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# **GRATEFUL ANÁMNESIS**

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By  
REV. JAKE ADRIAN E. LOPEZ, SDB

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To the Young People  
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## INTRODUCTION

Memory. Is it a curse or a blessing? In a purely empirical and pragmatic outlook, memory may be regarded as a curse insofar as the experience is something tragic. Painful events that left deep dents of regret and guilt are better never remembered. Yet beautiful experiences that stir up a profound sense of joy, pointing to a cause beyond the people involved and the event itself, must be kept in the treasury of human heart and mind. In a final stance, memory—bearing the best and the most vindictive in one’s personal story in particular and in the entire history in general—still evokes a sense of gratitude. In spite of everything, this famous aphorism is time and again validated by memory: *God writes straight in crooked lines.*

It has been a perennial observation that people of all walks of life, of respective epochs in the corridors of time, have a strange forgetfulness of the essentials. Ideals that were once ardently sought after are simply brushed aside if not totally buried under the dark blanket of oblivion. Memory is a saving grace. It is God’s precious gift. It is an incentive to move on despite the uncertainties of life because it is a threshold that anchors us to the certitude of the past—the past that happened under the providence of a higher power, and this past may still be effected today in the present and can still be projected to the future. After all, this temporal sequence of past, present and future is but in the eternal now in the sight of God.

God always beckons us to have recourse to our memory inasmuch as this memory points to a reality greater than our own human situatedness. Our memory when touched by the divine becomes a living memory, a memorial full of vividness and life. This calls us to transcend our earthly existence and be transported into the mystery of God’s Communion in the Trinity. The storyline runs thus: God is God—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are in mutual exchange of infinite love. In his wisdom and goodness, God created everything—with the human person as the center of creation. As eternity gives way to time, *chronos* will be tempered by God’s *kairos*, making a habitual return to *remember* as in a *memorial* the absolute Beginning that summons us into one great Family.

This theological synthesis attempts to present **ἀνάμνησις** (anámnesis) as a unifying theme of the systematic study of the faith of the Church based on divine revelation. The presentation of the proceeding chapters is as follows:

Chapter One is on “Cultic Anámnesis: Celebration of the Liturgy.” It deals with the present in which the memorial is celebrated in the worship of the Church, which is the permanent anamnestic presence of Christ. This also explores the celebration of the Holy Eucharist as anámnesis par excellence, entwined with the discussion on the role of the Holy Spirit, the principle that makes anámnesis possible through his epicletic presence.

Chapter Two deals with “Creedal Anámnesis: Remembering God’s Fulfillment of His Promise of Salvation.” It ushers us into the past, showing the content of the memorial that is being celebrated by the Church. It discusses God the Father’s plan of salvation and God the Son’s paschal victory. Likewise, it speaks about the Holy Spirit as another

paraclete, and it reviews the disposition of Mary, keeping all things in her heart, as the perfect disciple of her son.

Chapter Three is devoted to the enduring present as projected to the future: “Coded<sup>1</sup> Anámnesis: Journey towards the Eternal Communion.” It delves into the demands of morality: the following of Jesus as a community of disciples in view of the hope of communion in the eternal liturgy.

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<sup>1</sup> “Coded” in this context of anámnesis refers to *Lex vivendi*, the moral imperative of Christian discipleship.

## Chapter One

### CULTIC ANÁMNESIS: CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY

This chapter presents the enduring reality that the Church relentlessly celebrates her faith, and this celebration finds its highest expression in the liturgy. The reliving of the Church's memory through the liturgical celebration finds its fullest expression in the Holy Eucharist, which comes into being through the epicletic presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is all about “cultic anámnesis”—the celebrative aspect of the living memorial of the Church as a worshipping people of God.

#### A. The Church: Permanent Anamnetic Presence of Christ

The Church is the icon of the Trinity inasmuch as She is seen to be “a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>2</sup> Endowed with the gifts of her founder, the Church—“that is, the kingdom of Christ—already present in mystery, grows visibly through the power of God in the world.”<sup>3</sup> “As a *mystery, the Church is essentially related to Jesus Christ*. She is his fullness, his body, his spouse. She is the ‘sign’ and living ‘memorial’ of his permanent presence and activity in our midst and on our behalf.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the Church, transcending time and place, exists to continuously effect the very presence of Jesus himself that saves.

The great commissioning of the Lord Jesus—sending his apostles, and in effect the Church, into the world as “a universal sacrament of salvation”<sup>5</sup>—to go, to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach (*cf.* Matthew 28:19-20) substantiates the Church's divine mission. By her very nature, the Church on earth is missionary according to the plan of the Father and it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit:

This plan flows from “fountain-like love,” the love of God the Father. As a principle without principle from whom the Son is generated and from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds through the Son, God in his great and merciful kindness freely creates us and moreover, graciously calls us to share in his life and glory. He generously pours out, and never ceases to pour out, his divine goodness, so that he who is creator of all things might at last become “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28), thus simultaneously assuring his glory and our happiness. It pleased God to call men to share in his life and not merely singly, without any bond between

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<sup>2</sup> St. Cyprian as quoted from the SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 4. [Hereafter cited as *LG*].

<sup>3</sup> *LG*, no. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, no. 12.

<sup>5</sup> *LG*, no. 48.

them, but he formed them into a people, in which his children who had been scattered were gathered together (*cf.* Jn. 11:52).<sup>6</sup>

The entirety of these sublime realities pertinent to the Church is symbolically embodied in the liturgical assembly inasmuch as the liturgical assembly is the “principal manifestation of the Church,” its true epiphany, for it effectively reveals what the Church really is.<sup>7</sup> Down the centuries, different expressions<sup>8</sup> have been used to designate the liturgical assembly, but finally the term ἐκκλησία<sup>9</sup> (*ekklēsia*), “which had such specifically biblical overtones that was transliterated into Latin and not translated, was used in referring not only to the entire group of scattered Christians but also to their periodic gatherings for the Word of God and the Eucharist.”<sup>10</sup> In this regard, the liturgical assembly, representing the Universal Church, is actually the symbol of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church:

This Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful, which, in so far as they are united to their pastors, are also quite appropriately called Churches in the New Testament. For these are in fact, in their own localities, the new people called by God, in the power of the Holy Spirit and as the result of full conviction (*cf.* 1 Thess. 1:5). In them the faithful are gathered together through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and the mystery of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated “so that, by means of the flesh and blood of the Lord the whole brotherhood of the Body may be welded together” (Mozarabic Prayer). In each altar community, under the sacred ministry of the bishop, a manifest symbol is to be seen of that charity and “unity of the mystical body, without which there can be no salvation” (St. Thomas). In these communities, though they may often be small and poor, or existing in the

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<sup>6</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, no. 2.

<sup>7</sup> SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 41. [Hereafter cited as *SC*].

<sup>8</sup> “As early as the third century the technical Greek was *synaxis*, and it has continued its use, but previously *syneleusis* and even *synagogē* had been used. In Latin, Tertullian uses *coetus* and *convocationes*; *collecta* is also found. *Processio* is later, but Tertullian already gives the verb *procedere* the technical liturgical sense of ‘assembling, gathering together.’ In any case, the first Christians were more conscious of the movement and change of place required for the assembly, and they preferred to use verbs when speaking of it: *synagein*, *synerchomai*, *athroizomai*, *coire*, *convenire*, *congregari*, these verbs sometimes being further specified by the addition of *epi to auto*, *in unum*.” Aimé Georges Martimort, “Structure and Laws of the Liturgical Assembly,” *THE CHURCH AT PRAYER*, Vol. I: Principles of the Liturgy, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 90.

<sup>9</sup> It is composed of entwined Greek words: *εκ* which means “out of” and *κλη* which is the passive (“called”) of *καλεο*, meaning “to call.” Thus, *ἐκκλησία* means “called out of”—referring to those who have been called by God from different parts of the world, different cultures, different life-situations and formed by the Holy Spirit to be a community of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the definitive Self-Communication of God. For a more extensive discussion on this, *cf.* Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 29-32. [Hereafter cited as Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*].

<sup>10</sup> Martimort noted that this is evidently the case in 1 Cor. 11-14 and in the expression *oikos ekklēsias* or *domus ecclesiae*. Martimort, 94.

diaspora, Christ is present through whose power and influence the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is constituted.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, moments of great interaction between the Mystical Body of Christ and God himself take place whenever the liturgy is celebrated as enunciated by *Sacrosanctum Concilium*: “The liturgy, then, is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. In the liturgy, by means of signs perceptible to the senses, human sanctification is signified and brought about in ways to each of these signs; in the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and its members.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, for every liturgical celebration, mutual movements are always involved: liturgy is, “under the veil of sensible, efficacious signs, the point of encounter, in Christ, of God who sanctifies the Church and the Church who responds by rendering her worship to God.”<sup>13</sup> This is primarily because the liturgy is celebrated not just to offer fitting worship to God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, but also to make the mystery of salvation present and active among human beings.

The foregoing discussions lead us to a profound truth that “the liturgy has twofold function in the Church: to *constitute* the Church and to *express* the Church.”<sup>14</sup> It helps the Church to carry out Her divine mission of bringing to all men the light of Christ which shines out visibly from Her, particularly through Her nature as the sacrament of Christ—“a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men . . . .”<sup>15</sup>

What really is the vital link that firmly ties up Christ and the Church, which in turn continuously facilitates the Church’s enduring relevance to all men of all places and time? Elucidating the witness of the New Testament regarding the origin and essence of the Church, this consideration is offered as regards Jesus and the Church:

The institution of the most holy Eucharist on the evening before the Passion cannot be regarded as some more or less isolated cultic transaction. It is a making of a covenant and, as such, is the concrete foundation of the new people: the people comes into being through its covenant relation to God. We could also say that by his eucharistic action, Jesus draws the disciples into his relationship with God and, therefore, into his mission, which aims to reach “the many,” the humanity of all places and of all times. These disciples became a “people” through communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus, which is simultaneously communion with God. The Old Testament theme of covenant, which Jesus incorporates into his preaching, receives a new center: communion with Christ’s Body. It could be said that the people of the New Covenant takes its origin as a people from the Body and Blood of Christ; solely in terms of this center does it

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<sup>11</sup> *LG*, no. 26.

<sup>12</sup> *SC*, no. 7.

<sup>13</sup> J. Daniélou, *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, trans. N. Abercrombie (Chicago: Regnery, 1985), 149-67 as quoted from Irénée Henri Dalmais, “Theology of the Liturgical Celebration,” *THE CHURCH AT PRAYER*, Vol. I: Principles of the Liturgy, ed. Aimé Georges Martimort (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1987), 230.

<sup>14</sup> Dalmais, 242.

<sup>15</sup> *LG*, no. 1.

have the status of a people. We can call it “people of God” only because it is through communion with Christ that man gains access to a relationship with God that he cannot establish by his own power.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, the Eucharist serves as the vital link that hinges everything in a reciprocal relationship between Christ and the Church—reaching out to everyone while at the same time binding back all to God. It is a multi-layered communion that has been initiated by the Eucharistic Lord: communion with humanity, communion with Christ’s Body the Church, and communion with the Trinity. In this regard, it is not difficult to see how the Eucharist is esteemed as the supreme remembering of Christ. After all, “Jesus is the *true* paschal lamb who freely gave himself in sacrifice for us, and thus brought about the new and eternal covenant. The Eucharist contains this radical newness, which is offered to us again at every celebration.”<sup>17</sup>

## **B. Eucharist: Anámnesis par excellence**

The celebration of the liturgy itself necessarily flows from the very nature of the Church as the permanent anamnestic presence of Jesus, the redeemer of humanity. This mystery of the redemptive act of Christ is made present by the celebration of the liturgy, remarkably of the Eucharist: “For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, ‘the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.”<sup>18</sup> That is why the Eucharistic liturgy is the efficacious sign of the reality that makes up the Church, that is, both divine and human. In fact, the Church “draws her life from the Eucharist.”<sup>19</sup>

It is precisely in the liturgical celebrations and especially in the sacramental rites that the Church, “hands down her memory,”<sup>20</sup> that is, She gives the faithful a new birth in faith, feeds them, and strengthens them throughout the course of their earthly pilgrimage. This is true for all seven sacraments—“the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is his body”<sup>21</sup>—but is eminently true for the Eucharist, in which we find the “highest expression” of the “sacramental character of faith.”<sup>22</sup>

The heart of the Eucharist as *anámnesis par excellence* is described by the Second Vatican Council thus:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to

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<sup>16</sup> Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 28-29.

<sup>17</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 9.

<sup>18</sup> *SC*, no. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 433.

<sup>20</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, no. 45.

<sup>21</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 774. [Hereafter cited as *CCC*].

<sup>22</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, no. 44.

entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.<sup>23</sup>

The Eucharist indeed is a preeminent anámnesis by which the Lord Jesus “memorializes his death and resurrection, that is, he creates the ritual form of his Passover to the Father so that his disciples and later generations of Christians may participate in and relive those events until he comes again at the end of time.”<sup>24</sup> The command of the Lord—“Do this in memory of me”<sup>25</sup>—set the entire celebration of the Eucharist down the centuries as a divine imperative that the Church has been faithfully carrying out.

The scriptural accounts of the Last Supper may not contain historical narratives insofar as they are more of “a narrative explanation, or catechesis, on the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood”—simply referring to the Last Supper as a foundational event that grounds the early Christians’ practice of gathering together for the breaking of the bread—as indicated by Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians and by the Synoptic Gospels as well.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, a closer look into the different accounts of the Last Supper, it is evident that there are two traditional accounts of the institution of the Eucharist, namely, Paul and Luke’s and Matthew and Mark’s. Four consecutive verbs make up the structure thus:

1. Jesus *takes* bread and a cup of wine;
2. He *gives thanks*, or says a blessing;
3. He *breaks* the bread; and
4. He *gives* it as food to his disciples.

This structure constitutes, consequently, the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the celebration of the Mass:

1. The preparation of the gifts: the assembly offers bread and wine;
2. the Eucharistic prayer (including the institution account);
3. the breaking of the bread; and
4. the communion.<sup>27</sup>

This pattern, however, is better appreciated when seen in the context of the Jewish table prayer familiar to Jesus and his disciples as something well-established in the first century Palestinian Judaism. Jesus must have said the customary prayers, called “blessings.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> SC, no. 47.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Cabié, *History of the Mass*, trans. L. Johnson (Portland: Pastoral Press, 1992), 5.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Cor. 11:24; Lk. 22:19.

<sup>26</sup> Cabié, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Cabié, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Jesus “would certainly have used his legitimate freedom of introducing adaptations, perhaps to the extent of giving new meaning to old words. As a matter of fact, in oral tradition formularies were handed down as schematic patterns that a certain freedom in composition was allowed.” Cabié, 6.

One possible structure of these ritual meals we know from Luke's Gospel: first the wine is prepared, then the host and the guests drink, each in turn. A formula is attached to this action: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, king of the universe, who gives us the fruit of the vine." Is it not significant that the words "fruit of the vine" are found on the lips of Jesus, who was the first to take the cup?

The table liturgy itself began when the father of the family took the bread that he was going to distribute to the guests: "Blessed art thou, Lord . . . who brings forth bread from the earth." And when the meal ended, he said a longer formula, the "great blessing," over the cup that had been refilled. The Lord is blessed for food and for the "earth," and praise is transformed into supplication so that the wonders of God may still be accomplished today. Here we find one of the distinctive features of biblical prayer. A style of addressing the Father, a "spirituality," is expressed by means of a twofold literary form: first, we contemplate God and God's great deeds in the past; second, we joyfully recognize God's gift to us (to the speaker) and request that similar blessings may appear in our time.<sup>29</sup>

Other New Testament passages, likewise, indicate the four verbs evoking the Last Supper meal such as the accounts of the multiplication of the bread (Mark 6:30-44; Matthew 14:13-21; Luke 9:10-17) and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32) which highlight the instrumentality of the breaking of the bread in the recognition of the risen Lord.

The unfolding of the Emmaus story has particularly comprised the two major parts of the celebration of the Eucharist, namely, the *Liturgy of the Word*—"Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scripture" (v.27)—and the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*—"And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them" (v.30). The account reflects the early Christian conviction that it was only through encounter with the risen Lord that the key was given for understanding that the passion and resurrection and exaltation were already witnessed to by the Scriptures.<sup>30</sup> Luke wants to emphasize that "the Christians of his day were able to have the living Lord made known to them in the eucharistic celebration in a manner that was at least analogous to the experience of the Emmaus disciples."<sup>31</sup>

The witness provided by the practice of the Christians in the celebration of the Eucharist in the second century is likewise noteworthy. The *First Apology* of St. Justin Martyr, addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, contains significant chapters concerning the celebration of the Eucharist (67 and 65).<sup>32</sup> The serious appraisal of these accounts is very crucial in our present understanding of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist insofar as the testimonies of the Fathers of the Church serve as vital links to the Apostolic time,

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<sup>29</sup> Cabié, 6-8.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 35c, Luke 18:35-24:53 (Texas: Word, Incorporated, 1993), 1200.

<sup>31</sup> Nolland, 1206.

<sup>32</sup> For the entire texts, cf. *THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH: WRITINGS OF ST. JUSTIN MARTYR: The First Apology*, trans. Thomas B. Falls (New York: Christian Heritage, Inc., 1948), 104-107.

which necessarily finds its rootedness in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Furthermore, this document is of enormous significance considering that it has become one of the bases of the Second Vatican Council's liturgical reform of going back to the sources.

While the descriptions provided by St. Justin in those two chapters in his *First Apology* give us the structure of the Holy Mass, they, nevertheless, highlight first and foremost the gathering of the faithful—the community of believers—as one *assembly* for the celebration of the Eucharist: “On the day which is called Sunday we have a common assembly of all who live in the cities or in the outlying districts.” The first major part of the celebration, the *Liturgy of the Word*, is attested to by their continuous reading of the “memoirs of the Apostles” (*i.e.*, the New Testaments writings) and the “writings of the Prophets” (*i.e.*, the Old Testament). It is, then, followed by the *homily* of the presider exhorting the faithful to live the word they have heard. Afterwards, they find themselves in a gesture expressing their priestly function when they “stand and pray” for the Church, both local and universal.

The second major part of the celebration follows, namely, the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*. It is started by the offertory: “bread and wine and water are presented.” Taking the cue from the text, the presider performs the action corresponding to what the Lord Jesus himself did during the Last Supper—He took the bread, then the cup of wine. It should be noted that water is included inasmuch as it does not only show the cautionary practice of preventing themselves from intoxication but also the poverty of the Church (using low quality, very sour wine). This may be a point for a deeper reflection on how the Church keeps on reminding herself of her true nature (Church of the poor) and of her humble beginnings even if she found herself in magnificent basilicas—because of the mingling of water and wine. Besides, the use of wine is a profession of faith in the Holy Eucharist. Despite the persecution, the Church did not succumb to the so-called “Aquarian heresy”<sup>33</sup> that only used water instead of wine in the Eucharist.

The *Eucharistic prayer* is, then, prayed by the celebrant in a spontaneous manner since there were still no fixed formulae during those times: “He who presides likewise offers up prayers and thanksgivings, to the best of his abilities.” And the firm assent of the people is expressed by “Amen!” They have that awareness teeming with faith that

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<sup>33</sup> ‘Aquarians’ is “a name given to several sects in the early Church. The Ebionites, as St. Epiphanius tells us, had an idolatrous veneration of water (*aqua*), which they regarded as the source of life. The Manichean sects rejected the use of wine as something evil. The name, however, seems to have been given chiefly to the followers of Tatian, of whom Theodoret speaks as follows: ‘Tatian, after the death of his master, Justin the Martyr, set himself up as the author of a heresy. Among the things he rejected were marriage, and the use of animal food and wine. Tatian is the father of the Aquarians, and of the Encratites. They are called Hydroparastatae, because they offer water instead of wine [in the Eucharist]; and Encratites because they neither drink wine nor eat animal food. From these they abstain because they abhor them as something evil . . . .’ They are mentioned by St. Irenaeus and by Clement of Alexandria. St. Augustine in his ‘Catalogue of Heresies’ says: ‘The Aquarians are so called because in the cup of the Sacrament they offer water, not that which the whole Church offers.’” Charles G. Herbermann, ed., et al., *The Catholic Encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, vol. I (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, Inc., 1913), 660-661.

after the Eucharistic prayer the bread and the wine are no longer ordinary bread and wine because they have already been “eucharistified.” Subsequently, they proceed to the *communion* in which the eucharistified bread and wine were “distributed and consumed by those present.” Not only those who were present took part in the celebration, but the eucharistified gifts were also sent via the deacons to those who are absent.

As the Church walked along the corridors of time, countless changes took place yet, faithful to the Lord’s command, the essential elements of the Eucharistic celebration remain. The changes to the Catholic celebration and order of the Holy Mass as authoritatively implemented by the Second Vatican Council (in comparison with the Tridentine Mass of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century) include making it *more horizontal* and *less vertical*; essentially and harmoniously blending together its nature as a sacred meal (Holy Thursday) and as a sacrifice (Good Friday). It is a celebration as a people of God and not just a private prayer done by a priest—at Mass the Church is at prayer, the mystical Body united with its divine Head, Jesus Christ.

An abridged historical survey, much more like in basic terms taking the two bookends (Scriptural and Patristic accounts and the retrieval of Vatican II), seasoned with the theology of liturgical anámnesis, gives us the knowledge that the celebration of the Eucharist is not just an empty rite, a simple recalling, a mechanical re-enactment, or a mere looking back to past events, but it is a living memory that makes present here and now the saving acts of Christ: “In instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus anticipates and makes present the sacrifice of the Cross and the victory of the resurrection.”<sup>34</sup> Hence, it is a real thanksgiving for the continuous real presence of the Lord in the present course of time, gushed forth into the grace-filled and redeemed moment of history.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is replete with symbols, which facilitate the encounter between God and the faithful. While the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme Mediator,<sup>35</sup> this cultic encounter takes the form of rituals, in the mode of a celebration—sacred actions surpassing all others in which God makes use of different means (*e.g.*, bread, wine, water, vestments, vessels and other liturgical things) and mediations (persons like the minister, the assembly).

The order of the Mass mandated by Vatican II highlights that the communal gathering should point to a participative vitality in which *ALL Christ’s faithful are truly involved in the celebration of the sacred mysteries*. It is a staunch testimony to the solicitude of our holy Mother Church to make the sacrifice of the Mass have the “full pastoral efficacy.”<sup>36</sup> Not to mesmerize the faithful with highfalutin sense of “mystery,” the order of the Mass we have today shows that the real beauty of the Church’s Eucharistic liturgy lies in its brevity and simplicity. It is simple yet profound and meaningful.

To facilitate a more involved remembering—complementary suffusion of the divine and human—certain adjustments were made by Vatican II. Among others, such as

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<sup>34</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 10.

<sup>35</sup> *SC*, no. 7.

<sup>36</sup> *SC*, no. 49.

the celebrant facing the people during the celebration; the most far-reaching reform embraced by the Council is the use of the vernacular in the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>37</sup> With this bold move, the faithful's active, conscious, and full participation in the sacrifice of Christ in the Mass is effectively assured. The pastoral nature of the Council is highlighted even more by this openness to "legitimate progress" while "sound tradition is retained."<sup>38</sup> This speaks irrevocably as far as inculturation is concerned. At any rate, God's mysterious ways are on the line of inculturation as well. God's incarnation is but a solid theological and historical proof. The condescension of God's eternal Word by being expressed in the human language is another. The Mass should speak to the people. And for that to happen it has to be first of all understandable to them. After all, the Church's faith, which is a "eucharistic faith," is "expressed in the rite, while the rite reinforces and strengthens faith."<sup>39</sup>

It is faith "in its unity and integrity" that enables the Church to be "faithful to the memory of the Lord" primarily because She is "sustained by his presence and by the working of the Holy Spirit."<sup>40</sup>

### C. The Epicletic Presence of the Holy Spirit

Anámnesis becomes an intrinsically grace-effecting event on account of the Holy Spirit. In the Last Supper discourse, Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit, the advocate, will teach them everything and remind them of all that he told them (*cf.* John 14:26). The crucial role of the Holy Spirit as *another* advocate aside from Christ points to an ongoing deepening of the definitive revelation in Jesus as the Church carries on with the relentless effort to comprehend or at least to better understand the divine truths handed down to her by her Lord and founder. Revelation is definitive but dynamic because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Together with the Holy Spirit's role of teaching everything is his indispensable task of reminding the Church not just a part of what Jesus told his disciples but all. We can always look back to recall and remember Christ and all that is pertinent to his saving presence, but the faithful memorial is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit who guided the Lord all throughout his salvific mission. Considering this, it is evident that the Holy Spirit is rightly called "the Church's living memory."<sup>41</sup>

If the liturgy is the *memorial* of the mystery of salvation, the Holy Spirit, in the sacramental dispensation of Christ's mystery, "acts in the same way as at other times in the economy of salvation: he prepares the Church to encounter her Lord; he recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly. By his transforming power, he makes the mystery of Christ present here and now."<sup>42</sup> This is to profess that anámnesis and epiclesis are both by the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>37</sup> *SC*, no. 54.

<sup>38</sup> *SC*, no. 23.

<sup>39</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, no. 5.

<sup>41</sup> *CCC*, no. 1099.

<sup>42</sup> *CCC*, no. 1092.

While the liturgical celebration always refers to God's saving interventions in history as anámnesis awakens the memory of the Church, the same liturgical celebration actualizes them, makes them present through liturgical actions and ritual traditions. This movement of grace is attributed to the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. Such pneumatological accomplishment makes the Church assert thus: "The Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. It is the celebrations that are repeated, and in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present."<sup>43</sup> Historic events as they unfolded in the past are now rendered with supreme freshness and vitality all because of the intervention of the Holy Spirit. The events are veiled in the cultic forms of rites and symbols in the liturgy, yet the effects are likewise as plenitude as the actual.

This reality points to the power displayed by the same Holy Spirit that accompanies anámnesis: epiclesis—"invocation upon" which is the intercession entreating the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, to effect the implored transformation. Thus, anámnesis together with epiclesis is at the heart of every liturgical celebration of the Church: the sacramentality of the Word in the liturgical celebration exerts unmatched power effecting the saving actions of Christ, "whether the celebrant refers to the action of Christ in a petition that asks, with the certainty of being heard, for the intervention of the Spirit whom Christ sent upon his Church to sanctify it and do a new work of creation in it (*epiclesis*) or whether he declares *in Persona Christi* that the intervention is now taking place."<sup>44</sup> There is power in the word in every liturgical celebration because the *Breath of God* animates the *Word of God* in its fullest expression. For this reason, the words effect what they contain.

In the mysteric action of the Church, truly the Holy Spirit is the one who unceasingly continues the historical presence on earth of Christ the Redeemer and his saving work<sup>45</sup>—that is to say, the Holy Spirit is the essential principle that causes the interplay of anámnesis and epiclesis in every liturgical celebration. Anámnesis becomes an outpouring of Christ's redeeming grace only because of epiclesis. On the other hand, epiclesis becomes substantially meaningful only because of anámnesis. This mutual interaction of both anámnesis and epiclesis is provided by the Holy Spirit.

As the Church is filled with the Holy Spirit, she continues to grow just like how the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit who sent them as witnesses of the Lord Jesus to the ends of the earth (*cf.* Acts 1:8). The community of disciples, of believers, is filled with the Holy Spirit of the risen Lord, and this indicates the new people of God: "The church, not the casual sum of Christians now alive, but the sacred communion of all who go to the Father through Christ, all who bear within themselves the Holy Spirit, and whom grace makes perfect like our Father in heaven . . . ."<sup>46</sup>

What we have covered so far is the present reality that we celebrate our faith as a Church. Liturgy that is due to God is offered by the Church *as the Mystical Body of*

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<sup>43</sup> CCC, no. 1104.

<sup>44</sup> Dalmais, 247.

<sup>45</sup> *Cf.* Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Dominun et Vivificantem*, no. 7.

<sup>46</sup> Odo Casel, *THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1962), 76.

*Christ*, that is, by its head and by its members, and that is the reason why the Church is the permanent anamnetic presence of Christ. This living memorial of her Lord and Savior is supremely manifested in the celebration of the Eucharist which is the gift of Jesus' very Self. In this regard, the epicletic presence of the Holy Spirit accounts for the transformative action that makes all liturgical celebration cultic anámnesis.

## Chapter Two

### CREEDAL ANÁMNESIS: REMEMBERING GOD'S FULFILLMENT OF HIS PROMISE OF SALVATION

*Lex orandi, lex credendi* has become a normative expression of the Church's Tradition. This principle asserts the conviction of the Church that the rule of faith is mysteriously expressed in the Christian worship. Moreover, it maintains that the liturgical celebration is a privileged manifestation and expression of the faith of the Church and therefore a source of theological knowledge:

The liturgy is indeed sacred. Through it we lift ourselves to God and we are united with him, we profess our faith and fulfil our grave duty of giving thanks to God for the benefits and the help which he bestows on us and which we constantly need. There exists, therefore, a close relationship between dogma and the sacred liturgy, as also between the Christian cult and the sanctification of the people. This is why Pope Celestine I thought that the rule of faith is expressed in the ancient liturgical formulations; he said that "the norm of prayer establishes the norm of belief." "For, when the leaders of holy assemblies exercise the office entrusted to them, they plead the cause of the human race before the divine mercy and they offer prayers and supplications while the whole Church joins in their entreaty."<sup>47</sup>

After looking into the celebrative aspect of anámnesis, our attention will now turn to the heart of the celebration, the content of what the Church celebrates in liturgy: the creedal aspect of anámnesis.

#### A. God the Father's Plan of Salvation

"For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare, not for woe! plans to give you a future full of hope." To God's people who were disillusioned by their exile in Babylon, this was the good tidings the Prophet Jeremiah (29:11) proclaimed, communicating not only a forthcoming restoration but also a promise of salvation.

Prophecy as an institution had long been part of the life of Israel as God's constituted people. The prophets, being the "spokespersons of God," proclaimed the word of the Lord; therefore, their word was God's word. This word takes the form of a prophetic oracle pointing to either curse or blessing from Yahweh. "They make radical applications of the old traditions in the present situation."<sup>48</sup> Thus, this prophetic

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<sup>47</sup> Pope Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus*, no. 33.

<sup>48</sup> The Word of God is the instrument of the prophet (servant of the word); while at the same time, the prophet is the instrument of the Word of God. The power and prestige of the prophet come from the power and prestige of the Word of Yahweh (דבר יהוה). Cf. Broderick

pronouncement of God remembering his divine plan for his people is indicative of the wisdom and goodness that set all creation in motion.

### *1. Creation and the Fall of Man*

The first two chapters of the first book of the Bible (Genesis 1 and 2), dealing with creation stories, highlight religious messages despite the discrepancies in the manner and sequence of how things came to be. Among other things, these accounts of creation affirm the truth that God is the creator of all things. Emphasis is given to point out that from the very beginning the human person is singled out as the unique epitome of God's handiwork of creation since the human person is created as *Imago Dei*: "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).<sup>49</sup> Such privilege is also underlined since the human person is the only creature that directly received God's "breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).

Undoubtedly, the human person is the center of God's creation as attested to by the Psalmist: "When I see the work of your fingers, / the moon and the stars that you set in place- / What are humans that you are mindful of them, / mere mortals that you care for them? / Yet you have made them little less than a god, / crowned them with glory and honor. / You have given them rule over the works of your hands, / put all things at their feet" (Psalm 8:4-7). This song goes with the force of a didactic literature, since the Book of Psalms belongs to the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament. Employing the use of comparing and contrasting, this particular inspired hymn expresses that the worth of the human person in the plan of God is simply immeasurable.

The inestimable esteem given by God to the human person remains largely as something enigmatic especially in the act of conserving his creation. Such conservation is far removed from simply sustaining all creatures in their existence but, in the case of human persons who have the gifts of intellect and will (*cf.* Sirach 15:14), it goes beyond functionality. Enticed by the cunning proposals and twisted reasoning of the Ancient Serpent, the human person abused and misused his freedom and sinned against God, as

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Pabillo, *Thus Says YAHWEH: Understanding the Old Testament Prophets* (Philippines: Salesiana Publishers, Inc., 2001), 16.

<sup>49</sup> Making reference to the First Account of the Creation of Man, John Paul II in his *Theology of the Body* has expounded on the dignity of the human person by explaining thus: "Given that in this narrative the *creation of man* as male and female, to which Jesus appeals in his answer according to Matthew 19, is placed in the rhythm of the seven days of the creation of the world, one could attribute to it above all a cosmological character: man is created on earth together with the visible world. At the same time, however, the Creator orders him to subdue the earth (Gen 1:28): he is therefore placed above the world. Although man is so strictly tied to the world, nevertheless the biblical narrative does not speak of his likeness with the rest of creatures, but only with God ('God created man in his image; in the image of God he created him,' Gen 1:27). In the cycle of the seven days of creation, a precise step-by-step progression is evident; man, by contrast, is not created according to a natural succession, but the Creator seems to halt before calling him to existence, as if he turned back into himself to make a decision, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness' (Gen 1:27)." John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 135.

creatively recounted by the third chapter of Genesis. It was against this background where God, while implicating justice, still showed his providential tenderness: replacing the itchy loincloths made out of fig leaves, God made leather garments, with which he clothed the human person (*cf.* Genesis 3:21).

## ***2. Promise of Salvation***

The *proto-evangelium* recorded in Genesis 3:15—“I will put enmity between you and the woman, / and between your offspring and hers; / He will strike at your head, / while you strike at his heel.”—affirms another prophetic allocution: “Can a mother forget her infant, / be without tenderness for the child of her womb? / Even should she forget, / I will never forget you. / See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name.” (Isaiah 49:15-16). While it is humanly impossible for a mother to forget her child whom she nursed in her womb, normally for nine months, yet even if this human impossibility happens, God will always remember us and his promise to save us. This, in the fullness of time, will be fulfilled in the person of God’s only Son, Jesus, the Word made flesh (*cf.* John 1:14).

God took concrete steps in the course of history to realize his plan of salvation. First of all, he has voluntarily chosen a people that he made as his own, beginning with the Patriarchs.

## ***3. Election of God’s People***

The relationality of God towards the human person has become more pronounced in his initiative of having personal dealings with Abraham, our father in faith. This personal interaction depicts the necessary response to the dependability of God and his promises.

The word spoken to Abraham contains both a call and a promise. First, it is a call to leave his own land, a summons to a new life, the beginning of an exodus which points him towards an unforeseen future. The sight which faith would give to Abraham would always be linked to the need to take this step forward: faith “sees” to the extent that it journeys, to the extent that it chooses to enter into the horizons opened up by God’s word. This word also contains a promise: Your descendants will be great in number, you will be the father of a great nation (*cf.* Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 22:17). As a response to a word that preceded it, Abraham’s faith would always be an act of remembrance. Yet this remembrance is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken. We see how faith, as remembrance of the future, *memoria futuri*, is thus closely bound up with hope.<sup>50</sup>

It is the faith of Abraham that serves as an example of how to surrender one’s life and destiny to the God who always remembers his promises—the God who is faithful. The biblical narratives preserving the memory of Abraham’s son Isaac and eventually his

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<sup>50</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, no. 9.

grandson Jacob whose name was later on changed by God to Israel (*cf.* Genesis 32:29), whose sons comprise the Twelve tribes of Israel, and God's instrument of liberation in the person of Moses,<sup>51</sup> all point to the grand movement initiated by God to form a holy people, a kingdom of priests, set apart to be peculiarly his own (*cf.* Exodus 19:6).

In his intricate journey with his people Israel, God, making a history in an all-new adventure of love-relationship in the context of exclusive worship (*cf.* Jeremiah 7:23; Ezekiel 11:20; 14:11; Hosea 2:25), would make use of various personages to be his representative among the people. He sent Judges as military commanders to lead the people in victories in battles—powerful portrayals of God's action on the side of those who are oppressed.

God also anointed kings, and the monarchy in Israel found its golden days in the rule of David to whom God has said: “. . . I will raise up your heir after you, sprung from your loins, and I will make his kingdom firm. It is he who shall build a house for my name. And I will make his royal throne firm forever. I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me” (2 Samuel 7:12-14). God made successive steps further towards the full realization of his promise. Solomon, in this context, is seen as a kind of proximate fulfillment of God's promise, yet history would remind us that since after his reign, the kingdom will be divided into north and south kingdoms (*cf.* 1 Kings 12), Solomon is simply a prototype of the coming Messiah, the real bringer of peace, whose dominion will be forever.

Alongside the kingship was the prophetic movement. Prophets, anointed by God as well, are meant to temper the monarchy—reminding the kings and all the people of their covenant with God. Ascribed in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, God also prophesied: “. . . the Lord himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14). Bearing all these in mind, it still has to be acknowledged that their collective wound was too deep that they had a serious problem with their identity as a people. Time and again they come back to their senses to realize that the LORD is the only true God (*cf.* 1 Kings 18:39).

Nevertheless, the faith of Israel in spite of its being marked by inestimable infidelity and idolatry has been constantly being purified by God's faithfulness to his part of the covenant. In the vicissitudes of Israel's fidelity and infidelity, it is noteworthy to see how “the light of faith is linked to concrete life-stories, to the grateful remembrance of God's mighty deeds and the progressive fulfillment of his promises.”<sup>52</sup> This will turn us to the fulfillment of everything in God's only Son.

With powerful certitude, Jesus, when he was questioned about the resurrection of the dead, asserts that the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living (*cf.* Luke 20:37-38). If the Lord God is

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<sup>51</sup> Progressive revelation has been God's way of divine Self-Communication throughout the Old dispensation. Moses is privileged to know the unveiling of God's holy Name יהוה (YHWH) which even the Patriarchs did not come to know (*cf.* Exodus 6:2). This God's prerogative of making himself known by revealing his very Name (*cf.* Exodus 3:14-15) will take on a deeper and fuller significance when Jesus Christ comes as the definitive revelation of God.

<sup>52</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, no. 12.

not the God of the dead, then why enumerate the names of the Patriarchs who in fact were already dead! Jesus is claiming that the LORD God is the God of memory. This he proved not only in words but also in deeds, as witnessed to by the very living of his life.

## **B. God the Son's Paschal Victory**

The mystery of salvation that is expressed in the liturgical celebration has to be explained by the new content that "paschal mystery" has acquired in Jesus Christ. The turn of events that led to the rightful fulfillment of God's promises in reference to Christ's paschal victory is described by the Constitution on the Liturgy thus:

Accordingly, just as Christ was sent by the Father so also he sent the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit. This he did so that they might preach the Gospel to every creature and proclaim that the Son of God by his death and resurrection freed us from the power of Satan and from death, and brought us into the Kingdom of his Father. But he also willed that the work of salvation which he preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, round which the entire liturgical life revolves. . . . From that time onward the Church has never failed to come together to celebrate the paschal mystery, reading those things "which were in all the scriptures concerning him" (Lk. 24:27), celebrating the Eucharist in which "the victory and triumph of his death are again made present," and at the same time "giving thanks to God for his inexpressible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, "in praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:12) through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>53</sup>

### ***1. Total Obedience to the Father's Will***

In the ineffable exchange of God-becoming-man, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the eternal Son of God, in assuming human nature, has this disposition of total obedience, as the *Letter to the Hebrews* recounts: "For this reason, when [Christ] came into this world, he said: / 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, / but a body you prepared for me; / holocausts and sin offerings you took no delight in. / Then I said, 'As is written of me in the scroll, / Behold, I come to do your will, O God'" (10:5-7).<sup>54</sup> Thus, Christ's total obedience is in view of his self-oblation to carry out the will of the Father.

The unprecedented event of the Incarnation, the incomprehensible condescension of the Son of God—for "in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily" (Colossians 2:9)—speaks inexhaustibly of God's gratuitous plan: "The birth of Jesus at Bethlehem is not an event which can be consigned to the past. The whole of human history in fact stands in reference to him: our own time and the future of the world are illumined by his

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<sup>53</sup> *SC*, no. 6.

<sup>54</sup> This echoes Psalm 40—"Sacrifice and offering you do not want; / but ears open to obedience you gave me. / . . . To do your will is my delight . . ." (vv.7-9). Indeed, God took silent steps in the actual realization of His plan of salvation.

presence.”<sup>55</sup> This is particularly remarkable since the birth of Jesus has a “Christological significance.”<sup>56</sup> It was only after the resurrection that the divinity of Jesus was fully revealed. Such was the earliest proclamation of the Church concerning salvation in the risen Christ. Tradition saw the different events in the ministry of Jesus in the light of the resurrection. Going back to baptism and later on to conception, they have ascertained that, from the very beginning when Jesus was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, the real identity of Jesus as God was already there. This is the reason why the birth story in itself is already a “vehicle of the good news of salvation,” i.e., the Gospel.

Jesus was “wrapped in swaddling clothes” and “laid in a manger.” More than an allusion to another descendant of King David, since Solomon too was wrapped in swaddling clothes like any other infant (*cf.* Wisdom 7:4-6), Jesus is presented as the Wisdom Incarnate. Theologically interpreted, the swaddling clothes and the manger, in iconographic tradition in terms of the theology of the Fathers, prefigure the hour of Jesus’ death: the baby Jesus being “stiffly wrapped in bandages” is the “sacrificial victim” from the very beginning, and the manger was seen as “a kind of altar.”<sup>57</sup> It is noted that wrapping in swaddling clothes is similar to the wrapping of the body at the end of life (*cf.* Luke 23:53).<sup>58</sup>

It was St. Augustine who expressed the profound truth concerning the manger and the Eucharist.<sup>59</sup> Animals find their food in the manger; Jesus being laid in a manger indicates what he attributed to himself: “the true bread come down from heaven, the true nourishment that we need to be truly ourselves. This is the food that gives us true life, eternal life. Thus the manger becomes a reference to the table of God, to which we are invited to receive the bread of God.”<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the image of the manger suggests as well the presence of animals. Isaiah 1:3 is alluded in this story: “An ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master’s manger; but Israel does not know, my people has not understood.” Ox and ass may refer also to humanity made up of Jews and Gentiles, who used to be blind but now because of the self-revelation of God in the manger has come to acknowledge God despite his mysterious hiddenness and the lowliness of his birth<sup>61</sup>—“a paradox of divine condescension.”<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Pope John Paul II, Bull of Indiction *Incarnationis Mysterium*, no. 1.

<sup>56</sup> *Cf.* Raymond E. Brown, *Christ in the Gospels of the Liturgical Year*, 10<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary Edition, ed. Ronald D. Witherup (Makati: St. Pauls, 2008), 99-106.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (New York: Image, Random House Inc., 2012), 68. [Hereafter cited as Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth III*].

<sup>58</sup> *Cf.* Nolland, 105.

<sup>59</sup> *Cf.* “SERMON 194:2 ON CHRISTMAS DAY,” *SERMONS: The Works of Saint Augustine, III/6 (184-229Z) on the Liturgical Seasons*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1990), 54-55.

<sup>60</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth III*, 68.

<sup>61</sup> *Cf.* Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth III*, 69.

<sup>62</sup> Nolland, 106.

The “good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10) is based on the truth that a child has been born, as in Isaiah 9:1-6. The word σήμερον (“today”) is used to suggest the beginning of the time of messianic salvation. Here for the first and only time in the Gospel σωτήρ, “savior,” is used of Jesus, who is “more than just another deliverer like one of the judges of Israel,” so the sentence continues ὅς ἐστιν Χριστὸς Κύριος, “who is Christ, the Lord.”<sup>63</sup> The title “Savior” had been used for YHWH in Luke 1:47 (“my spirit rejoices in God my savior”), and now it is explicitly used of Jesus.<sup>64</sup>

The beginnings of Jesus’ coming into this world were marked by utter humility and surrender, which will escalate to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, to the complete offering of himself on the cross, and finally to his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven. All these orchestrated in the one person of Jesus Christ to establish God’s dominion and, along with it, to bring about universal salvation.

## 2. *Universal Salvation*

By far, this is what Jesus victoriously accomplished, succinctly put: “To carry out the will of the Father Christ inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth and revealed to us his mystery; by his obedience he brought about our redemption.”<sup>65</sup> Such redemption points to the encompassing reality of salvation that embraces the totality of the person, a salvation that springs from within and that, at the time, necessarily extends to the entirety of humanity.

The name, in the Hebraic and Jewish mentality, is the icon of the person. It does represent the person inasmuch as it is also indicative of his identity and mission. The name Jesus—יֵשׁוּעַ (*Jeshua*)—literally means YHWH saves. The whole sacred reality of this name evokes the fulfillment of what the LORD has revealed to Moses through the burning bush (*cf.* Exodus 3). Just as the Name YHWH has been revealed as a presence relative to God’s liberating action on behalf of his people enslaved in Egypt, now the Name Jesus is also in reference to his mission of all-embracing salvation (*cf.* Luke 1:31-33): there is no salvation through anyone else except in the name of Jesus Christ (*cf.* Acts 4:10,12). The day has finally come for the climax of God’s saving act (*cf.* Galatians 4:4-5): just as Israel has long been waiting for its “real liberation; that an even more radical kind of exodus was necessary, one that called for a new Moses.”<sup>66</sup>

The man Jesus has risen up to a name above all names, through all of this: he was crushed in the flesh of sin, bore the form of a servant, was obedient to death; he became *Kyrios, pneuma*. He is, then, the same Lord who walked unnoticed and persecuted through the fields of Palestine and at last ended his time like a

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<sup>63</sup> Nolland, 107.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1981), 409.

<sup>65</sup> *LG*, no. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: From Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 3. [Hereafter cited as Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth I*].

criminal on the cross; now he rules the world as King and the Church is his bride. All his life, beginning in the Virgin's womb, is the great mystery of salvation, hidden from eternity in God and now revealed in the *ecclesia*. The deeds of his lowliness in that life on earth, his miserable death on Calvary appear now in a wholly different, light, God's own light; they are his acts, revealed, streaming with his light.<sup>67</sup>

As integral part of universal salvation, Jesus tirelessly proclaimed that *the Kingdom of God is at hand* which is the heart of his Gospel message (*cf.* Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17). Actually, "Jesus is the *autobasileia*, that is, the Kingdom in person. Jesus himself is the Kingdom; the Kingdom is not a thing, it is not a geographical dominion like worldly kingdoms. It is a person; it is he. . . . By the way in which he speaks of the Kingdom of God, Jesus leads men to realize the overwhelming fact that in him God himself is present among them, that he is God's presence."<sup>68</sup>

Inevitably, Jesus, alongside the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, is the perfect revealer of God the Father (*cf.* John 10:30). Jesus is the human face of God.<sup>69</sup> This is indispensable for universal salvation to take effect since it was Jesus himself, in his prayer, who asserted thus: "Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). Furthermore, to better facilitate our being *fili in Filio per Spiritum Sanctum* (*cf.* Galatians 4:4-7), on account of his being a true Son and of his intimate relationship with the Father, Jesus taught us to relate to God as Father, teaching us "The Lord's Prayer" (*cf.* Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) and giving us the example to dearly address God as "*Abba*," Father (*cf.* Mark 14:36; Galatians 4:6).

The culmination of Jesus' mission of bringing about our *divine filiation* through universal salvation is to undergo the other "baptism" he so eagerly wanted to accomplish (*cf.* Luke 12:50), namely, his death on the cross. This is the very reason why he was also "resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51) to enter into his hour of glorification (*cf.* John 12:23) and to draw everyone to himself (*cf.* John 12:32). This is to show that while the cross of Jesus is the locus where the glory of God will shine forth in a perfect way as he gathers everyone to himself, it is fulfilling the will of the Father to save us as well.<sup>70</sup>

While hanging on the cross, Jesus, before bowing down and handing over his spirit, said, *τετέλεσται*—"It is finished" (John 19:30). Earlier in the Gospel of John it was said that Jesus "loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end" (13:1). The Greek expression *εἰς τέλος* (*eis telos*), meaning "end," refers to time and quality. In bringing to perfection the mission given to him by the Father, Jesus loved us all to the *end* in his *crucifixion* (temporal meaning), and he also *perfectly* loved us to the end

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<sup>67</sup> Casel, 66.

<sup>68</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth I*, 49.

<sup>69</sup> *Cf.* Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth I*, 128.

<sup>70</sup> *Cf.* Francis J. Moloney, SDB, *The Living Voice of the Gospel: The Gospels Today* (Australia: John Garratt Publishing, 2006), 253.

(qualitative meaning).<sup>71</sup> That being said expresses the magnitude of Jesus' saving mission that embraces all time, all depth, and all peoples.

To perpetuate his sacrifice on the cross that brought about universal salvation, Jesus instituted *his* own Passover meal at the Last Supper together with his disciples: "When the hour came, [Jesus] took his place at table with the apostles. He 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 there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God'" (Luke 22:14-16).<sup>72</sup> By giving *his* Body and *his* Blood in the ritual forms of bread and wine, Jesus instituted the memory of tomorrow. He sacramentalized in an unbloody meal the bloody sacrifice he will be undergoing the following day. As regards the Last Supper tradition, the only compelling explanation that can stand to account for such an invention is this:

Only from the mind of Christ himself could such an idea have emerged. Only he could so authoritatively weave together the strands of the Law and the Prophets—remaining entirely faithful to Scripture while expressing the radically new quality of his sonship. Only because he himself spoke and acted thus could the Church in her various manifestations "break bread" from the very beginning, as Jesus did on the night he was betrayed.<sup>73</sup>

In line with the institution of the Eucharist, the episode of the multiplication of the loaves, by principle of multiple attestation (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-71), takes on a greater historical value, as pointing to the reality that "in Jesus, the God of Israel has not been lost, but rendered incarnate. Jesus does not deny the Jewish Passover memory of the gift of the manna, present in the nourishment provided by the Law that makes God known to Israel," but the disciples are asked to accept Jesus' claim, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35); therefore, to celebrate the former gift of the bread from heaven given through Moses is no longer needed, since "such a tradition was a sign and a shadow of what has taken place in and through Jesus Christ."<sup>74</sup> This shows the continuous saving act of God in the unified but progressive flow from the Old to the New Testament.

Moreover, in the celebration of the Eucharist, as Jesus spoke over the bread—"This is my body" (Mark and Matthew) "which is given for you" (added by Paul and Luke), we clearly see the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (*cf.* John 10:14-15). With this, Jesus also declares: "I have the power to lay [my life] down, and the power to take it up again" (John 10:18). "The act of giving his life

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<sup>71</sup> *Cf.* Moloney, 274.

<sup>72</sup> This is gleaned from the account of chronologies of the Johannine tradition (different from the Synoptic chronologies) claiming that during Jesus' trial before Pilate, "the Jewish authorities had not yet eaten the Passover and, thus, had to keep themselves ritually pure" asserting therefore that Jesus' "crucifixion took place, not on the feast, but on the day before the feast. This means that Jesus died at the hour when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple." Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, trans. Vatican Secretariat of State (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), 112-113. [Hereafter cited as Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth II*].

<sup>73</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth II*, 125.

<sup>74</sup> Moloney, 276.

includes the Resurrection.”<sup>75</sup> And this memorial celebration, in the strict sense of the word, is truly a Eucharist. Jesus gave thanks in advance: because his prayer was “heard” (cf. Hebrews 5:7); “the Father did not abandon him in death” (cf. Psalm 16:10); for “the gift of the Resurrection, and on that basis he could already give his body and blood in the form of bread and wine as a pledge of resurrection and eternal life (cf. John 6:53-58).”<sup>76</sup> Hence, the Lord Jesus is the epitome of universal salvation generously offered by God to everyone.

In this regard, the hope of the “new covenant” that was foretold by the Prophet Jeremiah (31:31-34) has finally come through and in Jesus, and it is not feebly founded on human frailty of repeated infidelities but on the obedience of the Son, who took upon himself the disobedience of humanity, suffered and died bearing it, and eventually overcome it by his rising to new life. Therefore, objectively, salvation comes from God for all who believe through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 3:22)<sup>77</sup>: “For however many are the promises of God, their Yes is in [the Son of God, Jesus Christ]; therefore, the Amen from us also goes through him to God for glory” (2 Corinthians 1:20). After all, the Lord Jesus himself assures us: “I am the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6). With faith in Christ (cf. Romans 10:17), we also profess: “we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the savior of the world” (John 4:42).

### **C. God the Holy Spirit: the Paraclete**

“*Christ’s relevance for people of all times is shown forth in his body, which is the Church.* For this reason the Lord promised his disciples the Holy Spirit, who would ‘bring to their remembrance’ and teach them understand his commandments (cf. Jn. 14:26), and who would be the principle and constant source of a new life in the world (cf. Jn. 3:5-8; Rom. 8:1-13).”<sup>78</sup> This is the necessary overflow of the nature of the Holy Spirit in the economy of creation and salvation which radically springs from his life of communion within the Trinity:

In his intimate life, “God is love” [1 Jn 4:8.16], the essential love shared by the three divine persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit of the Father and of the Son. Therefore he “searches even the depths of God” [1 Cor 2:10], as uncreated *Love-Gift*. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine persons, and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is *the personal expression* of this self-giving, of this being-love (cf. St. Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theol.* La, qq. 37-38). He is Person-Love. He is

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<sup>75</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth II*, 131.

<sup>76</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth II*, 140.

<sup>77</sup> This scriptural passage is commonly rendered as “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” which points to the subjective assent of any believer, but the original text shows—πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ—that Paul is attributing the efficacy of salvation to the objective fidelity of Jesus Christ who offered his life on the cross, manifesting the supreme love of God for all.

<sup>78</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 25.

Person-Gift. Here we have the inexhaustible treasure of the reality and an inexpressible deepening of the concept of *person* in God, which only divine revelation makes known to us.<sup>79</sup>

In this regard, no wonder, the very gift given by the Lord Jesus Christ right at the moment he breathed his last on the cross is the Holy Spirit (*cf.* John 19:30), and the same gift was given to his apostles after his resurrection (*cf.* John 20:22). Truly, the Holy Spirit is the first instalment of the final glory to be revealed in Christ (*cf.* 2 Corinthians 1:22). He is the one helping us to endure the trials of our earthly pilgrimage, he comes “to the aid of our weakness,” and he strengthens us to grow in the conviction that “in hope we were saved” (Romans 8:24-26). Indeed, he is the paraclete promised by Jesus (*cf.* John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit is indispensable in our Christian life insofar as he is the one expressing what is inexpressible, deep within the recesses of our hearts, before God—our intimate longing for a filial relationship with God: “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘*Abba!* Father!’” (Galatians 4:3). Likewise, he is the one who keeps us firm in our kerygmatic faith, proclaiming Jesus—the definitive fulfillment of Scriptures—as God: “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). This divine interaction between the *Word of God* (made flesh) and the *Finger of God* has been powerfully portrayed in an episode in the life of Christ when he exorcised a mute demon and he was senselessly associated with the prince of demons (*cf.* Luke 11:20): the Kingdom of God is not located simply in the physical presence of Jesus but also in his saving action, accomplished in the Holy Spirit.

The saving action of the Holy Spirit always comes as an unmerited gift because “the Holy Spirit, being consubstantial with the Father and the Son in divinity, is love and uncreated gift from which derives as from its source (*fons vivus*) all giving of gifts vis-à-vis creatures (created gift): the gift of existence to all things through creation; the gift of grace to human beings through the whole economy of salvation.”<sup>80</sup> This is evidently seen in his enthusing presence all throughout the life and mission of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the *Acts of the Apostles* narrates in vivid fashion how the Christian community reliably becomes the newly constituted people of God. The only underlying principle is that they are filled with the Holy Spirit. After all, the Lord Jesus assured them that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they will be his witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (*cf.* Acts 1:3).

The continuous growth of the Church down the centuries, witnessing the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms, is because of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the *soul of the Church*,<sup>81</sup> and the mission entrusted by the Lord Jesus Christ to his followers is sustained by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it is fitting for us to remember with faith and worship with hope God our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord because “the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Romans 5:5).

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<sup>79</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 10.

<sup>80</sup> *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 10.

<sup>81</sup> *Cf.* CCC, no. 813.

## D. Mary kept all things in her Heart

At the pinnacle of God’s revelation, Mary brought Jesus forth in the fulfillment of God’s plan of salvation: “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption” (Galatians 4:4). Certainly, this proclamation already presupposes the intricate wonders God’s grace has wrought with Mary’s heroic availability and cooperation—“Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). It is for this reason that the faithful who are all joined to the Lord Jesus and in the communion of all believers “must in the first place reverence the memory ‘of the glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.’”<sup>82</sup>

The Old Testament accounts of faithful women, who courageously took the risk and initiative to withstand the challenge of giving a hand in the unfolding of God’s plan of salvation, find their fulfillment in the Daughter of Zion, Mary. In the context of the “good soil” who hear the word and hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance (*cf.* Luke 8:15), the faith of Mary has been portrayed. The Evangelist Luke himself “speaks of Mary’s memory, how she treasured in her heart all that she had heard and seen, so that the word could bear fruit in her life. The Mother of the Lord is the perfect icon of faith; as Saint Elizabeth would say: ‘Blessed is she who believed’ (Luke 1:45).”<sup>83</sup>

Mary’s faith is characterized by her humble disposition of listening to the word of God and her readiness to act on it. God’s plan of salvation in Jesus Christ began, insofar as Mary was concerned, with the Angel Gabriel’s greeting, Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη ὁ κύριος μετὰ σου—“Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you” (Luke 1:26-38)—but actually this mysterious salutation sheds light to the reality of Mary’ singular grace of being preserved immune from all stain of original sin from the moment of her conception.<sup>84</sup>

The lowliness of Mary<sup>85</sup> despite her enormous part in the realization of God’s plan of salvation is even more evidenced by her prayerfulness, her adoration of the true and living God and the acknowledgement of her nothingness before the majesty of God. This enabled her to cultivate that attitude of gratefulness. Her prayer of gratitude, the *Magnificat*, has this constant refrain: the greatness of God especially remembering his

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<sup>82</sup> *LG*, no. 52.

<sup>83</sup> *Lumen Fidei*, no. 58.

<sup>84</sup> This Dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception was defined by Pope Pius IX in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (8 December 1854).

<sup>85</sup> In the Gospel of Luke, contrasts drawn between the two birth announcement stories of John the Baptist (where we see the personage of the priest, the place is the Temple and the context is liturgy) and of Jesus (where we see an unknown young woman, in an unknown small town, in an unknown private dwelling) reveal that the unique sign of the new Covenant is humility and hiddenness just like the mustard-seed—epitomized by the birth of Jesus in lowliness. *Cf.* Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth III*, 21.

promise of mercy and looking with favor on his people, particularly the lowly and the despised (cf. Luke 1:46-55).

The intercessory prayer of Mary is powerful as well. The first sign Jesus performed in the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee happened because of Mary's imploring statement of confidence in the power of God and in the kindheartedness of her Son (cf. John 2:1-11). It is here where Mary's one and only maternal counsel in the scriptures has been recorded: "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5).

It has been documented that Mary used to keep all things, pondering them in her heart (Luke 2:19;51). The Greek *σημβάλλουσα* signifies the distinctive action of a pair of cymbals, thus, clashing repeatedly together, back and forth in her heart, the Word of God and the mystery brought by the events she confronted vis-à-vis her stand as a believer. This gains a more serious implication and effects a greater admiration to Mary, keeping in mind that her faith has been constantly tested from the moment of the Annunciation up until the Crucifixion and even beyond the Ascension.

Mary, therefore, is the example for all believers of faithful discipleship and Christian holiness<sup>86</sup> since she is the "most perfect embodiment" of obeying in faith, which is "to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God, who is Truth itself."<sup>87</sup> With her *fiat* full of faith and obedience, Mary is rightly esteemed as the new Eve, mother of the living.<sup>88</sup> Precisely at the foot of the cross (cf. John 19:25-27), Mary received from her Son the role of being the Mother of the Church: "Woman, behold your son." And to all the believers, represented by John, Jesus shared his own mother: "Behold, you mother."

Mary as the woman of evangelical obedience, now the Mother of the community of disciples, journeyed in faith, supporting the beginning of the Church through her prayers, imploring the overshadowing presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:13-14): the prayerful presence of Mary as a mother in the midst of her children set the Church's pilgrimage through the history of individuals and peoples.<sup>89</sup> As Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix, Mary is indeed our Mother in the order of Grace.<sup>90</sup>

Being the "eschatological icon" of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, Mary "in the glory she possesses in body and soul in heaven is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise she shines forth on earth, until the day of the Lord shall come (cfr. 2 Pet. 3:10), a sign of certain hope and comfort to the Pilgrim people of God."<sup>91</sup>

Mary, the New Woman, stand at the side of Christ, the New Man, within whose mystery the mystery of the human being alone finds true light; she is given to us as a pledge and guarantee that God's plan in Christ for the salvation of the human

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. CCC, no. 2030.

<sup>87</sup> CCC, no. 144.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. CCC, no. 511.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Mater*, no. 26.

<sup>90</sup> For a more extensive discussion on the compatibility of Mary's mediation with the unique mediation of Christ cf. *LG*, nos. 60-62.

<sup>91</sup> *LG*, no. 68.

person has already achieved realisation in a creature: in her. Contemplated in the vicissitudes of her earthly life and in the heavenly bliss which she already possesses in the City of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary offers a calm vision and a reassuring word to modern people, torn as they often are between anguish and hope, defeated by their own sense of limitations and assailed by limitless aspirations, troubled in their mind and divided in their heart, uncertain before the riddle of death, oppressed by loneliness while yearning for fellowship, a prey to boredom and disgust. She shows forth the victory of hope over anguish, of fellowship over solitude, of peace over anxiety, of joy and beauty over boredom and disgust, of eternal visions over earthly ones, of life over death.<sup>92</sup>

All these, in broad strokes, seek to typify that Catholic liturgical celebration has to be naturally filled with life-generating gratitude. Considering God the Father's plan of salvation—beginning with creation where the human person is at the center, to his enduring compassion despite the fall of man with the sin of pride and disobedience, to the constitution of his people arising from his promise to the Patriarchs—the address of every liturgical celebration to the Father is already replete with rich memory of utter wisdom and goodness. The culmination and definitive “yes” of God to humanity comes in the Word made flesh, Jesus our Savior. The mediatory role of Christ as the only way to the Father is taken into account by the celebration of the liturgy inasmuch as our prayers are always “through Christ” our Lord. This speaks voluminous as regards his complete abandonment to the will of the Father who brought everything to its consummation through the Paschal Mystery of Christ that brought universal salvation. The Paraclete, the silent worker, behind every cultic celebration, effecting the memorial and the transformation, is also remembered as everything is being done “in the unity of the Holy Spirit.” The immense content of such lofty mysteries in the economy of salvation as being preserved and remembered in the liturgical celebration is inspired by the lowly attitude of Mary who kept all things in her heart.

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<sup>92</sup> Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, no. 57.

## Chapter Three

### **CODED ANÁMNESIS: JOURNEY TOWARDS THE ETERNAL COMMUNION**

Remembering with gratitude the wonders of God’s saving plan, accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, will consequently usher us to the moral imperatives of Christian life. Anámnesis carries with it the dynamic living out of what is remembered. Hence, we will now discuss *Lex vivendi*, namely, coded anámnesis: the journey of discipleship towards the eternal communion.

“For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness . . .” (Romans 2:14-15). While Catholic moral tradition, since the Middle Ages, refers to the fundamental disposition to do good and avoid evil as “synderesis,” Ratzinger ingeniously made use of the term “anámnesis,” which, according to the then-Cardinal, now Pope-Emeritus, should be taken to mean what St. Paul expressed in the second chapter of his Letter to the Romans (just quoted above).

The assertion traces its root even as far back as the time of a renowned Ancient philosopher, Plato. Ratzinger explained that Plato taught that the intellectual midwifery characteristic of Socrates, that is, the method of teaching through the art of questioning was actually a means of bringing the student to “remember” what he already knew. In this regard, the concept of anámnesis encapsulates, more effectively than synderesis, the remembering of what constitutes our very being in terms of doing good and avoiding evil. This recalling of our need to be disposed toward good and to turn against evil is necessary to avoid the dictatorship of subjectivism.<sup>93</sup> This exultation of relativistic standard of rightness and wrongness is unspeakably dangerous especially today because it does not only alienate man from his true nature and vocation, but it also seeks to destroy him in the end and even along the process.

Admittedly, the moral norm engraved in the human heart points to the greater reality that perfects the human person—his soulful longing for the divine.

The first so-called ontological level of the phenomenon conscience consists in the fact that something like an original memory of the good and true (they are identical) has been planted in us, that there is an inner ontological tendency within man, who is created in the likeness of God, toward the divine. From its origin, man’s being resonates with some things and clashes with others. This anamnesis of the origin, which results from the god-like constitution of our being, is not a conceptually articulated knowing, a store of retrievable contents. It is, so to speak, an inner sense, a capacity to recall, so that the one whom it

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *On Conscience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 30-31.

addresses, if he is not turned in on himself, hears it echo from within. He sees: That's it! That is what my nature points to and seeks."<sup>94</sup>

On the basis of individual assent to what is morally good, on the basis of personal, conscious, free and explicit surrender to truth, God draws a vision of having his newly constituted people. Therefore, the LORD pronounced this prophetic oracle through Ezekiel: "I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the stony heart from their bodies, and replace it with a natural heart, so that they will live according to my statutes, and observe and carry out my ordinances; thus they shall be my people and I will be their God" (11:19-20). This would only be fully realized in the redeemed human person who commits himself to the life-long process of conversion and faith as the call of the Lord prescribes thus: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Inasmuch as the call demands individual responses as deliberated human acts, each one who has been called is eventually drawn to form one assembly of believers, that is, the ἐκκλησία, the community of disciples.

### **A. The Community of Disciples: Following Jesus**

Remaining as *image of God*, the human person is constantly called to be the *likeness of God*.<sup>95</sup> It is his vocation "to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation 'in the image and likeness of God.'"<sup>96</sup> As such, this sublime mission of revealing God through the human person's very being finds its supreme model in the Person of Jesus, the perfect Image and Likeness of God.

If Jesus declares himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), and that he brings us into the full communion of the Blessed Life of the Triune God, then following Him is our salvation. The definitive expression referring to the real path irrevocably leading to God places Jesus at the crucial point of encounter: there is none besides him, and without him we can only turn against ourselves and find perdition. For this reason, following Jesus is not only the most logical option to make but also the perfect thing to do.

*Moral living* definitely means *following Jesus*<sup>97</sup>: "Christian morality consists, in the simplicity of the Gospel, in *following Jesus Christ*, in abandoning oneself to him, in letting oneself be transformed by his grace and renewed by his mercy, gifts which come to us in the living communion of his Church."<sup>98</sup> While following Jesus remains radically as a personal endeavour; nonetheless, it essentially involves the mediation of the community of disciples, the Church.

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<sup>94</sup> Ratzinger, *On Conscience*, 32.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. CCC, no. 705.

<sup>96</sup> CCC, no. 2085.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, no. 674. [Hereafter cited as *CFC*].

<sup>98</sup> *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 119.

The Church is necessary as a communal bearer of moral tradition that will surely guide each believer in the lifelong mission of following Christ.<sup>99</sup> The Church, especially through the grace of the hierarchy, safeguards while, at the same time, transmits the memory of the Lord, including the essentials of Christian discipleship. Therefore, how to conduct oneself in accordance with the faithful following of the Lord—living out the Gospel values in the heart of the communion of the Church—is never simply left to the morality of conscience, that is, the subjective dispositions of individual believers, but it also has to be guided by the morality of authority based on the mandate given by the Lord Jesus.

When the Lord gave the command to his apostles during the Last Supper—“do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19)—he does not only refer to the cultic celebration of his new Passover but to the entirety of his identity and mission. Truly, the body of Jesus would be broken and his blood would be poured, but there is something more: “By the word ‘do this,’ [the apostles] are urged to break their bodies and spill their blood in the future mission.”<sup>100</sup> Besides, even St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians (11:23-34) recounts the Lord’s Supper in order to reprimand the abuse at Corinth such as lack of sensitivity, selfishness and greediness. Hence, it is a celebration that has everything to do with life—a life characterized with what is morally upright in the standard of the Gospel, and a life, while remaining personal, that is open from within to the prophetic voice of Mother the Church. For a Christian there can be no rapture between worship and morals, there can be no fundamental conflict between a personal assent and the communal assent to truth, and there can be no dichotomy between life and faith.

Individually and as a community, we dare say with St. Paul: “I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (Galatians 2:19-20). Christian faith is the ambiance in which Christian morality thrives. For Christians, it is faith that “makes a *radical difference* in their moral lives” by means of “providing a *distinctive Christian meaning* to life; and by *strengthening moral motivation* with *uniquely Christian motives*.”<sup>101</sup> Thus, Christian morality, as it were, radically flows from Christian faith, which “gives rise to and calls for a consistent life commitment.”<sup>102</sup>

A consistent life commitment, zealous with Christian moral imperatives, is only possible through love that animates the life of each believer and of the community. In reality, the moral life is “the response due to the many gratuitous initiatives taken by God out of love for man.”<sup>103</sup> The Johannine account of foot-washing (John 13) serves as the memorial ordinance demanding obedience to Jesus’ love commandment: “the memorial celebration must fit into a life of obedience to the Gospel” and that in this context it

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. *CFC*, no. 758.

<sup>100</sup> Moloney, 208.

<sup>101</sup> *CFC*, no. 734.

<sup>102</sup> *CFC*, no. 738.

<sup>103</sup> *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 10.

fosters a life serving as a herald of the Good News.<sup>104</sup> After all, love consists in keeping the commandments of Christ (*cf.* John 15:10), and this is summed up in his new commandment: “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). The Lord Jesus Christ is the standard of Christian discipleship, of Christian morality.

The courage to carry on in this life of discipleship despite the countless trials and difficulties is impelled not by anything mundane but by the assurance of faith, as the Lord Jesus Christ himself declares: “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world” (John 16:33). This conviction of hope draws its strength from that relationship that has been gained for us by our Lord—the restoration of our life in God that springs into the fullness of life. Such is what we live up until today as a community of disciples, and such is what we hope for in the glorious eternity that awaits us all.

## **B. Hope of Communion in the Eternal Liturgy**

The human person is the point of convergence of two far-reaching sides: he is a creature of nothingness and at the same time a creature of profound worth. He is a creature of nothingness insofar as he is just made out of dust (*cf.* Genesis 3:19), and without the breath of God he simply ceases to exist. Nonetheless, he is of profound worth as well, for he is the only creature God destined for himself.

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to the truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator.<sup>105</sup>

The inalienable and inviolable dignity of the human person entirely rests on his vocation to be in communion with God. This is also the basis why every human person is infinitely precious in his “unique and unrepeatable human reality.”<sup>106</sup> This communion is the fullest end the divine plan has set as a pledged destiny for all who freely love God in this world.

The prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper recounts that “eternal life” begins here and now if only we allow ourselves in faith to be grafted into the very life of God: “Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). This is the case inasmuch as knowledge in the biblical

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<sup>104</sup> David N. Power, “Theology of Eucharistic Celebration,” *HANDBOOK OF LITURGICAL STUDIES, Vol. III: THE EUCHARIST*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2004), 332.

<sup>105</sup> *CCC*, no. 27.

<sup>106</sup> Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 13.

language is not purely the product of the process of intellection but the fruit of an encounter that matures into a love-relationship.<sup>107</sup>

“Eternal life” is not—as modern reader might immediately assume—life after death, in contrast to this present life, which is transient and not eternal. “Eternal life” is life itself, real life, which can also be lived in the present age and is no longer challenged by physical death. This is the point: to “seize” life here and now, real life that can no longer be destroyed by anything or anyone.

The meaning of “eternal life” appears very clearly in the account of the raising of Lazarus: “He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (Jn 11:25-26). “Because I live, you will live also”, says Jesus to his disciples at the Last Supper (Jn 14:19), and he thereby reveals once again that a distinguishing feature of the disciple of Jesus is the fact the he “lives”: beyond the mere fact of existing, he has found and embraces the *real* life that everyone is seeking. On the basis of such texts, the early Christians called themselves “the living” (*hoi zōntes*). They had found what all are seeking—life itself, full, and hence, indestructible life.<sup>108</sup>

While the perfection of “eternal life” is attained only after death, “in faith it is even now a light of truth, a source of meaning for life, an inchoate share in the full following of Christ.”<sup>109</sup> The subsistence of “eternal life” in this present age manifests the power of God’s saving grace that speaks of the imperishable hope that we are all called to communion in the endless joys of heaven. This is enacted and best signified whenever the Church is gathered as a liturgical assembly. She prefigures the eternal liturgy:

The assembly is an image that anticipates the Church of heaven as glimpsed in the darkness of faith. This is why, in the visions of the apocalypse, St. John describes heaven as a liturgical assembly: he sees there the same gathering of the people of God; he hears there the same acclamations, the same canticles (the Canticum of Moses in particular). In the earthly liturgy, like the heavenly, those assembled contemplate the risen Lord, the Lamb who has been slain; they see the glory of the Father reflected in him; they acclaim him by the glorious title *Kyrios*. Like the heavenly assembly and in union with it—“with the whole company of heaven, venerating the memory of the saints”—the earthly assembly occupies itself with praise of God. The presence of Christ is the pledge and anticipation of his blessed return; thus liturgical prayer gives intense expression to eschatological expectation.<sup>110</sup>

Truly, the earthly liturgy as “a foretaste of heavenly liturgy”<sup>111</sup> audaciously acclaims: “Marana tha” (1 Corinthians 16:22)—“Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20), expressing our joy in hope to welcome our glorious Savior, who would bring the definitive fulfillment of salvation. This communal acclamation that happens throughout the Liturgical Year is an anámnesis of the mysteries of redemption: “Celebrating the

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<sup>107</sup> Knowledge as a personal contact (see John 10:14-15 and 14:20; 17:21-22; cf. 14:17; 2 John 1-2) becomes love when it matures (see Hosea 6:6 and 1 John 1:3). Cf. New Jerusalem Bible, note 10g, 1767.

<sup>108</sup> Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth II*, 82-83.

<sup>109</sup> *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 12.

<sup>110</sup> Martimort, 96.

<sup>111</sup> CCC, no. 1090.

memorial of our salvation strengthens our hope in the resurrection of the body and in the possibility of meeting once again, face to face, those who have gone before us marked with the sign of faith.”<sup>112</sup> In every celebration that closely ties together heaven and earth in one liturgy, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of the Lord's powers and merits, making them present in every age in order that the faithful may lay hold on them and be filled with saving grace until they are called to partake of the eternal liturgy.

Our hope of communion in the eternal liturgy possesses a distinct sacramental power and efficacy to strengthen our Christian life by providing it supernatural optimism, charity and gratitude: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7). For in the final consummation of time, gratefully remembering the wonders God’s grace has wrought in our frail humanity, we must humbly profess: “I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). Only then can we enjoy heaven, the “perfect life with the Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed, . . . the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.”<sup>113</sup>

Indeed, our discussion on “our journey towards the eternal communion” integrates the demands of Christian morality and the vision of Catholic eschatology. It is the Lord Jesus himself who indicates that there is an intrinsic connection between loving obedience to God and eternal life (*cf.* Matthew 19:17). If “following Christ” is “the essential and primordial foundation of Christian morality,”<sup>114</sup> and Jesus is the only way to the Father (*cf.* John 14:6), then, the imitation of Jesus and his love is our only way to salvation, that is, to the “wedding feast of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). Rightly does the Liturgy tell us at the dismissal in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist: “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.” This is coded anámnēsis.

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<sup>112</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 32.

<sup>113</sup> *CCC*, no. 1024.

<sup>114</sup> *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 19.

## CONCLUSION

“But you have the anointing that comes from the holy one, and you all have knowledge” (1 John 2:20). This is the sharp argument asserted by the first Epistle attributed to the Apostle John in contrast to the presumption of Gnostic teachers, who wanted to convince and mislead the faithful that their naive faith must be understood and applied much differently.

In the Old Testament sense, anointing is the reception of the Spirit of God. In effect, this anointing that the faithful have received is the Spirit given to the Messiah and by him to all believers. In baptism, this anointing by Jesus, “the holy one,” is fully realized.

To claim that all faithful “have knowledge” is also to express, as in a variant rendition, that “they know all things.” However, this has to be clarified. It does not mean a factual omniscience on the part of the faithful. It does signify, nevertheless, the **certitude of the Christian memory**. “This Christian memory, to be sure, is always learning, but proceeding from its sacramental identity, it also distinguishes *from within* between what is a genuine unfolding of its recollection and what is its destruction and falsification.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, the concern of the Apostle in reminding the faithful concerning their faith is to make them aware of the sureness and reliability of the Christian memory.

By far, this paper is but an attempt to bring together the essential articles of the Christian faith—celebrated, proclaimed and lived—in the perspective of anámnesis. A living memorial is fundamental in every aspect of Catholic Tradition inasmuch as it ascertains fidelity: the fidelity of God to his people and the response of fidelity of the people to God in accordance with what the Lord Jesus taught “in Spirit and truth” (John 4:23). Hence, the sacraments of faith, the profession of faith, and the life of faith that constitute our Catholic faith is integrally safeguarded and faithfully transmitted from one generation to the next—a memorial that engrafts us into the mysteries of Christ (cultic anámnesis), a remembering that flows from the divine plan (creedal anámnesis), and a recalling that transpires in yet transcends time (coded anámnesis).

All of these are but directed to the continuous work of salvation. This is the reason why anámnesis awakens within us a profound sense of joy and gratitude. After all, it is also our common faith that enlightens and strengthens us to always hopefully remember that our God is the Almighty God, omnipotent in love and compassion, who said “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13). Nothing is beyond the embrace of God, and anámnesis allows us to be totally captivated by the grace of God from today up until time is assumed by eternity.

Indeed, the heart of Catholic theology is grateful anámnesis.

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<sup>115</sup> Ratzinger, *On Conscience*, 35.

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