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**First Draft: Communal and Ecclesial Aspects
of the Communion Rite**

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This column in the last issue presented the connections between the Communion Rite and the Paschal Mystery. The article stressed that the practice of receiving Communion frequently is quite recent in the long history of the Church, and argued that the "propaganda" generated by Pope Saint Pius X's urging of "frequent, even daily, Holy Communion" contributed significantly to the lively awareness among the faithful that, indeed, Holy Communion was a profound appropriation of the Paschal Mystery, more often expressed in the idiom of the day as "the union of the individual with Christ." Now we concern ourselves with the social aspects of the campaign for frequent Communion, for both the origins of the campaign and the largest contributor to its success dealt not so much with individuals as with groups, whether highly organized or spontaneous. In the earliest days of the campaign, the Communion of one layperson was hopefully regarded as powerful witness not only for more to receive, but against the ominous forces opposing religion in the late nineteenth century. In addition to its print component, the campaign for frequent Communion subsisted in numerous societies for frequent Communion. After considering these, this essay reflects upon the inherent social dimensions of the texts and actions of the whole Communion Rite. For our purposes, the most significant "social" dimension of receiving Holy Communion is ecclesiological.

Apparently communicating was a bold--as well as pious--action in the centuries of infrequent and rare reception, because receiving above and beyond one's Easter duty was generally seen as both a reward for and a declaration of piety. At the very least, receiving indicated that one's confessor permitted the action. The annals of the campaign for frequent Communion cite instances of "frequent Communion" by

canonized saints and professed religious who received four times per year. Indeed, the annals that cover the contemporaneous late nineteenth century refer sometimes to the shock that receiving Communion would excite if the communicant were a member of the establishment--a senator of the Third Republic or an army commander. Vignettes of Louis Pasteur at his devotions typify this strategy.

The campaign for frequent reception of Holy Communion began in France in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and was fueled considerably by a political agenda--basically, the restoration of the *régime ancien*. Because the France of that time was characterized by virulent anti-clericalism and relentless secularization, to receive Holy Communion was considered a significant and public statement of one's abiding belief in worlds beyond the experiential. The rare action of a layperson's receiving both confirmed the Real Presence and declared one's ultimate allegiance--perhaps at the expense of one's fealty to France--to Church and to God. Both pontiffs of frequent Communion, Leo XIII and Pius X, encouraged sacramental reception for many reasons, but among them was that it opposed the cultural trends which the Church experienced as so threatening.

The first "social" dimension, then, of receiving Communion was during the campaign for frequent Communion, and to some extent still is, an evangelical dimension. Not only is Communion an action of the person of Christ. It is a proclamation of the faith of the receiver--insofar as the Catholic sacramental system is, with its premises, accepted. This was not only the case in late nineteenth-century France, for our own Bishops' Conference in *This Holy and Living Sacrifice* (1985) observes, "The act of Communion, therefore, is also an act of faith. For when the

minister says, 'The Body of Christ,' or 'The Blood of Christ,' the communicant's 'Amen' is a profession of faith in the presence of the saving Christ, body, soul, and divinity, who now gives life to the believer" (§16, in turn referring to *Inaestimabile Donum* of 1980). The "act of faith" seems to indicate an action of faith in the sense that only those who possess belief in all that the Church means by Communion would partake in the Lord's table; the choice of the word *profession* emphasizes the communal witness effected by participation in the sacrament.

The propaganda to dispel prejudices against frequent Holy Communion appealed preeminently to individuals, be they prelates, priests, or laypersons, and the reading material fit the genre of devotional or spiritual reading. But the promotion of frequent Communion was by no means not limited to print and the oral occasions of persuasion--sermons and retreats--which reciprocated generously with the literature. Much of the task of this propaganda was to counteract fears of singularity--that is, standing out from one's family or peers for an unusual degree of piety. Therefore, the social and communal dimensions of receiving Communion were of great interest to the official church. While the remains of the printed word are relatively easy to access and analyze, social and communal events orchestrated by the campaign seem to have been the more successful.

Perhaps the most influential movement for bringing to prominence the social dimension of communicating was the Communion of Reparation. This was originally articulated by Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque as part of the whole system of devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, including the Holy Hour on Thursday evenings, and the Nine First Fridays. The Jesuits, who early supported Saint Margaret Mary's initiatives, connected these devotions to the Apostleship of Prayer, a trans-generational masculine

social movement with its own array of supports--magazines, meetings, enrollments, etc. Sociologically, therefore, it was quite “social,” but theologically it was, too. In “repairing,” one was compensating mystically for the sins of others, either as a group or as individuals. The sin particularly mitigated by the prayers and pious deeds of the “apostle of prayer” were offenses to the Blessed Sacrament. Although Saint Margaret Mary's activities pre-dated the campaign for frequent Communion by two centuries, most chroniclers admit that she laid quite a foundation for Pius X's promotion.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the disincentive of singularity was met head-on by campaigners, whose social organizations, specializing in frequent Communion, sprouted both profusely and amazingly rapidly. In short, directed and organized peer pressure quickly showed its efficacy and became a tactic of choice. In schools and universities where a captive clientele and youthful open-mindedness proved advantageous, extant spiritual programs were subordinated to the attainment of big numbers of communions; indeed, for the sake of impressive numbers, encouraging children devolved sometimes into forcing them to communicate, and this situation was duly reported and decried in the periodical literature of the campaign. John Cardinal O'Hara, CSC (d. 1960) made a name for himself by promoting frequent Communion with the football team at Notre Dame, but was not unopposed by some Holy Cross confreres on his own campus. In Rome, Confraternities for Frequent Communion became Archconfraternities with a speed that the curia has not seen since. Parochial and diocesan organizations whose purpose had been solely Eucharistic adoration were quickly transformed into aggregations explicitly to encourage the implementation of *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, as both the Priests' and Peoples' Eucharistic Leagues

witness. Some "fraternities" during this, the hayday of fraternalism in the United States, demonstrated systems of organization that smacked of totalitarianism. Leaders from the grass-roots up were to have reported to their superiors the precise numbers of communicants in their squads; promotions and sanctions would have been the consequences. How often these schemes were implemented is hard to determine, but the less structured may have proved more successful and certainly more enduring, as the still popular Communion breakfasts attest.

While these social organizations tended to create feelings of solidarity among the members, and while these programmatic social organs would serendipitously instance the doctrine of the Body of Christ, the current Rite of Communion conveys numerous and with ritual efficacy the social aspects of receiving the Real and Paschal Christ. Let us survey the complex rite itself.

The first element of the Communion Rite is the Lord's Prayer. Social--and perhaps even ecclesiological--elements of this prayer can be conveniently regarded in two modes, the verbal and the gestural. In keeping with the norm of liturgical prayer, this is spoken by the whole assembly, as the initial "our" announces. The first-person plural reiterates six times in the rest of the prayer. Indeed, these pronouns stress the social natures both of our nourishment and our sinfulness. Because the prayer is from the scriptures that Christians share, it connects us both to the mystery of revelation and to its history, and the generations of the faithful, irrespective of denomination or confessional body, who have prayed it. Thus the prayer is an ecumenical moment in the Communion Rite. Because the fundamental form of the prayer is Jewish, it even links the recipient of Communion with the Old Testament. As Gabe Huck has written

The words of this prayer are the words of our scriptures, not only of the gospel [sic] story when the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, but of the whole tradition that Jesus drew on when he prayed. The words are from the depths of the Hebrew Scriptures. Within the Christian churches, they have been the summation of all our prayer (Huck, 20).

Does not the way this prayer is said reinforce the communal aspect of the rite? The assembly have the Lord's prayer by heart, and so their attention is not directed to a printed text at this point. Whether sung or recited, the congregation is aware of, and can attend to, the ideal of vocal unison, and in the voices of the brothers and sisters can experience a sign of true unity in Christ's body. While postures vary during the Eucharistic prayer both within congregations and dioceses, standing during the Lord's prayer is unchallenged except in cases of widespread infirmity. Thus all bodies, ministers and congregants, assume the same stance. More precisely, however, gestures vary widely during the Lord's Prayer, and Huck insists that at the parish level, consistency is highly to be valued so as to avoid dissonance with the Christian reality of union in the Blood of Christ (Huck, 16).

Perhaps the most conventionally "social" aspect of the Communion Rite is the sharing of the peace because, in practice in the United States, a simple handshake, except for between family members, suffices. The ritual may be traced back, with some caution, to Paul's request that the faithful welcome one another with a "holy kiss" (Romans 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20). Mary Collins explains in *It Is Your Own Mystery* that, as the gesture shifted from the end of the liturgy of the word to the end of the Eucharistic prayer, its significance, too, shifted ("Historical Perspectives," In *It Is Your Own Mystery: A Guide to the Communion Rite*, ed. Melissa Kay (Washington: The Liturgical Conference, 1977), 7-15). Rather than "sealing" the proclamation of the word and

simultaneously reconciling the faithful before the Eucharistic liturgy, it "sealed" the Eucharistic prayer and was interpreted as a "dramatic enactment of the phrase from the Lord's prayer, 'Forgive us as we forgive.'" The virtual disappearance of Holy Communion among the laity during the Medieval period ritually spoke of a concentration of the presence of Christ in the elements upon the altar, and the "pax" no longer involved the laity. Recall, too, the connection between giving the peace and receiving Holy Communion. In the earliest days of the Eucharistic liturgy, catechumens were dismissed at the end of the liturgy of the word, and this was then the ritual location of the exchange of peace originally. In Carolingian times, the giving and receiving of the pax was actually restricted to those who were communicating (Josef A. Jungmann, "The Communion Cycle" in *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, new and abridged edition, tr. by Francis A. Brunner, rev. by Charles K. Riepe (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1959), 481). Such glimpses at the history of the rite of peace indicate its importance in connection with Holy Communion. While Collins, writing in 1977, noted that "ritual touch" caused the faithful to feel an "awkwardness," the kiss of peace is now executed either perfunctorily or without sufficient attention to its sacramentality. Huck excludes from this very conventional gesture its secularly social meanings.

It is not a time for socializing, exchanging words about health or weather, or even for exchanging holiday greetings. It is a time to manifest as best we can the peace that Jesus prayed for and that we pray for" (Huck, 29).

On the other hand, even as the sacrament of Holy Communion, if rightly received, will effect and signal our participation in the Pasch of Christ, so, too, it will allow our everyday imitation of Christ to occur with friends at Starbuck's and with family at McDonald's.

How, then, does this gesture of peace within the Communion Rite recall the Paschal Mystery? The ritual here works less intensely than during both the Lord's Prayer and the actual Communion, as Huck's commentary and my own experience with high-school Masses indicate. Perhaps the connection to the Paschal subsists, not in the gesture, but in how the kiss of peace echoes the Gospel of John. Immediately after the Resurrection, but as the disciples still quake in the upper room, "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you'" (JN 20:19). Is it too idealistic to hope that the rite of peace will trigger recollections of the Upper Room on Easter evening, and that these will mitigate casualness in the rite? Or will the quality of the life of the parish, engaged in social ministries and struggles for justice as Margaret Mary Kelleher implies, be the overt anticipation of the Paschal banquet that Our Lord promised (Margaret Mary Kelleher, "The Communion Rite: A Study of Roman Catholic Liturgical Performance," *The Journal of Ritual Studies* 5, 2 (1991): 113-114)? John's Gospel contextualizes Christ's blessing by describing the disciples as fearful, and, after demonstrating the physicality of his resurrection, Jesus both invites the disciples to mission and confers his Holy Spirit upon them. The principle articulated by Saint Augustine in his sermon 272 applies here. "It is to what you are that you reply [at the end of the Eucharistic prayer] Amen, and by replying subscribe." The peace ritual celebrates the reality of the Paschal feast that is occurring, but it also challenges the congregation to bring the reign of God to fruition by the exercise of vibrant hope. In this respect, the redemptive dimension extends not only to the local congregation and church, but to the whole of creation. Thus the communal aspect of the rite is raised a quantum.

The next ritual is the fractioning, the breaking of the species of Bread. The official documents proclaim that this ritual intends to indicate the unity of the congregation, much like a family. "The gesture of the breaking of the bread, as the eucharist was called in apostolic times, will more clearly show the eucharist as a sign of unity and charity, since the one bread is being distributed among the members of one family" (*General Instruction*, 283). The operant metaphor must be family, and not the object of the breaking, the loaf, for this suggests not unity, but division. What was originally one now literally divides. It is the nature of the bread itself that suggests unity; the familiar hymn, "Father, We Thank Thee, Who Has Planted," a paraphrase of the Didache, conveys the reciprocity of the images: "As grain once scatter'd on the hillsides, Was in this broken bread made one, So, from all lands thy Church be gather'd Into thy kingdom by thy Son."

Although well attested in official documents since Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (§ 55), using hosts exclusively from the Mass in progress has not yet become universal in the United States. It is interesting to note that when the *General Instruction* seconds the ideas of the *Constitution*, it refers to the Paschal dimension of the sacramental meal. The breaking of the host persisted when it had lost its practical purpose, and so allegorical interpretations sprouted about the rite in the Middle Ages. The three distinct parts of the host represented, to the famous allegorizer Amalar of Metz, the Body of Christ at the Resurrection, on earth, and in the grave (Jungmann, 272).

While the fractioning is both historically and quintessentially functional, its immediately following rite, the commingling, demonstrated the unity of the Body of

Christ that follows from the Paschal Mystery, a unity both liturgical and ecclesial. Pieces of the host from the Roman bishop's Mass were dispatched to the neighboring churches.

This particle was called a *fermentum*. The priests dropped it into the chalice at this part of the Mass. The practice is ancient indeed. It answered to that awareness, so keen in the ancient church, that the Eucharist was the *sacramentum unitatis*, that this Sacrament held the Church together, and that all the people of God subject to a bishop should, if it were possible, be gathered around that bishop's altar and receive the Sacrament from his table of sacrifice" (Jungmann, 475).

Although the gesture no longer so materially signals the unity of the local church through the bishop's passing along the particle, the current Sacramentary provides a similar rubric: As the "Lamb of God" is on the threshold of concluding, the priest "takes the host and breaks it over the paten. He places a small piece in the chalice, saying quietly: "May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it."

Unlike in the centuries of infrequent Holy Communion, receiving no longer declares oneself suspiciously pious or one's faith annoyingly counter-cultural. The actual communication by the priest, deacon(s), altar personnel, other ministers, and, finally, by the congregation, requires a complex choreography. Continuing injunctions for using hosts from each particular Mass arise from the symbolism of the actual breaking of "bread" so that the Communion Rite is, as the *General Instruction* indicates, like a family meal in which food is shared. The scale and logistics of the parish Sunday Eucharistic liturgy tend to obscure the meal aspect, which is not surprising since genuine meals disappeared from Eucharistic liturgy, strictly speaking, in the first century. The "mealness" abides, however, in the actual receiving of Communion, for any ingestion provokes a sequence of gastric events. Because space does not provide

opportunities to analyze all of the events in the distribution of Communion, we touch upon priest's private pre-Communion prayers, the common affirmation of a Eucharistic faith, the invitation to receive, the procession to communicate and then the actual consuming of the sacred species.

The "private" prayers immediately before the minor elevation are private in their mode of recitation, but not in their content. For they do not distract the presider from the Paschal Mystery, particularly its eschatological aspect. As Jungmann wrote,

Our prayer is directed not to Christ as present under the form of bread, but always to Christ who 'liveth and reigneth' in heavenly majesty and who, 'by this, His most holy Body and Blood,' will deliver us from sin and sorrow. The idea of the heavenly Christ and his heavenly existence is so strong that it is not eclipsed even by the sacramental nearness. . . The reception of Communion [is not permitted to become] a meditative visit to the Blessed Sacrament. . . [In this prayer] in bold strokes, the whole pattern of Christianity is presented to view"(Jungmann, 493-494).

For the purpose of this series of articles on the Mass and the Paschal Mystery, we might equate Jungmann's "whole pattern of Christianity" with this Mystery.

The next significant element of the Communion Rite is a common and united and vocal affirmation of faith in the presence of Christ among his Church in this Great Thanksgiving. The presider displays the consecrated host and declares, "This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those who are called to his supper." Both priest and people respond, "Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed." Both periods are Biblical, and recall the Paschal Mystery by reference to the original Pasch, the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage. via the Baptist's identification of his cousin. The benediction prayer as the host is raised, by use of the word "supper," emphasizes that the meal is emphatically a ritual

meal, different from the everyday, and hence a way of particularly paying attention, as Catherine M. Bell has explained (*Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford, 1992). The response is an aspiration based upon Matthew 8:8, the faith-testimony of the centurion of Capernaum.¹

The priest communicates himself, and then distributes to those who would receive. As Reformers pointed to the blatant Roman disregard for the Biblical injunction to "take and eat," Catholic apologists argued that even as the priest represented Christ in the action of consecrating the bread and wine, he represented the congregation in his own consuming the species.

Significantly the now numerous communicants enter the precincts of the altar to receive. What a contrast with the practice of some sister-churches whose deacons minister the Lord's Supper by conveying trays to the pews! Gabe Huck expends considerable energy trying to raise the consciousness of liturgical planners about the choreography of the Communion procession. In fact, he says, "A true procession[--]this is the most difficult yet crucial part of preparing the rite of communion for a parish" (Huck, 60). In short, his directions lead the congregation to experience the walk to and from reception, not as "lining up," particularly as individuals, but as a congregation. The experiential difference between forming a queue and a engaging in procession is the sense "that we are acting together." He calls this procession, because it is for Communion, a "manifestation of the church" (64).

¹Jungman notes the antiquity of the association of this sentiment with Holy Communion by reference to Ethiopian and Byzantine liturgies. See p. 497

The *General Instruction* recommends--and many commentators highlight this recommendation--that a repetitive song be joined during the procession, particularly in order to cultivate the experience of unity in the ritual action. "Singing people walk by me while I am singing and, singing, I walk by singing people. That is a strong part of the rite"(82). The question of the posture of the assembly before and after their personal reception of Holy Communion, Huck does not decide, but he does observe that for all to remain standing could enhance a sense of unity.

After an injunction in favor of receiving Holy Communion under both species and an outline of Eucharistic doctrine (§240-242), the *General Instruction* describes specific ways of distributing--hosts alone, hosts and precious blood (by sipping from the chalice, by intinction, by tube, and by spoon). Communicants are to "make a suitable reverence" before receiving.

What is the meaning, then, of the reception of Holy Communion itself to the Church, the Body of Christ, and with respect to the Paschal Mystery? What are the social and theological ramifications of the sacrament? As Kelleher, relying upon both Lonergan and Turner, observes, participation in ritual creates and enacts an "ecclesial self-image" which, because corporate identity really exists in a symbolic medium, constitutes both individuals as members of the church and the church itself. Kelleher, concentrating upon the communal aspects of the Rite of Holy Communion within the Eucharistic liturgy, probes ecclesiological issues. Through ritual analysis, Kelleher concludes that because of the weight of the long tradition of rare Communion reception and the attendant ritual drift of the meaning of Holy Communion, the popular understanding of receiving, the "cognitive" element, as Lonergan would have it, remains

the acceptance of a gift by an individual [communicant] from an individual [Jesus], rather than of a "mutual [i.e., general?] participation in a gift" (Kelleher, 115). As Paul Bernier says in *Eucharist: Celebrating Its Rhythms in Our Lives*, Holy Communion

continues to be misunderstood, separated from the liturgy which prepares it, and often reduced to a popular devotion. The real problem may be that for many people it is still essentially a Jesus-and-me reality. Having received the eucharistic gifts we can shut out the rest of the congregation and immerse ourselves in silent conversation with Christ. It becomes our moment alone with Jesus" (102).

Going beyond such impressions about the way Communion is received and appropriated, Kelleher describes deeply two different methods of distribution of the two species in a given parish. For original reasons of facility in both instances, the "bowl of hosts" is passed from person to person in the choir loft, while, in the vicinity of the altar, each extraordinary minister serves herself with the precious blood as the presider relocates to distribute the hosts (113). The choir-loft distribution tantalizes the observer with an image "in which all members of a liturgical assembly. . . minister to one another on the basis of their baptism"(114). And the self-service of the extraordinary ministers challenges "the notion that only a priest has the right to perform this act." Still, the potential in these ritual actions which contravene regulations, was not realized because of the "absence of personal interaction" (114). Yes, concedes Kelleher, vestiges of a "corporate dimension" remain and remain discernible in homilies that enjoin Christians to love one another, in the corporate praying in unison of the Lord's Prayer, in the peace and in "brief invocations" of the priest immediately before Communion (115). On the other hand, ritually pronounced differentiations--the insiders and the outsiders with respect to presiding (males only) and receiving the Precious Blood (extraordinary

ministers only), and, with respect to the Eucharistic bread, its commercialization and artificiality, foster an "ecclesial amnesia"(117). The resulting "ignorance" of the community's "fund of knowledge" threatens the very identity which is shaped by ritual and symbol.

Kelleher's list of things which remind us of the communal aspects of the rite can be complemented. Simply convening for worship is quite--or even most--significantly communal, but usually completely ignored by liturgical critics because it is a given, as James F. White has often observed. Indeed, such mass but ephemeral movements as Promise Keepers testify to the power of gathering for religious reasons. As Monika Hellwig says, "To take part in a eucharistic celebration is always an act of allegiance, of self-identification, and of commitment, however slight" (Hellwig, 1). She reflects upon the nature of food in the human condition, and reminds us that "the simple central action of the eucharist is the *sharing* [my emphasis] of food--not only eating, but sharing" (10), and that the hunger that leads to eating makes us painfully aware of our contingency and our dependence upon other human beings (15). Philippe Rouillard has meditated helpfully upon the interdependence that any act of eating reveals. So, while eating may usually and most powerfully be experienced as a personal, necessary biological gratification, ritual participation in a meal enjoins each individual to reflection upon her fundamental interdependence with society and with all of creation.

But the sharing about which Hellwig speaks leads her to consider covenant as an essential and often overlooked element of our sacraments. Given Christian assertions about sacraments, how does this ritual sharing of a "meal" connect to God? Torah tells the stories of God's covenant with all human beings (creation and Noah) and with the

Jews particularly (Abraham and Moses). Covenant means basically alliance, agreement, bond, contract. Hellwig finds the normative social meaning of Holy Communion in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Even as early as Paul's lifetime, participation in the sacrament was disturbingly inadvertent. In fact, the sacrament means "we accept the gift that Jesus makes us of himself in his death" and that we then commit ourselves to "a radically different way of life" (71) that is in "stark opposition to many of the values taken for granted even in Christian countries" (72). While Hellwig speaks, not of receiving Communion specifically, but of participating in the Eucharist, and, given the successes of the campaigns for frequent Communion, we may presume that she intends to include this partaking of the sacrament in her reflections. Only Holy Communion makes Mass a sacrament with respect to each soul. Hellwig rightly emphasizes the communal.

We are called to become one with his crossing over [from death on the cross to the Resurrection--i.e., the Paschal Mystery] and to eat of the sacrificial banquet in order to participate in the life of Jesus who is now 'on the other side,' on God's side, on the side of self-gift rather than self-assertion, on the side of total community and total sharing, on the side of creative love" (76).

After the actual Communion, by procession and accompanied by a song, the Sacramentary prescribes "a period of silence" (rarely satisfactorily and intentionally observed) or a "psalm or song of praise." The *General Instruction* does not present the option of letting this be sung by the choir or cantor, as is often the practice in the United States, but specifies that it be sung by the "entire congregation."

The Communion rite concludes with the prayer after Communion. The content of this priestly prayer, according to the *General Instruction*, is a petitioning for "the effects of the mystery just celebrated," and the sharing of this prayer with the congregation

happens by their "acclamation, Amen." The texts of the Sacramentary allow that the "period of silence" right after the general Communion and the Communion song migrate to the Prayer after Communion. After the priest's invitation to prayer "priest and people pray in silence for a while, unless a period of silence has already been observed." The typography of the text would include the silence after the "Let us pray" of the priest in the Prayer after Communion, but the text indicates that what the priest says and the Amen of the congregation comprise the Prayer after Communion. One could argue that silences offer greater involvement of the laity in the prayer, for the verbalizing by the presider, if the silent times have been rushed or even eliminated, preempts the congregational; on the other hand, the wording of the prayers, while not overtly "Paschal Mystery," does beg that the effects of the Mass be real in the lives of all Christians. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin wrote,

We are called to the Lord's table less for solace than for strength, not so much for comfort as for service. This prayer, then, is prayed not only over the bread and wine, so that they become Christ's body and blood for us to share; it is prayed over the entire assembly so that we may become the dying and risen Christ for the world" (*Our Communion, Our Peace, Our Promise: Pastoral Letter on the Liturgy*, N.p.: N.p. (February, 1984), 15-16).

Strength is necessary in our putting on Christ. "Participation in the eucharistic covenant is a new form of relationship between God and humanity but it is more. It is really a participation in the cross, the redemptive act of Jesus. His disciples can expect to suffer. When we eat this bread and drink this cup we assimilate into ourselves the role of suffering servant" (Patricia A. Gallagher, "The Communion Rite," *Worship* 63 (July, 1989): 326). Because our understanding of the Paschal Mystery is not limited to the cross and resurrection of Jesus, but rather embraces his whole life, so too our receiving

Holy Communion expresses our faith and commits us to an imitation of Christ, expansively conceived and yet known intimately. Not only in our final illness and dying do we imitate Christ on his Cross, but throughout our lives we serve Christ by imitation. The suffering is not primarily emotional, as was the emphasis of Mother Loyola and of her era, but is consequential to prophetic challenge. Gallagher has written that all revision of ritual has, as its end, that all participants be

more acutely aware of the sacramental dimension of life's situations as well as the ecclesial mission entrusted to us by Jesus. When we accept the bread and wine we symbolically commit ourselves to continuing the work of the risen Christ in our midst: elimination of divisions and hatreds, shattering of boundaries through strengthening the bonds of unity among ourselves and with God" (Gallagher, 327).

The action of the Paschal Mystery continues both ritually at Mass and in the world. While our world is not limited to our genuine social relationships, within this sphere our appropriation of the Paschal Mystery can bear evident fruit. Our mystical and yet practical cooperation with Jesus in what Karl Rahner called the "liturgy of the world" is sustained by the Bread of Life which calls us to be, in turn, bread for the world.