***Living a Eucharistic Life***

**Pope Benedict XVI on Eucharist as Moment of Nuclear Fission:** “In this way, Jesus left us the task of entering into his ‘hour.’ ‘The Eucharist draws us into Jesus’ act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate Logos, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving.’ Jesus ‘draws us into himself.’ The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within creation the principle of a radical change, a sort of ‘nuclear fission,’ to use an image familiar to us today, which penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28)” (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 11).

**Emmanuel Falque on the Reverse Digestion that Takes Place in Receiving the Eucharist:** “As far as *incorporation* is concerned, the movement is different, or even opposite. That which is assimilated by us; or rather, paradoxically, it incorporates us even into Christ-there whom we eat. The eucharistic sacrifice is a form of ‘anti-digestion’ rather than something that simply contains or ingurgitates. ‘The priest is a man eaten,’ according to Abbe Chevrier. He shows by his work and even by his death that a human being becomes progressively ‘food for God,’ so as to be transformed and reintegrated into the life of the Trinity” (Emmanuel Falque, *The Wedding Feast of the Lamb*, 206).

**Augustine on Failure to Live a Good Life as Abuse of the Sacraments:** “Because there are, you see, and this is a sad and sorry fact, a number of the faithful who are bad. They are the faithful so called, and are not really so. They are the faithful by whom the sacraments of Christ are misused; who live in such a way that they both perish themselves and ruin others” (s. 223.1).

**Augustine on Being Impregnated with the Virtues of Christ in the Reception of the Eucharist:** “It is, if I may say so, by spiritually embracing Him that the intellectual soul is filled and impregnated with true virtues (*fecundaturque virtutibus*). We are enjoined to love this good with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength (*virtute*). To this good we ought to be led by those who love us, and to lead those we love” (Augustine, *City of God*, 10.3).

**Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI) on Entering Into the Sacrifice of Christ in the Eucharistic Liturgy:** “The whole event of the Incarnation, Cross, Resurrection, and Second Coming is present [in the Mass] as the way by which God draws man into cooperation with himself…True, the Sacrifice of the Logos is accepted already and forever. But we must still pray for it to become our sacrifice, that we ourselves, as we said, may be transformed into the Logos, conformed to the Logos, and so be made the true Body of Christ. That is the issue, and that is what we have to pray for” (Joseph Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 173).

**Augustine’s Definitions of the Cardinal Virtues as Dispositions of Love:**

**Prudence:** “Love discriminating rightly between those things which aid it in reaching God and those things which might hinder it” (Augustine, *The Catholic and Manichean Ways of life*, 1.25).

**Josef Pieper on Prudence as Action in accordance with the truth of reality:** “Now prudence means, as we have already stated many times, nothing less than the directing cognition of reality. Out of this cognition good acts are ‘born’; otherwise they are not born at all. The decisions of prudence embody the duties enforced on us by things as they are; in these decisions true cognition of reality is perfected for the purpose of realizing the good” (*The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 24-25).

**Justice:** “Love serving God alone and, therefore, ruling well those things subject to man” (*The Catholic and Manichean Ways of life*, 1.25).

**Fortitude:** “Love enduring all things willingly for the sake of God”(*The Catholic and Manichean Ways of life*, 1.25).

**Temperance:** “Love preserving itself whole and unblemished for God**”** (*The Catholic and Manichean Ways of life*, 1.25).

**Josef Pieper on Temperance as Selfless Self-Preservation:**“The discipline of temperance, understood as selfless self-preservation, is the saving and defending realization of the inner order of man. For temperance not only preserves, it also defends: indeed, it preserves by defending. For since the first sin man has been not only capable of loving himself more than he loves God his Creator but, contrary to his own nature, inclined to do so. The discipline of temperance defends him against all selfish perversion of the inner order, through which alone the moral person exists and lives effectively. Wherever forces of self-preservation, self-assertion, self-fulfillment, destroy the structure of man’s inner being, the discipline of temperance and the license of intemperance enter into play” (*The Four Cardinal Virtues*, 150).

**St. Thomas Aquinas on the Virtues of Humility & Magnanimity:** “As stated above (I-II, Q. 23, A. 2) when we were treating of the passions, the difficult good has something attractive to the appetite, namely the aspect of the good, and likewise something repulsive to the appetite, namely the difficulty of obtaining it. In respect of the former there arises the movement of hope, and in respect of the latter, the movement of despair…Wherefore a twofold virtue is necessary with regard to the difficult good: one, to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately; and this belongs to the virtue of humility: and another to strengthen the mind against, despair, and urge it on to the pursuit of great things according to right reason; and this is magnanimity” (Summa Theologica, II-II, Q. 161.1).

**St. John Henry Newman on the force of Virtue’s Beauty:** “[The Truth] has been upheld in the world not as a system, not by books, not by argument, not by temporal power, but by the personal influence of such men…who are at once the teachers and patterns of it…Here, first, is to be taken into account the natural beauty and majesty of virtue, which is more or less felt by all but the most abandoned. I do not say virtue in the abstract,-virtue in a book. Men persuade themselves, with little difficulty, to scoff at principles, to ridicule books, to make sport of the names of good men; but they cannot bear their presence: it is holiness embodied in personal form, which they cannot steadily confront and bear down…” (St. John Henry Newman, *Oxford University Sermon*, 5.26-27).

**St. Gregory Nazianzen on his friendship with St. Basil the Great:** “There was a contest between us, not as to who should have first place for himself, but how he could yield it to the other, for each of us regarded the glory of the other as his own…The sole object of us both was virtue and living for future hopes, having detached ourselves from this world before departing it. With this in view, we directed our life and all our actions, following the guidance of the divine precept, and at the same time spurring each other to virtue, and, if it is not too much to say so, being for each other a rule and a scale for the discernment of good and evil…Our great concern, our great name, was to be Christians and be called Christians” (Oration 43, 20-21).

**Keys to Living a Eucharistic Life:**

* 1) Sacraments: Especially efforts to enter more deeply into the sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist. Perhaps make it a practice of following the Eucharistic Prayer in the Missal during Mass if you do not do so already, let the words form you.
* 2) Scripture: If virtue is participation and imitation of Christ, we need to get to know him.
* 3) Saints—the Greatest Exemplars of the Christian Faith: We need to get to know the saints and make them our heroes.
* 4) Prayer—No assistance of the Holy Spirit, no virtue.
* 5) Fake it ‘til you make it: The way to acquire the virtues is by living them (the works of mercy are an excellent place to start).
* 6) Good Christian Friends—Mutual Exemplars, Cooperative Competitors
* Our Mission: To become so perfectly integrated into the life of Christ that with every word and action, the world sees and hears the words God wants them most to hear: This is my body, given for you.