

Celebrating the Eucharist: Sacrifice and Communion

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Preface

The value of the Fota international liturgy conferences resides not only in the papers delivered by the distinguished speakers, but also in the discussion which ensues after these papers, in and indeed beyond the conference hall. Fota IV undertook to examine the *Missale Romanum*, but a recurring topic of discussion during the days of that meeting was the relationship between the aspects of sacrifice and communion in the liturgy of the Mass. It was clear that there was an appetite to pursue this further. In addition, since 2012 was to see Ireland host the fiftieth international eucharistic congress, it seemed more than appropriate to devote Fota V, to be held just a few weeks after that congress, to a eucharistic theme.

This volume presents the papers of that conference. Whereas it is common today to think of the Eucharist in terms of communion, and indeed that was precisely the theme of the fiftieth congress ('communion with Christ and with one another'), the sacrificial nature of the eucharistic celebration is often neglected or misunderstood. Both aspects, however, communion and sacrifice, are essential to a full and balanced understanding of the Eucharist, though, it must be admitted, the sacrificial can be more difficult to appreciate. The contributions in the present volume address this twin topic from a very wide range of perspectives: scriptural, patristic, dogmatic, liturgical, canonical, spiritual, philosophical, anthropological and historical. Rather than a comprehensive treatise in any one area, we have a broad overview of several. It is hoped that readers will find much to stimulate their interest, and will be led to pursue the indications for further reading and research given in the footnotes.

The Fifth Fota International Liturgy Conference could not have taken place without the generous support of the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, New Haven, Connecticut. Particular thanks go to Dr Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight, and to Mr Stephen Feiler.

Thanks also to the Munich-based *Ratzinger/Benedikt XVI Stiftung* and Fr Stephan Horn; to the Order of Malta; and to some personal benefactors in Germany, in the United States and in Ireland, among whom were a number of priests of the diocese of Cloyne.

The conference was once again superbly organized by St Colman's Society for Catholic Liturgy under the guidance of its president, Norma Crosbie, and officers Terry Pender, Adrian O'Donovan, James O'Sullivan and Sylvia Wilmott. Their efficiency was matched only by their courtesy.

An important feature of the Fota conferences has always been the exemplary liturgies which accompany the academic proceedings. Special thanks go to Fr Patrick McCarthy, PP, for allowing the use of the splendid church of Sts Peter and Paul, Cork, and to the numerous sacred ministers and servers who took care of the ceremonies, in particular the members of the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter and the Institute of Christ the King. The Lassus Scholars, under the direction of Dr Ite O'Donovan, along with organist Dr Paul McKeever, provided music altogether worthy of the divine liturgy.

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The holy Eucharist as sacrifice in canonical discipline

RAYMOND LEO CARDINAL BURKE

Canonical discipline exists to safeguard and promote the sacred realities of our life in Christ in his holy Church. Certain norms of the law provide for a common way of interpreting everyday aspects of life in the Church, or provide procedures by which to safeguard good order in the life of the Church and justice in the relationships of her members, or codify the wisdom in the Church's perennial discipline regarding the states of life in the Church or her various associations and apostolates. However, none are more important and none are to be more revered than the norms which pertain to the highest and most perfect expression of the Church's being, her worship of God 'in spirit and truth' (John 4:24), and, above all, to the sacrament of the holy Eucharist, the Mystery of faith.

Blessed Pope John Paul II articulated the purpose of canon law, that is, the service of faith and grace, and of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and charity. He noted that, far from hindering the living of our life in Christ, canonical discipline safeguards and fosters our Christian life. In the Apostolic Constitution *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges* by which he promulgated the 1983 Code of Canon Law, he wrote:

[I]ts purpose is rather to create such an order in the ecclesial society that, while assigning the primacy to love, grace and charisms, it at the same time renders their organic development easier in the life of both the ecclesial society and the individual persons who belong to it.¹

As such, canon law can never be in conflict with the Church's doctrine but is rather at its service and, in fact, in the words of Pope John Paul II, is 'extremely necessary for the Church'.²

1 *Codex eo potius spectat, ut talem gignat ordinem in ecclesiali societate, qui, praecipuas tribuens partes amori, gratiae atque charismati, eodem tempore faciliorem reddat ordinatam eorum progressionem in vita sive ecclesialis societatis, sive etiam singulorum hominum, qui ad illam pertinent.* Ioannes Paulus PP. II, Constitutio Apostolica *Sacrae Disciplinae Leges*, 25 Ianuarii 1983, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 75, Pars II (1983), p. xi (hereafter, *SDL*); English translation: Canon Law Society of America, *Code of Canon Law: Latin-English edition*, New English Translation (Washington, 1998), pp xxix-xxx (hereafter, *SDLE*).

2 *Ecclesiae omnino necessarius est.* *SDL*, p. xii; *SDLE*, p. xxxi.

The sacred doctrine of the Church, in fact, is translated into discipline by means of the canonical tradition.³ Blessed John Paul II indicated four ways in which the Church's discipline provides a necessary service to her doctrine, declaring:

Since the Church is organized as a social and visible structure, it must also have norms: in order that its hierarchical and organic structure be visible; in order that the exercise of the functions divinely entrusted to it, especially that of sacred power and of the administration of the sacraments, may be adequately organized; in order that the mutual relations of the faithful may be regulated according to justice based upon charity, with the rights of individuals guaranteed and well defined; in order, finally, that common initiatives undertaken to live a Christian life ever more perfectly may be sustained, strengthened and fostered by canonical norms.⁴

Because of the essential service of canon law to the life of the Church, Pope John Paul II reminded the Church that 'by their very nature canonical laws are to be observed', and, to that end, 'the wording of the norms should be accurate' and 'based on solid juridical, canonical and theological foundations.'⁵ It is clear that the second way in which canon law serves the Church, namely, the right organization of the exercise of sacred power, especially in the administration of the sacraments, is the most important of all.

In reflecting on the holy Eucharist as sacrifice, it will be helpful to see how the essentially and fundamentally sacrificial nature of the holy Eucharist is safeguarded and promoted in the Church's discipline. A complete study would include a review of the history of liturgical law, especially the norms set forth in the liturgical books down the Christian centuries. Time permits at the present only a study of the truth of the holy Eucharist as sacrifice in the Code of Canon Law and its sources, and in the teaching of one of the great canonists of the last century, Cardinal Pietro Gasparri.

3 Cf. *SDL*, p. xi; *SDLE*, p. xxx.

4 *Cum ad modum etiam socialis visibilisque compaginis sit constituta, ipsa normis indiget, ut eius hierarchica et organica structura adspectabilis fiat, ut exercitium munerum ipsi divinitus creditorum, sacrae praesertim potestatis et administrationis sacramentorum rite ordinetur, ut secundum iustitiam in caritate innixam mutuae christifidelium necessitudines componantur, singulorum iuribus in tuto positos atque definitis, ut denique communia incepta, quae ad christianam vitam perfectius usque vivendam suscipiuntur, per leges canonicas fulciantur, muniantur ac promoveantur.* *SDL*, pp xii–xiii; *SDLE*, p. xxxi.

5 *canonicae leges suapte natura observantiam exigent...accurate fieret normarum expressio...in solido iuridico, canonico ac theologico fundamento inniterentur.* *SDL*, p. xiii; *SDLE*, p. xxxi.

Cardinal Gasparri was the principal architect of the Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law and is perhaps unmatched in his time for his comprehensive knowledge of the Church's discipline. One of the great fruits of his study is his two-volume work, *Tractatus canonicus de sanctissima Eucharistia*, written during his years as a professor of the text of canon law at the *Institut Catholique* in Paris. Cardinal Gasparri is a canonical figure who, in my judgment, is not sufficiently remembered and studied in our time, perhaps, most of all, because of the rebellion against Church discipline in the post-conciliar period. In any case, I hope, in some way, to stimulate your interest in his significant contribution to the knowledge and love of the Church's discipline regarding the most blessed Sacrament.

My presentation follows a simple structure. First, I look at the notion of the holy Eucharist as sacrifice in the Pio-Benedictine or 1917 Code of Canon Law. Then, I study the same notion in the 1983 Code of Canon Law, with special attention to any differences. Finally, I summarize the life and the contribution of Cardinal Pietro Gasparri to the Church's discipline.

THE 1917 CODE OF CANON LAW

The 1917 Code of Canon law treats the most holy Eucharist in title three of part one, 'Regarding the sacraments', of book three, 'Regarding things'. Concerning the rather bad title of book three, when one considers the sublime matters which it treats, it is important to recall that it derives from the ordering of laws elaborated in classical Roman law. It in no way reflects a lack of proper reverence for the subjects contained in book three.

Title three, 'The most holy Eucharist', after a single introductory canon, is divided into two chapters: chapter one, 'Regarding the most holy sacrifice of the Mass', and chapter two, 'Regarding the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist'. Chapter one, on the most holy sacrifice of the Mass, is divided into four articles: I) 'Regarding the priest celebrating the sacrifice of the Mass'; II) 'On the rites and ceremonies of the Mass'; III) 'On the time and place of the Mass to be celebrated'; and IV) 'Regarding offerings or stipends of Masses'.

The introductory canon, canon 801, declares succinctly the Mystery of faith which the norms to follow safeguard and promote: 'In the most holy Eucharist, under the species of bread and wine, Christ the Lord himself is