

Supplementary Reading

JOHN 20: 19-23

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them 'Peace be with you,' and after saying this he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again 'Peace be with you.' 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' And after saying this he breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.'

CELEBRATING THE MASS

200 The eating and drinking together of the Lord's Body and Blood in a Paschal meal is the culmination of the Eucharist. The assembly is made ready to share in this banquet by a series of rites that lead from the Eucharistic Prayer directly to the Communion. The themes underlying these rites are the mutual love and reconciliation that are both the condition and the fruit of worthy communion and the unity of the many in the one. These themes are symbolised at both the natural and the sacramental level in the signs of bread and wine now become the Body and Blood of Christ.

204 The exchange of peace prior to the reception of Communion is an acknowledgement that Christ whom we receive in the Sacrament is already present in our neighbour. In this exchange the assembly acknowledges the insistent Gospel truth that communion with God in Christ is enjoyed in communion with our sisters and brothers in Christ. The rite of peace is not an expression merely of human solidarity or good will; it is rather an opening of ourselves and our neighbours to a challenge and a gift from beyond ourselves. Like the 'Amen' at Communion, it is the acceptance of a challenge, a profession of faith that we are members, one with another, in the body of Christ. ... All the members of the assembly, ministers and people, turn to those immediately around them. It is not transmitted in sequence, as it were from a single source. Christ, who is its only source, is present and active in the assembly.

205 Breaking of the Bread (Fraction).

This characteristic action of Christ at the feeding of the multitude, at the Last Supper, and at his meals with the disciples after his resurrection was so central to the Eucharist that it seems to have given its name to the entire celebration in the days of the Apostles. The natural, the practical, the symbolic, and the spiritual are all

In spirit and in truth

inextricably linked in this most powerful symbol. Just as many grains of wheat are ground, kneaded, and baked together to become one loaf, which is then broken and shared out among many to bring them into one table-fellowship, so those gathered are made one body in the one bread of life which is Christ (see 1 Corinthians 10:17)

209 Distribution of Communion

Faithful to the Lord's command to his disciples, 'Take and eat', 'Take and drink', the assembly completes the Eucharistic action by together eating and drinking the elements consecrated during the celebration. It is most desirable that the faithful share the chalice. Drinking at the Eucharist is a sharing in the sign of the new covenant (see Luke 22:20), a foretaste of the heavenly banquet (see Matthew 26:29) and a sign of participation in the suffering Christ (Mark 10:38-39)

Further Reading

Understanding the Revised Mass Texts

(Paul Turner, LTP/

McCrimmons, 2011)

- Pages 42–47: The Communion Rite

Bibliography

Constitution on the Sacred

Liturgy: Sacrosanctum

Concilium

Liturgiam Authenticam

on the use of Vernacular

Languages in the Publication

of the Books of the Roman

Liturgy (5th Instruction for

the Right Implementation of

SC)

General Instruction of the Roman

Missal (GIRM)

CTS London, 2005

Celebrating the Mass

Bishops' Conference of

England and Wales (CTS:

London 2005)