

A quote from a newly ordained priest is a good place to start this reflection. *“The Eucharist celebration should be preceded by an adequate preparation which has to be both remote and proximate”* I would go further and say we should live the Eucharist. This way going to the Eucharistic celebration becomes just an extension of our everyday life. I believe strongly that Eucharist must be experienced in our daily living if we are to get the most out of the liturgical Eucharistic celebration. This should be the case for Priests and religious in particular but it should apply for all Christian surely. As my Novice Master said so long ago *“we should live Eucharist”* He meant by this that we have a mindset that allows us to see life as one big offering to our Creator in an act of loving thanksgiving. What a great attitude to have and we would be a happier and more loving people if we had this attitude to life and others would see it shining through us. Was this not a feature of the early Christian communities? *“See how those Christian love one another”* The last thing we need to be accused of is being hypocrites who go to the Eucharist and act differently outside in our everyday life. No we must be consistent and be what we claim to be a Eucharistic people in and out of church. What do I mean by Eucharistic people? Well when I go out of my way to help someone or even just greet someone and believe the Gospel value that Christ is the one I help or greet than surely each of these are evidence of a Eucharistic experience. *“Where not our hearts burning as we walked and talked with Him”* When we walk with our fellow brothers and sisters in our daily life and see ourselves walking with Christ we can well say those beautiful words of the two disciples walking to Emmaus.



### **Fr Paul Putzu:**

Let me focus on the liturgical expression of the Eucharist for a moment and to do this I quote Fr Sal Putzu SDB who said of priests *“Celebrate the Eucharist as if it were the only liturgy you ever celebrate”* or for us I would say *“imagine this Eucharist is the last liturgy you will participate in”* Would the experience be somehow enriched and heightened? Would we do anything a little differently? I think the ordinariness of our daily Eucharist would disappear and maybe the experience would be a little more intense. For me the Eucharist should be a climax of the day’s activities for others it is the ideal beginning for the day’s activities. Either way it is an attitude thing. Taking part in the offering of the Eucharist is not just devotional but rather a most precious grace one can receive for that day. One writer put it this way *“It is the greatest contribution which one can make to the good of the church and all mankind”* No wonder the Eucharist is something worth doing, if at all possible, every day. To help me make this experience a climax of the day I can include all the intentions of the day

and all the ups and downs that have made up the day. All of a sudden the Eucharist takes on a larger perspective. My interaction with students and staff, and the difficulties I may have encountered as well as all the good things that happened can become part of my offering to join the offering of Jesus at the table of sacrifice. The other thought I had was the fact that hundreds of masses are said each minute of the day around the world so the one I am experiencing can join the others in one big thanks giving of praise to God. Somehow I feel in solidarity with the whole church which is made up of millions of souls. Can you just imagine how many Masses have been said since the first Eucharist on the very first Holy Thursday night?

### ***The Philippines:***

Most of our masses are said in the vernacular here in Hilongos, which means most masses, are said in the Visayan language. This is a bit of a challenge for us but our participation is improving in proportion to the amount of the language we have mastered. We have English masses every Wednesday and at the Sunday 10 o'clock mass which we gladly take advantage of. One of the wonderful Eucharistic experiences we have here in the Philippines is when we celebrate a quiet Eucharist here in our own home at the end of a busy day and we are lucky to have this privilege once a month. Mind you I also just love the 10 o'clock Children's mass every Sunday too and that is certainly not quiet. Participation takes on a new dimension when 1000 children sing, dance, mime, and pray their little hearts out together giving praise to their creator God. So the Eucharist can take different forms but yet be one and same celebration. Jesus asked us to "*do this in memory of Him*" and the church has been following that command right up to today. The miracle is that the mass is said in hundreds of different languages and in hundreds of different places with different outward forms being experienced and yet the same sacrifice is offered and the same Jesus is present. He is present as the complete person not just a body with blood. "*This is my body, this is my blood*" implies his living body which includes his teachings, as told in the sacred scripture, and his whole way of living. We are asked to take not only his body, in the appearance of a host in communion, but also his gospel values and promise to adopt his very life principles. He is the Word of Life, and "*when we eat this bread and drink this blood*" we are accepting all that Jesus said and did and all that he was when he walked this earth. We are saying yes to all he ever preached and yes to all he ever taught because what he taught is what he believed in and to be saved we must believe in Him too.

***Fr Frank Anderson:***

The celebration of the Word is so important as we can't take in his teaching if we don't hear it. We must take in His teaching and values and make them our own if we are to make any sense of the taking of His sacramental presence in communion. We not only take his body and blood but his very spirit into our hearts. Frank Anderson put it very well when he writes *"when Jesus presented his apostles with his own self, Jesus wanted to prepare them to continue the sacrifice he was about to go through. He was to be the Priest, victim and food for his followers. A revolutionary way of thinking for sure like the world had never seen before"* He puts forward himself as a way of life, a way of giving praise and thanks to the Father. This whole idea of sacrifice would not be made clear to those twelve men until Pentecost Sunday when the Spirit was sent to explain and enlighten them. As the scripture says *"They become as changed men"* They became filled with the fire of love for their Master and for all he ever taught and did while with them. We should be changed people when we come from the celebrating of the Eucharist and our hearts should be burning from hearing his Word and sharing his very self.

### ***Teilhard de Chardin:***

I finish this reflection by quoting Teilhard de Chardin's cosmic theology on the Eucharist. He said these amazing words *"From age to age there is but one single mass in the world. The true Host, the total Host, is the Universe which is continually being more intimately penetrated and vivified by the cosmic Christ. From the most distant origins of things until their unforeseeable consummation, through the countless convulsions of boundless space, the whole of nature is slowly and irresistibly undergoing the supreme consecration"* He is seeing the whole Universe as Eucharist which to me is a difficult concept to grasp but not hard to believe. The prophetic words *"I will make the whole earth my altar"* is surely what Jesus did on Calvary. Teilhard sees life in its totality and not in its elements and his very faith is bound up in his vision of the Cosmic Christ. It is because Teilhard feels the whole of life passionately that he believes in a God. When we listen to the cry of the Earth as heard most loudly in the cry of those made poor then we start to see what Eucharist really means. Eucharist should be a life changing experience and a way that we can join with Jesus in giving pure praise honour and thanks to our creator God and after all isn't this what we were created for in the first place. *"Why did God make us?"* Asked the penny catechism *"To love serve and obey Him here on earth and be happy with him for all eternity in heaven"* was our reply. Sounds easy but for some reason we seem to make heavy work of it. We need our prophets and saints to guide us through and to live life as we were meant to live it; namely to live it to the full. The Eucharist is just one expression of the way we can live life to the full. Till next time – Peter T Hilongos