

“DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME”

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A Paschal/Eucharistic Spirituality
For Worshipers and Witnesses in Spirit and in Truth
At the Shrine of Our Lady of South Carolina
Our Lady of Joyful Hope

Jesus speaks of His Paschal Mystery

Our Lord shows the centrality of the paschal mystery in his life in John 10.17-18: “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father.” God the Father declared twice that Christ was his beloved Son, at his baptism (Mark 1.11) and at his transfiguration (Luke 9.35). At Jesus’ baptism St. John the Baptist proclaims him the Lamb of God. The full meaning of that term is found in Revelations 5.6 where the celestial Lamb is presented as “standing, as though slain”, an obvious reference to the paschal state of the Lamb of God in heaven. Luke tells us that during his transfiguration Jesus was conversing with Moses and Elijah about the paschal mystery that he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. The presence of these two leading persons in the Old Testament shows that the Mosaic covenant and the history of the Chosen People were focused on their fulfillment in the paschal mystery of the Messia, now sacramentally celebrated in the New Covenant. Thus we see that at both times when the Father speaks about his beloved Son, there is a paschal reference. In Mark 8.27-33, after Jesus inquires of the apostles, “Who do people say that I am?” he then asks, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter responds, “You are the Christ.” Jesus then reveals to them the mission of the Messia: to suffer greatly, be rejected and killed, and rise after three days. The Christ must fulfill the paschal mystery. Exegetes interpret Jesus’ taking off his cloak and putting it on again at the Last Supper (John 13.3,12) as signifying his laying down of his life and his taking it up again, his death and resurrection, the paschal mystery, giving it a Eucharistic dimension.

The Paschal Mystery in the Life of the Christian

As important as the paschal mystery is in the life of Christ, so must it be in the life of his disciples since they are members of his Mystical Body, called to follow him. This is clear in Mark 8.34: “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it.” Obviously to lose signifies death and to save implies resurrection, a spiritual reflection of the paschal mystery.

St. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5.5, gives a paschal motivation to Christian life: “And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” This “paschal dimension” (*The Shrine 18*) is stressed in a

baptismal context in Romans 6.4: “We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

The Church brings that theme to our meditation in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, Week 33, Monday in Ordinary Time in the Second Reading by St. Fulgentius of Ruspe: “...Those who in this life have been changed from evil to good are promised that future change (physical resurrection) as a reward... Here they are changed by the first resurrection, in which they are enlightened and converted, thus passing from death to life, sinfulness to holiness, unbelief to faith, and evil actions to holy life... the first resurrection consists in the conversion of the heart...” The Second Reading for the memorial of St. Bonaventure, celebrated on July 15th, quotes this Doctor of the Church describing a spiritual journey with Christ by one who “turn(s) his full attention to this throne of mercy... Then such a man will make with Christ a pasch, that is, a passing-over... For this passover to be perfect, we must suspend all the operations of the mind and we must transform the peak of our affections, directing them to God alone. This is a sacred mystical experience.” Already in the second century, the martyr bishop St. Ignatius of Antioch alludes to the same principle, as given in his Letter to the Magnesians in the Second Reading for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time: “Unless we are ready through his power to die in the likeness of his passion, his life is not in us.”

Vatican II centers on the Paschal Mystery

Vatican II made the paschal mystery its Christological theme, as is evident in many of its documents. A very inclusive application of the paschal mystery to a life of faith is found in the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* 37: “...Christians state their belief that all human activity, in daily jeopardy through pride and inordinate self-love, is to find its purification and its perfection in the cross and resurrection of Christ.”

It would not be unusual then, to see the magisterium follow those directives. Pope John Paul II, in his 2005 *Holy Thursday Letter to Priests* 1, pointed out a similar association of Christian life with the paschal mystery but in a Eucharistic context: “the life of the priest (should) be shaped by the Eucharist. For us, the words of consecration must be more than a formula of consecration: they must be a formula of life”. This can be so because the Eucharistic formula makes Christ present in his paschal mystery, sacrificed and risen, as the Pope explains in the same Letter 7, “On the altar, then, Christ crucified and risen is truly and substantially present in the fullness of his humanity and divinity.”

In his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 20, the same Holy Father explains that what is true for the priest is applicable to all Christians. “Proclaiming the death of the Lord ‘until he comes’ (1 Corinthians 11:26) entails that all who take part in the Eucharist be committed to changing their lives and making them in a certain way completely ‘Eucharistic’”.

The Church expresses this in the Prayer over the Gifts in the Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of St. John the Baptist, “Help us put into action this mystery we celebrate in

this sacrament.” In the Prayer after Communion for the Monday before Epiphany, the Church prays “grant that our lives may always be founded on the power of this holy mystery.” The Mass for Thursday of the Second Week of Easter continues this petition not only in its Opening Prayer, “God of mercy, may the Easter (Paschal) mystery we celebrate be effective throughout our lives,” but in its Prayer after Communion as well, “...Strengthen us by this Easter (Paschal) sacrament; may we feel its saving power in our daily life.” Pope Benedict XVI, in his homily at the opening Mass of the 11th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the 2nd of October 2005 enunciated the same: “Let us pray to the Lord to give us the grace... not only will we say beautiful things about the Eucharist but above all, we will live from its power.” The Mass of St. John Neumann summarizes these themes. In the Prayer over the Gifts there is a reference to the ordination ceremony as well as to conformity to Christ: “Form us in his (Christ’s) likeness as you formed St. John (Neumann), who imitated what he handled in these holy mysteries” – that is, the Eucharist. The Prayer after Communion expresses the communal dynamics of the paschal mystery of the altar: “By the power of this sacrament, help us to live, one in spirit and in truth, in the communion of Christ’s body.”

Let us recall what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1131 teaches about the efficacy of the sacraments: “The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.” This spirituality helps develop those proper dispositions to an eminent degree for the fulfillment of our sacramental life.

Paschal Imitation of Christ

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 519-521 speaks of “Our communion in the mysteries of Jesus”. Quoting Pope John Paul II in *Redemptor Hominis* 11, CCC 519 states: “All Christ’s riches ‘are for every individual and are everybody’s property.’” Next, CCC 520 states that “In all his life Jesus presents himself as our model.” Then, CCC 521 emphasizes that “Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us.” CCC then quotes St. John Eudes from the *Liturgy of the Hours*, week 33, Friday, Office of Readings: “We must continue to accomplish in ourselves the stages of Jesus’ life and his mysteries and often beg him to perfect and realize them in us and in his whole Church... For it is the plan of the Son of God to make us and the whole Church partake in his mysteries and to extend them to and continue them in us and in his whole Church. This is his plan for fulfilling his mysteries in us.”

This is in accord with St. Paul’s counsel in 1 Corinthians 11.1: “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.” The Christ St. Paul encountered on the way to Damascus was the Paschal Lord, which became central not only to his Christology but to his sacramentology and ecclesiology as well.

Pope John Paul II’s explanation of the Eucharist as Presence-Sacrament, Sacrifice-Sacrament, and Communion-Sacrament in *Redemptor Hominis* 20 can serve as a general pattern for such a paschal transformation of life.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) 780 teaches that “the Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and instrument of the communion of God and men.” As members of the Church the baptized participate in a certain manner in that vocation to be sacrament.

CCC 1076 informs us that the sacramental economy “is the communication of the fruits of Christ’s Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church’s ‘sacramental’ liturgy.” Part two, chapter one of the CCC speaks of “The Paschal Mystery in the Age of the Church”, while article two treats of “The Paschal Mystery in the Church’s Sacraments” and chapter two continues with “The Sacramental Celebration of the Paschal Mystery”.

Thus, by receiving Christ in the Eucharist as Presence-Sacrament, as Sacrifice-Sacrament, and as Communion-Sacrament, the baptized are to be transformed into a similar reality. By becoming sacramental, that is, “a sign and instrument of the communion of God and men” (CCC 780), the Christian participates in and helps fulfill the Church’s mission as sacrament.

As a presence-sacrament, the transformed Christian brings to mind (memory), the salvific presence of Christ. As sacrifice-sacrament, that Christian reproduces the love of Christ in action. As communion-sacrament, the fraternal identity with others will be manifest (see CCC 959).

The Code of Canon Law 387 declares that the diocesan Bishop is “to promote the holiness of Christ’s faithful according to the special vocation of each.” Therefore this paschal/Eucharistic sacramental spirituality has to be modified according the specifics required by the individual’s vocation.

Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium* chapter 5, emphasizes the universal call to holiness by listing the various vocations in the Church (41). Starting with the bishops, it then enumerates others: priests, deacons, clerics, apostolic laity, the married, widows and the single, workers, the poor, the infirm and sick. It concludes by a general inclusion of all to this call: “Finally all Christ’s faithful, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives – and indeed through all these – will daily increase in holiness... In this temporal service, they will manifest to all men the love with which God has loved the world.” In that way the Christian becomes a sacrament of presence, sacrifice and communion in the world.

An excellent example of such living sacramentality is Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose spirituality is eminently Eucharistic. Her presence immediately evoked the presence of the love of Christ. Her love was totally sacrificial, which created a union (communion) with those she served.

It is interesting that Pope John Paul II saw this “paschal dimension” not just part of an individual’s personal spirituality but that of a community as well. During his first visit to Poland he presented a paschal vocation and mission to the entire Church in that country. In his sermon at the Mass in Warsaw he exhorted them to become” the land of a

particularly responsible witness... the witness of (Christ's) cross and resurrection." That invitation and identity could also be extended to a local Church since it is the vocation of the entire Church.

In the section on Holy Orders the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1546-1547 refer to the "Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ". It is noted in 1546 that "The whole community of believers, as such, is priestly. The faithful exercise their baptismal priesthood through their participation, each according to his own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet and king." The difference in the ministerial priesthood is explained in 1547: "While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace - a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit - the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed toward the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians."

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 48 shows this unison in the celebration of the Eucharist: "by offering the Immaculate Victim, not only through the hands of the priest but also with him, (the faithful) should learn also to offer themselves".

Keeping Memory of Christ's Paschal Mystery

In this way we see the double meaning of Christ's command to "Do this in memory of Me." The first is the immediate celebration of the Eucharist and the second is the living of the Paschal Mystery of the Altar, both centering on presence-sacrament, sacrifice-sacrament, and communion-sacrament in the context of priesthood, both baptismal and ministerial.

Through the Eucharist we come in contact with Christ in his paschal mystery, the wisdom and power of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 1.24). Through the word and sacrament of the paschal mystery of the altar we receive his paschal wisdom and paschal power to be renewed in his "paschal dimension" (*The Shrine* 18). In this way Jesus is seen as both model and mentor of this paschal spirituality as he was to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. This he provides for us in the liturgy, as the Church prays on the 19th of December in the season of Advent in the Prayer Over the Gifts: "Let your power take away our weakness..." In the same way his wisdom will replace our ignorance.

This transforming effect of the paschal mystery is demonstrated in St. Paul's Letters such as to the Philippians 3.10,11: "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead," first spiritually then physically, which St. Fulgentius of Ruspe explained above, a theme echoed again by St. Basil in his book *On the Holy Spirit*, as presented in the Liturgy of the Hours in the Second Reading for Tuesday of Holy Week, "we have to begin a new life, and we cannot do so until our previous life has been brought to an end... when we wish to reverse the direction of our lives there must be a pause, or a death, to mark the end of one life and the beginning of another." Again in The Liturgy of the Hours, at the beginning of the Paschal season, in the Second Reading for Monday of the Second Week of Easter, by Pseudo-Chrysostom, we are instructed that

“(Christ) puts an end to our former life, and through the regenerating waters of baptism in which we imitate his death and resurrection, he gives us the beginning of a new life.” And in this way Christ can make us an everlasting gift to the Father, as the Church requests in Eucharistic Prayer III, according to his image because the Father will see and love in us what he sees and loves in Christ, for which the Church prays in the Sunday Preface in Ordinary Time VII.

Mary’s Memory of Christ

The themes implicit in the phrase “Do this in memory of Me”, are explained in a Marian context in the Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II *Rosarium Virginis Mariae (RVM)*. Mary is presented in *RVM* 10 as “an incomparable model”. The importance of Mary’s memories of her Son is brought out in *RVM* 11. “Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: ‘She kept these things, pondering them in her heart’ (Luke 2:19; cf. 2:51) The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart were always with her... In a way those memories were to be her ‘rosary’ which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life. Even now..., [they] inspire her maternal concern for the pilgrim Church, in which she continues to relate her personal account of the Gospel. *Mary constantly sets before the faithful the ‘mysteries’ of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary.*”

RVM 13 is most important because it links Mary’s “remembering” with scripture and liturgy. “We need to understand this word in the biblical sense of remembrance as a making present of the works brought about by God. The Bible is an account of saving events culminating in Christ himself. These events not only belong to ‘yesterday’; *they are also part of ‘today’ of salvation.* This making present comes about above all in the liturgy: what God accomplished centuries ago did not only affect the direct witnesses of those events; it continues to affect people in every age with its gift of grace. To some extent this is also true of every other devout approach to those events: to ‘remember’ them in a spirit of faith and love is to be open to the grace which Christ won for us by the mysteries of his life, death and resurrection... By immersing us in the mysteries of the Redeemer’s life, (the rosary) ensures that what he has done and what the liturgy presents is profoundly assimilated and shapes our existence.”

RVM 15 emphasizes “being conformed to Christ with Mary”. “In the spiritual journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary’s company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association which could be described in terms of friendship... Never as in the Rosary do the life of Jesus and Mary appear so deeply joined. Mary lives only in Christ and for Christ!”

In Romans 12.2 St. Paul admonishes us, “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Mary was conformed to Christ from the moment of his conception in her virginal womb. She was totally and always united with him until the completion of his paschal mission. In this way she was brought into the

Paschal Mystery and serves as a perfect model and mentor in that process of the paschal renewal of our minds. By means of the Rosary we are united to Jesus through Mary in their paschal journey and thus transformed in mind and heart in conformity with them.

RVM 17 continues by showing how the Rosary is an effective means for evangelization. “The Rosary is also a path of proclamation and increasing knowledge, in which the mystery of Christ is presented again and again at different levels of the Christian experience.” The purpose of evangelization is the proper participation in the Eucharist and an effective living of the paschal mystery of the altar, by which we fulfill our duty to be worshipers in spirit and in truth as well as witnesses (cf. John 4.23; Acts 1.8) of the Christ whom the Father has sent. Pope John Paul II’s intended Mercy Sunday address of 3 April 2005 states that the Father’s love is revealed by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore the Father is manifested to us in the paschal mystery of the altar in which we participate and from which we go forth to proclaim that gospel in word and action.

This spiritual outlook is appropriate for our times, which is characterized by secularism. The Church is called to evangelize and re-evangelize. This means to keep the memory of the marvelous works of God, epitomized in the paschal mystery of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist as an everlasting covenant. The fundamental importance of memory is well presented by Pope John Paul II in his book *Memory and Identity* in which he analyzes the causes of the secularization of our culture. “Memory is the faculty which models the identity of human beings at both a personal and collective level. In fact, it is the memory that our sense of identity forms and defines itself in the personal psyche... Christ was acquainted with this law of memory and he invoked it at the key moment of his mission. When he was instituting the Eucharist during the Last Supper, he said, ‘Do this in memory of me’ ... The Church is, in a certain sense, the ‘living memory of Christ’ This ‘memory’ is accomplished through the Eucharist. It follows that Christians, as they celebrate the Eucharist in ‘memory’ of their Master, continually discover their own identity” (p.144). In this we see the importance of a constant Eucharistic Evangelization. The Shrine’s program for this is formulated to keep memory through the Rosary.

In the chapter “The Maternal Memory of the Church” the Pope expounds on the Marian dimension of the Church’s memory of her Son, because she “treasured all these things in her heart” (Luke 2.51) and shared them with the Lord’s disciples, most notably Luke and John: “This maternal memory of Mary is particularly important for the divine-human identity of the Church. It could be said that the memory of the new People of God is intimately associated with Mary’s memory, and that the celebration of the Eucharist relives events and teachings of Christ learned from the lips of his mother. Moreover, the Church has a maternal memory of her own, because she herself is a mother, a mother who remembers. The Church, in her turn, safeguards what was present in Mary’s memories.” (p. 149) Furthermore, “Mary led the way because hers is the most faithful memory, or rather, because her memory is the most faithful reflection of the mystery of God, transmitted in her to the Church and through the Church to humanity.” (p. 150)

As recorded in John 19.27, Jesus entrusted his mother to the care of his disciple, traditionally identified as the apostle John. What must have been the intensity of her memory of Jesus as she was present in the Masses celebrated by the beloved John, since she participated in the historic development of the Paschal Mystery, sacramentally present on the altar? How profound must have been her consciousness of Jesus, her God and her son, in this sacrament of his presence, his sacrifice and his communion!

In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Sacramentum Caritatis” (SC), Pope Benedict XVI points out that the Eucharist is a Mystery to be believed, to be celebrated, and to be lived. Since this Mystery was central in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, her faith in this Mystery, her participation in the celebration of this Mystery and the development of this Mystery in her life are perfect. As this Pope stated in the same document #33, “God’s gifts to us have found their perfect fulfillment in the Virgin Mary.”

The Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary lists three formulas entitled “The Blessed Virgin Mary, Image and Mother of the Church”. As image of the Church Mary is model for the Church in that aspect of celebration called “authentic participation” emphasized in SC#52, “In fact, the active participation called for by the (Second Vatican) Council must be understood... on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life.” Further, in #64, this document points out “the need to provide an education in Eucharistic faith capable of enabling the faithful to live personally what they celebrate.” The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the complete school of Eucharistic faith and formation.

For this reason, the section on the Eucharist and Mary in SC #33 concludes thus: “Consequently, every time we approach the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharistic liturgy, we always turn to her who, by her complete fidelity, received Christ’s sacrifice for the whole Church. The Synod Fathers rightly declared that ‘Mary inaugurated the Church’s participation in the sacrifice of the Redeemer.’... Mary of Nazareth, icon of the nascent Church, is the model for each of us, called to receive the gift that Jesus makes of himself in the Eucharist.”

The Lack of Memory and the Loss of Faith

The Hebrew people were constantly to recall the merciful presence of God in his actions throughout their history. We see this in psalm 77.11-12: “I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds.” But, in fact, the opposite occurred, as is recorded in psalm 106.7: “Our fathers...did not consider your wonderful works; they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love, but rebelled against the Most High...” This was the frequent theme of the prophets as well. Jeremiah 3.21 complains, “...Israel’s sons... have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord their God.” Earlier in Deuteronomy 32.18, Moses pointed out to the assembly of the Israelites “You were unmindful of the Rock that begot you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.”

Pope Leo XIII, the author of 16 documents on the Rosary, pointed out the practical causes of the slow diminution of an active faith in his encyclical *Magnae Dei Matris* of 1892. “But the Christian is so preoccupied with life’s varied concerns and so easily distracted by futile matters that, unless he is frequently reminded, he little by little forgets the most important and the most necessary things. Eventually his faith grows weak and even dies.” Our technological advances have increased these occasions for such destructive forgetfulness.

The Dominican specialist in spirituality, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, described this process of the erosion of faith in “The Priesthood and Perfection” (p. 12, 23). “The poisonous errors of modern life are tending towards a complete de-Christianization of society... an apostasy of nations... At the root of all these errors is the idea that God, if he exists at all, is only interested in universal laws and not in individual people... those societies which are based on grossly false principles and atheistic legislation are on their way to death... If the sorrowful effects of these cancerous errors are not evident in the first generation, they will become very obvious – according to the ‘law of acceleration in fall’ – in the second, third and fourth generations... These effects are not apparent in the first generation which has been fed on those errors; but they are terrible in the fifth and sixth generations.” That perspective, published at least a half century ago, have proven to be increasingly prophetic.

In the same passage Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange speaks of the disappearance of the sense of sin, as though it were just an offense against reason in evolution. This eliminates original sin, a redemptive incarnation, regenerative grace, sacraments and sacrifice. The presence of God is absent and prayer is therefore unnecessary.

One of the basic remedies for such secularization is this keeping memory of the mighty works of God, from creation to glorification. We can then understand the role of the Rosary as keeping this memory constant and strong as a preparation for a proper participation in the Eucharistic life of the Church and the restoration of a Christian identity, sorely lacking in our times.

Jesus himself indicates the centrality of the paschal mystery in the Church’s mission of evangelization. During the Last Supper discourse in John 14.31, he states, “...the world must be shown that I love the Father and am doing what he commands; come let us go!” What the Father commanded Jesus to do was already indicated in John 10. 17-18, “The Father loves me because I lay down my life, to receive it back again. No one takes it away from me; I am laying it down of my own will. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to receive it back again; this charge I have received from my Father.” In other words, the world must be shown the paschal mystery as the proof of Jesus’ love for the Father since that is the command the Father gave to Jesus. The final statement, “Come let us go!” shows the eagerness with which he desires to fulfill that command, to accomplish the paschal mystery. We should pray to the Holy Spirit for the same zeal to live out the paschal mystery of the altar in our lives as followers of Christ.

Marian Icon of Paschal Holiness

The icon of Our Lady of South Carolina – Our Lady of Joyful Hope – has three scriptural quotes which refer to the three themes of this spirituality. *Behold the Lamb of God* has a paschal reference. *Behold Your Mother* relates to our formation according to the mysteries of Christ. *The just flourish like the palm tree* corresponds with the universal call to paschal holiness of Vatican II.