, victory, and splendor. For all in Heaven and on Earth is yours; yours, Lord, is kingship; you are exalted as head over all. Riches and glory are from you, and you have dominion over all. In your hand are power and might; it is yours to give greatness and strength to all. Therefore, our God, we give you thanks, and we praise the majesty of your name.

BREAK & DISCUSSION

Fourth Conference

(sign of peace & reception of holy communion)

128. Then, if appropriate, the Deacon, or the Priest, adds:
Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

In properly connecting the work of our hands with the fruit of our life, the Eastern liturgies position 'the Rite of Peace' prior the Eucharistic Prayers. In the Maronite Rite, the Priest prays in part, "Enable us to greet one another with a holy kiss, worthy of your holy name," and is followed by the Deacon announcing, "Let each of us give the greeting of peace to our neighbor, with that charity and loyalty which is pleasing to the Lord," **In the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom**, there is a great deal of kissing. Up to the Rite of Peace, the Priest has already kissed the icon of Christ, the icon of the Theotokos, the holy Gospel Book, the Holy Table, the Hand-Cross, the orarion (the Deacon's and Sub-deacon's vestment), the epigonation, the phelonion (the poncho worn over the Priest's vestments), and the Holy Gifts. Then at 'the Rite of Peace' the Priest kisses all the holy things, and if there are other Priests present, they kiss each other on the shoulder.

Similarly, in the Tridentine Mass, 'the Sign of Peace' is only exchanged among the clergy, but is given by offering to each an embracing hand, and is positioned in the liturgy prior to receiving the Holy Eucharist.

Fourth Conference

(sign of peace & reception of holy communion)

In 2004, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacrament offered this instruction *in Redemptionis Sacramentum* on certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist:

"It is appropriate "that each one give the sign of peace only to those who are nearest and in a sober manner." "The Priest may give the sign of peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so as not to disturb the celebration. He does likewise if for a just reason he wishes to extend the sign of peace to some few of the faithful." "As regarding the sign to be exchanged, the manner is to be established by the conference of Bishops in accordance with the dis-positions and customs of the People," and their acts are subject to the recognition of the Apostolic See."

Fourth Conference

(sign of peace & reception of holy communion)

This need for uniformity and protection from error over 'the Rite of Peace' has been necessitated by a nearly two-thousand-year-old history of it being abused and causing Catholics to harm each with it and to arouse suspicions of im-morality with the public. In 175 A.D. Saint Athenagoras warned that we should give the most exceptional care to guard our bodies against defilement and corruption, "*If anyone kisses a second time because it has given him pleasure, he sins.*" Twenty years later Saint Clement of Alexandria cautioned, "*Love is not proved by a kiss, but by a kindly feeling. But there are those who do nothing but make the Churches resound with a kiss, not having love itself within. For this very thing, the shameless use of a kiss (which should be mystical), causes foul suspicions and evil rumors. The Apostle calls the kiss holy.*" By 390 A.D. we find in the *Apostolic Constitutions*:

"And let the bishop salute the church, and say, The peace of God be with you all. And let the people answer, And with your spirit; and let the Deacon say to all, Salute one another with the holy kiss. And let the clergy salute the bishop, the men of the laity salute the men, the women the women. And let the children stand at the reading-desk; and let another Deacon stand by them, that they may not be disorderly."

Fourth Conference

(sign of peace & reception of holy communion)

If 'the Sign of Peace' is just a social greeting, then its inclusion into the liturgy is inappropriate and disruptive to the mystery, meaning, and theology of the Divine Symphony. To the contrary, in the rhythm of prayer and confession, 'the Sign of Peace' is an intercessory prayer. Therefore, when the Priest says, "The peace of the Lord be with you always," 'the Sign of Peace' that immediately follows becomes an intercessory prayer that is an extension of the Priest's Eucharistic prayers, whereby the People of God pray a Eucharistic blessing for the persons nearest to them. In other words, when the People pray to each other, "Peace be with You," they are praying that all that the Holy Eucharist is; that is, true peace and true eternity, becomes that very thing to them; that Christ Jesus comes to abide in them, that the Holy Eucharist makes them holy and eucharistic.

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