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EUCCHARISTIC WAY OF THE HUMAN EXPECTATION

The apostolic task for Christians is always to restore hope in the poor. The Catholic Church understands this as Christ's commission and as also an opportunity and a request to exercise sensitivity towards the needy. The Church is always under an obligation to care for poor people: both poor materially and poor spiritually; people who haven't got bread and somewhere to live as well as people who live in a state of sin; sick people; those who are lonely, and those who suffer. In the liturgy, especially the Breaking of the Bread, we recognize the way of life shown by Jesus Christ. In His love for God the Father our Saviour teaches us about loving our neighbors as ourselves, caring in a special way for the poor, the lowly, the lonely, the rejected and forgiving our enemies.

This article hopes to illustrate in the Eucharist a way which is full of expectation for the poor. In the celebration of the Holy Mass people's hopes for joy in the eternal life are raised (as is outlined in the first part this text); the poor receive the strength to carry their own cross (in the second part); and people are called to change their way of life in accordance with the Ten Commandments (in the third part).

1. People hopes for joy in the eternal life

During the Holy Mass the faithful participate in the suffering, the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This gives them an opportunity to reflect on their own lives: their suffering, redemption and eternal joy. They are reminded of this in the prayer:

“Father, (...) help us to understand the meaning of your Son's death and resurrection, and teach us to reflect it our lives” (*Opening Prayer. First Sunday of Lent*)¹

If people are suffering and their suffering is such that it prevent all activity, they can offer this as sacrifice of love. During the Mass the believers immerse their pain in the pain of Jesus and it becomes a generous gift for the good of all mankind. “In life one can do many things, say many words. But the voice of suffering, unheard by

¹ All quotations of the Order of Mass derive from the: *The Roman Missal. Revised by decree of the Second Vatican Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI. Official English Texts*, London 1974.

others and perhaps unknown to them, suffering offered out of love, is the most powerful word, the one that reaches Heaven”²

By offering up their own spiritual and material poverty believers are united with Jesus Christ. They place their pain at the altar of God where they come nearer to the Kingdom of God. By giving up their lives to the Saviour they receive the fruits of redemption and consequently they will be better able to endure patiently the problems of every day life. By sharing their problems with Christ they come nearer to eternal life with Him. This is the Christian way of life. Through the prayer of the Holy Mass they can see each of their days in a new perspective:

“Lord, receive our gifts. Let our offerings make us holy and bring us salvation”
(*Prayer over the Gifts. Third Sunday in Ordinary time*).

The sacrifice of Jesus taking place on the altar allows people to see the truth of the human condition on earth. The Saviour reveals the purpose of life which does not end with the earthly life. It is the life which death is not able to destroy and it continues into eternity. After the multiplication of the loaves the Saviour talked to those assembled in His Eucharistic speech: “I am the living bread which has come from Heaven: if any man eats this bread for food he will have eternal life. (...) He who eats my flesh for food and my blood for drink has eternal life: and I will raise him up from the death on the last day. (...) As the living Father has sent Me, and I have life because of the Father, even so he who takes me for his food will have life because of Me” (J 6: 51.54.57). If Jesus is telling us that we are supposed to eat His Body and to drink His Blood, He is saying by this that our existence without the nourishment of Christ’s Body and Blood is different and leads to death. With this nourishment in us we live. However, Jesus does resurrect and therefore, proves to us His different nature, the one that can feed. His feeding of the apostles at the Last Supper exposes this truth. If His Body was to be subordinate to death, it would have disintegrated in the grave. Such a body could not provide sustenance to anyone.

However, His Body and Blood provide sustenance for eternal life because in the Eucharistic species Christ has already overcome death and has risen. Christ has destroyed the power of death. He alone overcame death and granted new meaning and substance to His rising from the death. Receiving the Eucharist is the moment of birth to new life, going to that world where the God will wipe away every tear, where neither death nor mourning, no cries or any strife will be felt (note Ap 21:4). There His people will be meeting their loving God³

Cardinal Basil Hume explains concerning suffering: “I am thinking of all those persons who suffer: men and women who suffer in hospitals, prisoners of conscience, those troubled in mind, the anxious, the depressed, the aged, the lonely, the bereaved, the dying. They are evangelists with that special vocation to take up the

² C. Lubich, *Meditations*, London 1971, p. 38.

³ A. Santorski, *Czy znasz tajemnicę Eucharystii?*, Warsaw 1994, p. 45.

cross of Christ and follow him. That vocation will be ours at some time or other, in some measure at least. It is always the clarion call to holiness”⁴

By receiving the Eucharist those who suffer receive renewed expectation. That is so because it is the Sacrament of hope and vision of the future, joy to come in God’s Kingdom. The important purpose of this Celebration is fruitful participation in the mystery of Christ’s Resurrection. It invites people to transcend earthly life and enter eternal life. The Resurrection breathes new life into believers, a life of hope, and it inspires to transcend the present. God gives us participation in the ultimate future glory and Christians ought to remember that the gathering at the Eucharistic table confirms and extends their communion with God. It is in this Eucharistic communion that hope is born. Therefore, people of God pray:

“Lord, accept the gifts of your Church. May this Eucharist help us grow in holiness and faith” (*Prayer over the Gifts. Fifteen Sunday in Ordinary time*).

During the celebration of the Holy Mass people ask for strong faith. The faith tells us that the end of human life is eternal life. Faith is the assurance that God has truly revealed His Will to people in Jesus Christ, and this Will is eternal life. How God will realize His Will we do not know, the „how” is unimportant. Christians ought to live this meaning of faith, be of good cheer, and live even on earth in God’s love which is the inner meaning of eternal life. Eternal life begins with faith in Christ and when it has begun death has no more power over people.

The faith illuminates the order and the depth of human reasoning. In the light of faith man can find the concrete reply for questions: who am I?, what is the sense of my life?, why do I suffer and die? Without faith man himself cannot find answer to these questions. The Holy Mass is the instrument whereby the faithful ask God for the grace of faith and at the same time they profess it to God. *Ordo Missae* contains a lot of moments when the faithful have an opportunity to express their relation to the Holy Trinity: while they say the Creed – I believe in one God; while they make the sign of the cross – in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; while they proclaim the mystery of faith – when we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory. These events not only remind us of the purpose of the Holy Mass but also they give growth to faith. It should be stressed that the Liturgy immerses us in God and in this way man can lose himself in the Creator, clothes himself in Christ and is nailed to the cross with Jesus. In this way Christians confess their own faith: they look for the resurrection from the dead and the life of the world to come⁵

As an efficacious sign of Christ’s salvation, the Eucharist confirms our hope in God, His grace to live in His friendship in this life and to inherit eternal life in heaven. The Eucharist nourishes human hope, already pointing back to God’s salvi-

⁴ B. Hume, *The Mystery of Love*, London 2000, p. 71.

⁵ Z. Janiec, *Liturgia na ambonie*, Sandomierz 2002, p. 320-321.

fic deeds, especially Jesus' death and resurrection, at the same provides the basic of our hope when in the future we look forward to the coming of the Kingdom and eternal life in communion with God.

In the above mentioned aspects of the Holy Mass the faithful express their trust in Christ and particularly so when experiencing life's hardship. Moreover it makes us aware that material possession are not as important as spiritual matters. Eternal life is dependent on the latter.

2. The poor receive the strength to carry their cross

Whoever participates in the celebration of the Eucharist does not do so to escape from the problems of every day life but to pray and participate in the mysteries of the union with God here on earth. They show willingness to imitate Christ in His earthly pain and poverty. Equally, a suffering human being becomes aware of his dependence on God and on other people. This provokes reflection on the meaning of life and how to conduct it. Through these means we arrive at the full realization of the transitory nature of life on earth:

“Lord, You give us new hope in this Eucharist. May the power of your love continue its saving work among us and bring us to the joy you promise” (*Prayer after Communion. Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary time*).

During the Holy Mass Jesus shows us His desire for us to overcome every weakness. He paid the price through His own self-annihilation, the price of His kenosis. “It is in the light of faith that man will see how exceedingly the Eucharist is the Self-abasement of Christ. He strips Himself of His divine dignity and abases Himself by the very fact that His majesty and His humanity are hidden under the material form of bread and wine. He strips Himself of His due praise and honor”⁶

In a life of man there are difficult situation which take away hope or put hope to the test. Experiencing spiritual suffering, illness or death of a close relative are these testing moments. People are reminding during the Mass that there is no situation in life which Jesus (as a man) has not known and could not help. Liturgy is the time to conquer hopelessness. It is only by placing our expectation in Christ that we can fill the void within us and rid ourselves of our loneliness and fear of death:

“Father, your love for us surpasses all our hopes and desires. Forgive our failings, keep us in your peace and lead us in the way of salvation” (*Opening Prayer, Twenty-seven Sunday in Ordinary time*).

“«The salvation of man is in love and through love» – few thoughts are more exhilarating than the realisation that «God is love» and that he has for each person

⁶ T. Dajczer, *Inquiring faith*, Warsaw 1996, p. 176.

an intensity of love which no human experience of love can match. Human love is nonetheless a wonderful instrument whereby we may begin to explore the meaning of love in God. None of these experiences proved in any sort of conclusive manner that God existed, yet each one was, and remains, a pointer to another form of life that would persist after death. Each experience carried within it glimpses and a promise of an existence characterised by an unending «now» of ecstatic joy when united to One who is, of all that is lovable, the most lovable of all”⁷

The Eucharist is “God with us” (Mt 1:23). Jesus is the true Emmanuel and He gives answer for people’s questions and requests. “He wishes to enter within us to be our Food for eternal life, our love, our support. He wants to make us part of His mystical Body in which He would redeem us and save us, and then take us into the kingdom of Heaven to settle us in an everlasting bliss of love”⁸

In the Eucharist we encounter the Christ who lived and died like us and then rose again. We encounter Jesus who took upon Himself our weaknesses and now He allows us to participate in His mission of salvation:

“Lord, we are nothing without You. As you sustain us with your mercy receive our prayers and offerings” (*Prayer over the Gifts. Second Sunday of Advent*).

This meaning of Missal’s prayer is presented by the Pope in a document about Christian expectation: “We can try to limit suffering, to fight against it, but we cannot eliminate it. It is when we attempt to avoid suffering by withdrawing from anything that might involve hurt, when we try to spare ourselves the effort and pain of pursuing truth, love, and goodness, that we drift into a life of emptiness, in which there may be almost no pain, but the dark sensation of meaninglessness and abandonment is all the greater. It is not by sidestepping or fleeing from suffering that we are healed, but rather by our capacity for accepting it, maturing through it and finding meaning through union with Christ, who suffered with infinite love”⁹

In the Eucharist Catholics remind themselves that the Lord Jesus liberates us from paralysis, He makes us get up and persevere. He helps us to start walking in the steps of faith. Christ in the Eucharist gives people strength whenever they are feeling battered or uncomfortable. The Eucharist is the sacrament of God who does not leave us alone on our journey, but stands by our side and shows us the way. The Eucharist is the most valid and radical remedy against the idolatries of yesterday and today. This Celebration is a profession of freedom: one who bows to Jesus cannot and must not prostrate himself before any earthly power. To adore the body of Christ means to believe that there, in that piece of bread, there really is Christ who gives meaning to our lives, meaning to the immense universe as well as to the smallest creature and to all of human history as well as to the briefest existence.

⁷ B. Hume, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, London 1999, p. 54-55.

⁸ S. Manelli, *Jesus Our Eucharistic Love. Eucharistic Life. Exemplified by the Saints*, New Bedford 1996, p. 3.

⁹ Benedict XVI, *Encyclical letter “Spe salvi”* (30 November 2007), 37.

People are not able to accept suffering as Christ did until they are given special grace from God. It is only possible when they receive Jesus' power of love. Holy Mass not only shows Christ's example, but also invites us to follow in His footsteps and draw strength from the celebration as the inexhaustible source and power of love. This power not only provides defence against selfishness and human will, but also enable us adopt an attitude of self-giving just as the Saviour did in His Passion. He was not preoccupied with self, but total giving. He offered Himself as burnt offering. Feeding believers on His Body and watering with His Blood Christ strengthens us in His love. He helps to overcome difficulties and different problems which appear on the way of Christian life. He humbled himself before people and He has not only washed the feet of His disciples, but He also has given Himself unreservedly to us as nourishment. He is feeding Christians on His own Body and Blood. He explains: "For truly the Son of man did not come to have servants, but to be a servant, and to give His life for the salvation of men" (Mk 10:45). It was very difficult mission and Jesus had moments of despair in Gethsemane. However, in the end He chose obedience to the Will of the Father, Lord of heaven and earth. The followers of Christ are called to the same attitude.

The New Testament reminds us: "Therefore, we are not discouraged; rather, although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2Cor 4:16-17), "But what credit is there if you are patient when beaten for doing wrong? But if you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good, this is a grace before God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps" (1Pt 2:20-21).

3. People are called to change their way of life

Jesus died for our sins and rose for our justification. When He set out on his sorrowful road of Redemption – His Calvary – He founded the Eucharist for the absolution of our sin:

"Lord Jesus Christ, you gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood help us to experience the salvation you won for us" (*Opening Prayer: The Body and Blood of Christ*).

The Christians right to God's merciful love flows from Christ's redeeming sacrifice on the cross. People ought to remember that Jesus, "who carries us in His arms and holds us close to His heart, bears the marks from the wounds us inflicted upon Him. We cannot forget that His Head was wounded by the crown of thorns, His pierced Heart and wounded hands and feet all bleed. We witness this at Holy

Mass when His redeeming sacrifice for us is made present"¹⁰. The Eucharist with its mystery of the cross and salvation shows us a new style of living.

Jesus Christ continues ceaselessly to help us, poor sinners, because after the Resurrection, He sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and they received the power to absolve sins in His name (note Jn 20:19-23). In the sacrifice of the Holy Mass we find re-enacted the suffering of Christ, when the Church offers up to God, for the salvation of the whole world, the Body given up for us and the Blood shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins. John Paul II reminded us of it: "The Church constantly draws her life from the redeeming sacrifice; she approaches it not only through faith-filled remembrance, but also through a real contact, since *this sacrifice is made present ever anew*, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister. The Eucharist thus applies to men and women today the reconciliation won once for all by Christ for mankind in every age"¹¹. In this spirit the faithful pray:

"Lord, look on the heart of Christ your Son filled with love for us. Because of his love accept our Eucharist and forgive our sins" (*Prayer over the gifts. Sacred Heart*).

"God of mercy, may we offer a pure sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins" (*Prayer over the Gifts. Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary time*).

God of mercy made a covenant with man. Its essence is "I am yours and You are mine" We have become kinsmen by blood. This is rooted in a larger covenant between God and His people as understood by Old Testament Jews. When Christ died on the cross, He established an everlasting covenant with us. Savior renews that covenant at every Mass: "This is My Body, given for you; this is My Blood, shed for You" He reminds us: "I give Myself to you; give yourselves also to Me" He gives us Himself in Holy Communion, and we give ourselves back to Him in obedience and love. He unceasingly teaches us the meaning of love and gives the power to love because He calls us to change our way of life and to place all our hope on heaven¹²

¹⁰ *To trust In love*, ed. J. Piłat, T. Dajczek..., Manila 1997, p. 40.

¹¹ John Paul II, *Encyclical letter "Ecclesia de Eucharistia"* (17 April 2003), 12.

¹² S. Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper. The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, New York 1999, p. 155. „To go to Mass is to renew our covenant with God, as at a marriage feast – for the Mass is the marriage supper of the Lamb. As in a marriage, we pledge ourselves, we assume a new identity, we are changed forever” Scott Hahn explores an amazing interpretation of The Book of Revelation that has been almost forgotten over time. He reaches back to the second through sixth centuries to the teachings of the early Eastern Fathers of the Church. In his study of their writings, Hahn shows us the link between the celebration of the Eucharist and the end of the world. He illustrates how the heavenly worship found in the Book of Revelation is really an account of the Marriage Feast of the Lamb - a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

In the Eucharist Christ is present, and placed before us on the altar as a burnt offering for our reconciliation, so that we may become united by the power of the Holy Spirit. God is love and cannot stop loving and giving Himself. The faithful gathered at the liturgy pray constantly to experience God's love. They ask to be reassured that God who is love never ceases to love them in spite of their sinfulness:

“Father, (...) when we are discouraged by our weakness, give us confidence in your love” (*Opening Prayer. Third Sunday of Lent*).

Realizing one's weaknesses and experiencing one's sin is a path which leads to faith. God gives us the grace to deepen our faith and strengthen our love when we realize our spiritual weakness. The help available from Christ is directed towards the poor, towards those who ask Him and wait for His help; all this can be understood during the Holy Mass. The Saviour took on Himself all human weakness. He, the One who never sinned, dying for the sins of man and then resurrecting tells us that He wants to continue His victory over the soul, even the soul of the greatest of sinners. The love of God does not heal those who have no wounds of sin. A person who does not feel the need and necessity for grace cannot open himself to receive it.

The consequences of sin have not yet been eliminated and the power of darkness is always at work. People have not arrived at their destination but are still on their way. Yet in the night of weakness there shines the brilliant light of the expectation that God Himself will perfect in His faithful the work He has begun in them by forgiving us our sins and filling us with His grace:

“Lord, may your healing love turn us from sin and keep us on the way that leads to you” (*Prayer after Communion. Tenth Sunday in Ordinary time*).

“With the consciousness of love, with the consciousness of forgiveness, with the consciousness of hope, a man and woman can walk through life. Yet it was at the height of Our Lord's suffering on the cross that He spoke those glorious words. So at the heart of Calvary is of course the resurrection. Every time we celebrate Holy Mass, surely all that agony and suffering of humankind is present, and through that offering in some way love, forgiveness and hope are being given – not just to this community round this altar but, like the pebble cast into the pond, the ripples move ever further outwards.

So the Holy Mass makes present that one complete sacrifice of Christ, re-enacted through the consecrated bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ, transcending time and space, enabling us to be present at the foot of the cross and close to the empty tomb. It is our earthly way of being involved in the great heavenly liturgy which is going on all the time (Rev 5:6-14). Our celebration is the earthly counterpart of that liturgy”¹³

¹³ B. Hume, *The Mystery of the Incarnation*, op. cit., p. 110-111.

The current nature of man deformed by the effect of the original sin separates man from God while salvation, redemption and forgiveness are freely offered to all by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. When a person repents of sin and believes in his heart that Christ is his personal Savior and Lord, trusting Him to save him, that person is immediately born again and sealed by the Holy Spirit. This action of the Holy Spirit ensures that we become children of God, destined to spend eternity with Him. It is God's Will that we are transformed into "repaired" beings who now immersed in grace begin to show: purity, holiness and growth in Christ-like character. Son of God helps people to return to the rightful way of life in accordance with His Commandments.

"Lord, make us worthy to bring you these gifts. May this sacrifice help to change our lives" (*Prayer over the Gifts. First Sunday of Lent*).

This is a path to holiness. At each Mass the Holy Spirit descends anew; not only to transform our gifts of bread and wine into the Lord's Body and Blood, but also to transform human lives for one body and one spirit in Christ. As the source of our new life in Christ, the Holy Spirit is also the soul of the Church, the love which binds us to the Lord, and the light which opens eyes to see all around us the wonders of God's grace. The power of the Spirit never ceases to fill the Church with life. This power, the grace of the Spirit, people receive as pure gift. God's love can only unleash its power when it is allowed to change us from within. In the power of his Spirit, Jesus is always present in human hearts, quietly waiting for man to be still with him, to hear his voice, to abide in his love, and to receive power from on high, enabling people to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt 5,13-14). The Eucharist reminds us of the truth of our calling to holiness and of the need to be released from the bondage of sin:

"Lord, as we gather to offer our gifts confident in your love, make us holy by the sharing your life with us and by this Eucharist forgive our sins" (*Prayer over the gifts. Ninth Sunday in Ordinary time*).

"The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy – the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer – and when she brings people close to the sources of the Savior's mercy, of which she is the trustee and dispenser. Of great significance in this area is constant meditation on the Word of God, and above all conscious and mature participation in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation. The Eucharist brings us ever nearer to that love which is more powerful than death: „For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup," we proclaim not only the death of the Redeemer but also His resurrection, „until he comes" in glory. The same Eucharistic rite, celebrated in memory of Him who in His messianic mission revealed the Father to us by means of His words and His cross, attests to the inexhaustible love by virtue of which He

desires always to be united with us and present in our midst, coming to meet every human heart. It is the sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation that prepares the way for each individual, even those weighed down with great faults. In this sacrament each person can experience mercy in a unique way, that is, the love which is more powerful than sin”¹⁴

By taking part in the celebration of the Eucharist people reflect upon the fact that before Christ we are all poor sinners. He alone is holy:

“For you alone are the Holy One (...) Jesus Christ” (*The Gloria*).

Only He, in His mercy, enriches weak people with His Grace. Praising and extolling the Creator they are asking about gifts which He only can give His creatures. These gifts are available to those who admit their weaknesses, accept their suffering and want to change their lives to follow the road of God’s commandments. The Eucharist reveals that our salvation begins with God, not ourselves. God offers Himself to man in Christ first. At the same time, as the summit of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist is man’s supreme, grace-enabled, freely given offering of oneself back to God through Jesus Christ, our high priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The union is intimate; personal fellowship between God and man realized through God’s gift to Himself to man and man’s faithful response.

“Though we are sinners, we trust in your (Lord) mercy and love. Do not consider what we truly deserve, but grant us your forgiveness. Through Christ our Lord (...) you give us all these gifts” (*Eucharistic Prayer I*).

A life without Christ is a life without value and leads to death. It is He alone who frees people from guilt and sin. He gives the Divine life of grace and introduces us to communion with the Father, in unity of the Holy Spirit¹⁵

Once in union with the Divine we encounter everyone there. We begin to recognise the most needy because love points them out clearly. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ offered by Him to all people, we recognize Christ in the poorest. They are His brothers and sisters, and they are our brothers and sisters. It is through the deep commitment to the Eucharist, and the sharing and giving it proclaims that opens our hearts to the poor. The Eucharist sustains the faithful because of the consummation of Christ’s Body and Blood, so that strengthened and united with

¹⁴ John Paul II, *Encyclical letter “Dives in misericordia”* (30 November 1980), 13.

¹⁵ Note M. F. Pennock, *A Catholic Catechism for Adults. This is our faith...*, Notre Dame – Indiana 1993⁵, p. 49-56. “Jesus has saved us. He announces God’s forgiveness and heals us of all the hurts which evil and sin can cause. He has conquered sin and death. If we join ourselves to him in faith, accept his forgiveness, and turn from sin, we need fear nothing. Jesus’ life witnesses to the greatest news possible: Good triumphs over evil; life wins out over death!” (p. 56).

Him they begin to be able to follow the mission of Christ to the poor, the needy, the captives, the oppressed both in terms of spiritual and earthly help (Lk 4:16-19). Now grace can start to act. It is our duty then on leaving the Eucharistic Celebration to examine our conscience to see if we ourselves are helping the poor and the needy.

The hope, the expectation of new and eternal life doesn't give Christians excuse to turn their backs on the world and on their role in making it more humane. Rather, because „God so loved the world” and because each person is called to share in the divine life of the Trinity, people are obliged to allow the truth of the Gospel and the light and love of the Eucharist to shine on the earth. We are called to transform the world into a place where the poorest, the weakest, the most powerless are respected and loved. The hope we experience in the Eucharist is what motivates our solidarity with the unborn, the poor, the persecuted, the sick and the dying. Hope is what enables us to imitate Christ, who washed the feet of the disciples and washed our sins away upon the cross.

The Almighty Father knows all our desires and He would like to respond to them. Therefore, unceasingly He calls His people and invites them to be close to Him. He does this selflessly because He is Love and He loves mankind. Christ dies on the altar again and again. His never ending and total sacrifice is always available to His poor followers, so when they come to the celebration of the Holy Mass they can see the answer to their questions: what they need to do to be united with God ever closer.

We can now understand how the Eucharist is so very important for human life. People can take the power from the prayer of the Holy Mass. The prayer of the Holy Mass has immense transforming power. It repairs the union broken by the original sin, it restores hope to the poor and inspires them to live the life of Christ. When we come to the cross of Christ we see His suffering, but we know also by faith that His suffering was our salvation; His death was to lead to His resurrection and our new life. The poor have hope as they journey with Christ knowing that He is able to sympathize with them in their suffering (Heb 4:15) and lead them through His mercy and grace to the depths of God. The poor leave the Eucharist enriched with new life, God's peace, His love and His Promise: the Holy Spirit.

Streszczenie

EUCHARYSTYCZNA DROGA LUDZKIEJ NADZIEI

Przywracanie nadziei ubogim jest zawsze aktualnym zadaniem chrześcijan. Kościół rozumie je jako realizację Chrystusowego polecenia miłości bliźniego, świadczonej zarówno względem doświadczających biedy materialnej, jak i duchowej. Wydarzeniem, przez które Jezus Chrystus daje nadzieję tym, którzy jej nie mają oraz uczy człowieka przywracać ją bliźnim, jest Eucharystia. Teksty angielskiej edycji *Roman Missal* – Mszału rzymskiego z 1974 r., które stanowią źródło

dla obecnego studium, ukazują celebrację Męki, Śmierci i Zmartwychwstania Zbawiciela w następujący sposób: jako misterium ożywiający w najbiedniejszych ufność na radość otrzymania życia wiecznego w zjednoczeniu z Chrystusem, jako tajemnicę udzielającą sił potrzebnych do wzięcia i niesienia własnego krzyża oraz jako wydarzenie wzywające do zerwania z grzechem i kroczenia drogą Bożych przykazań. Wymienione kolejno trzy prawdy wyznaczyły strukturę powyżej zaprezentowanej analizy relacji Chrystusa obecnego i działającego w Mszy św. do tych, których trudna codzienność naznaczana jest utratą wszelkiej nadziei.

W pierwszej części zaprezentowane wybrane modlitwy mszalne ukazują zamysł Ojca niebieskiego odnośnie do zesłania na ziemię Jednorodzonego Syna, który cierpiąc i umierając nadał ludzkiemu cierpieniu sens i pokonał śmierć. Człowiek, jednocząc się z Chrystusem przez ofiarowanie Mu swojego cierpienia, wzrasta w wierze i świętości. Tym, którzy dźwigają trudy doczesnego życia, Eucharystia przypomina, że niesienie krzyża w łączności z Ukrzyżowanym za zbawienie ludzi stanowi drogę do wiecznego szczęścia.

Kolejne przywoływane teksty mszalne przekonują o nieustannym zatroskaniu Boga o każdego człowieka. Pewność taka potrzebna jest szczególnie ludziom doświadczającym poczucia braku wartości i nadziei. Mogą oni, będąc podtrzymywani Bożą łaską, składać na ołtarzu ofiary z doznawanego cierpienia. Ofiary te Ojciec niebieski pragnie przyjmować tak, jak przyjął ofiarę wypełnionej przez Jednorodzonego Syna Jego woli. W ten sposób włączają się oni w dzieło zbawienia świata.

Ostatni fragment studium wypełniają teksty podkreślające wartość oddania przez Zbawiciela życia. Dzięki tej ofierze spełnia się pragnienie Chrystusa, aby zjednoczyć się z człowiekiem czyniąc go bogatym w radość i szczęście. Dzięki temu zjednoczeniu biedni grzesznicy mogą doświadczać przebaczenia, cieszyć się czystością serca i nieustannie przeżywać zwycięstwa nad swoją słabością.