This Bread Of Life: Report Of The United States Roman Catholic-Reformed Dialogue On The Eucharist/Lord's Supper (November 2010)

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Section 1: General Introduction

In the groundbreaking ecumenical document, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982), the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches declared as its aim "to proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, in order that the world might believe."[1] Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church, in the Vatican Council document *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963) listed as two of its aims "to encourage whatever can promote the union of all who believe in Christ; [and] to strengthen whatever serves to call all of humanity into the church's fold."[2] In pursuit of these noble goals, we offer this report from the seventh round of dialogue between the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and four denominations in the Reformed tradition: the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRC), the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. (PC(USA)), the Reformed Church in America (RCA), and the United Church of Christ (UCC).

This round of dialogue began with a discussion of the sacrament of baptism (2003-2007), which resulted in the report, "These Living Waters: Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism."[3] The present document concludes this round of ecumenical discussion with its report on the second part of the dialogue (2007-2010), which focused on what is commonly called the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic tradition and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion in the Reformed tradition. We hope that this report is read by and benefits church leaders, pastors, ministers, seminarians, and parishioners. We offer the report with the prayer that it will serve to draw our communions closer to lived unity within the Body of Christ.

1a: Scope of the Dialogue on Eucharist/Lord's Supper

As we affirmed in our earlier report on baptism, "Baptism is the sacramental gateway into the Christian life, directed toward the fullness of faith and discipleship in

Christ."[4] Together we understand that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper/Eucharist nourishes believers to live their baptismal identity and commitment throughout their lives.

At the outset of our dialogue on the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, we agreed that we would broaden our discussion to include key themes beyond those commonly considered. Many previous ecumenical discussions of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper have focused on the issues of the *"real presence"* of Christ in the sacrament and on *sacrifice* and *offering*, since these have tended to be areas of greatest divergence.

While we realize that the presence of Christ and sacrifice/offering are critical themes needing our attention (and, indeed, they will be thoroughly

[1] *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper, no. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), viii.

[2] No. 1 in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Northport, NY: Costello, 1996), 117.

[3] "These Living Waters: Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism" (report prepared during the seventh round of the United States Catholic-Reformed dialogue, 2008).

[4] "These Living Waters," 5.

discussed), we came to understand that there is a richness to be uncovered by broadening our dialogue to include *epiclesis* (invoking the action of the Holy Spirit), *anamnesis* (the act of remembering), and *discipleship* (the response-action of believers).[5] Furthermore, as we developed all five themes, we discovered that they are not isolated but closely interconnected. Taken together, these themes offer a rich approach to the sacrament that points to a felicitous degree of ecumenical convergence.

It is our hope that this report fairly represents each dialogue partner's understanding of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, and clearly states both points of agreement and those needing further dialogue. We recognize that there are other critical issues (e.g., ecclesiology, orders, actual divergence in practice) related to the sacrament. However, time and the mandate given to us by our respective churches have led us to limit our focus to these five themes. It is our prayerful expectation that future dialogue will be able to address these other significant issues.

1b: Brief History and Development of the Sacrament

There is much documentation concerning the development of the ritual shape of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper across the centuries. This development shows increased understanding through ritual experience of and theological reflection on the meaning of the sacrament. It is not our intent to present this development in detail here. However, we believe it will be helpful to outline in broad strokes the development of the sacrament, for this not only points to a common early tradition we all share, but it also provides the basis on which we have structured the body of this report.

Earliest Practice

Both scriptural and extra-scriptural evidence suggests that the earliest celebrations of the Lord's Supper/Eucharist were simple "family" gatherings of about thirty to fifty people held in the larger homes of wealthier community members who were able to accommodate these numbers. In response to Jesus' command to "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19), this shared meal ended with the blessing, breaking, and giving of bread and the blessing and passing of the cup (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). On the one hand, this meal was a continuation of the table fellowship so central to Jesus' whole ministry, and, on the other hand, in some of the Gospels it was unmistakably linked to the Jewish Passover celebration.

In addition to the significance of the meal as a response to Christ's command to celebrate in a remembrance of him, these gatherings were also significant because all present were to be regarded as equals, regardless of their economic or social rank. Social distinctions were abolished through baptism into Christ, and thus could have no place at the communion meal. Hence

[5] Significant scholarly work in recent decades by both Protestants and Roman Catholics has led to a new appreciation of the work of the Spirit in the Eucharist (especially with respect to the *epiclesis*) and to a richer understanding of the role of remembering (*anamnesis*) in Jewish and early Christian praying. These developments have led to liturgical changes in all of our communions and prompted the decision to incorporate these two themes so prominently in this report.

Paul was dismayed at the behavior of the Corinthian community, where some had their fill while others were shamed and went hungry.[6]

The late first-century *Didache*[7] indicates that the Christian community gathered on the Lord's Day (14:1), and this gathering included confession of sins (4:14; 14:1), reconciliation with neighbors (14:2), and making memorial of the Lord's sacrifice.[8] From this early, simple description of the Supper as a memorial of the Lord's sacrifice celebrated in the context of a household meal, sacramental theology and practice developed. Already in apostolic times, we find leadership roles emerging—apostles, overseers (*episkopoi*), presbyters, and deacons—all of which helped order the social and liturgical life of the early Christian communities. It is probable that by the turn of the first century (or shortly thereafter) this simple household meal had already begun to find structure as a eucharistic ritual, the main components of which are still recognizable today.

Second to Fourth Centuries

A number of changes took place during the period from the second to the fourth centuries. These changes continued to move the sacrament away from a simple, though structured, shared meal toward a more formal ritual. The meeting place changed from family homes to house churches as Christian communities began to buy property and own buildings dedicated to worship and other activities of the community. The meeting time changed from the evening meal on the Sabbath to sunrise on the Lord's Day, reflecting a strong resurrection motif. During this period, the following liturgical structure began to emerge: Scripture is read "as long as time allows," after which the "president in a discourse admonishes and exhorts [us] to imitate these good things"; prayers are offered and gifts are presented; the president offers prayers and thanksgiving, followed by distribution of the communion elements; the elements are taken by deacons to those who are absent; and a collection from the wealthy is taken up and given to the president who helps those in need.[9] In this collection for the poor as an element of the rite, we note an ongoing concern that participation in the Lord's Supper include the community's caring for those in need. By mid-second century, therefore, four main components of the liturgy were already in place: introductory rites, word, sacrament, and dismissal, which included a collection for the poorer members of the community.

Fourth Century and the Classical Structure of the Eucharist Liturgy

Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 AD), which ended the era of persecution, made possible a flurry of developments in Christian worship. As Christian communities grew, they needed larger buildings and churches

[6] 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

[7] While scholars disagree as to the exact date, most would agree that the *Didache* was redacted in the middle of the second century from previously existing manuscripts dating from the late first and early second centuries.

[8] *Didache* XIV, in J. Stevenson, ed., *A New Eusebius*, 6th ed. (London: SPCK, 1975), 129. Sections IX and X of the *Didache* show us something of the kind of text that was used for the liturgy.

[9] Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 67:3-7, in *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, trans. and ed. R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, 3rd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1987).

began to be constructed—at first along the lines of a typical basilica, the standard architecture for public buildings at that time. With the growth of the Church came also growth in the number of distinct Christian communities (for example, Greek, Latin, Syriac). While there were unique features in the celebration of the sacrament in each of these diverse communities, certain key elements were practiced in common:

- introductory rites
- proclamation of the word and preaching
- prayers of the faithful
- presentation and preparation of gifts (done in silence)
- prayer over the offerings
- *lavabo* (hand washing)
- kiss of peace
- reading of names of the living and dead (diptychs)
- the eucharistic prayer or great thanksgiving consisting of
  - introductory dialogue
  - preface
  - *epiclesis* (over the gifts as well as the assembly)
  - institution narrative
  - *anamnesis* (remembering)
  - offering
  - intercessions
  - doxology
  - the recitation of the Lord's Prayer by all
  - the breaking of the bread and mingling of the elements
  - preparation for and invitation to Communion
  - distribution of the elements
  - concluding blessing and dismissal

There are three key points to note about the development of sacramental practice and theology through the first several centuries of the Church's life. First, while prayers and actions were added, the basic shape of the sacramental rite remained the same. Second, the sacrament was understood theologically predominantly as a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ. Third, the Eucharist/Lord's Supper was seen as transforming the assembly into being more perfect members of the Body of Christ. St. Augustine says it eloquently (Sermon 272):

> If you are to understand what it means to be the Body of Christ, hear what Paul has to say: "Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27). If you are the Body of Christ and members of it, then it is that mystery which is placed on the Lord's table: you receive the mystery, which is to say the Body of Christ, your very self. You answer Amen to who you are and in the answer you embrace yourself. You hear Body of Christ and answer Amen. Be a member of Christ's body, that your Amen will be true.[10]

[10] Joyce Ann Zimmerman, C.PP.S., *Liturgy as Living Faith: A Liturgical Spirituality* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1993), 101; translation author's.

Participation in the Lord's Supper carried an ethical mandate to live as Jesus did, with particular concern for those who are poor and oppressed.

This review of the first four centuries of practice and theological perspective on the Lord's Supper provides a common foundation for the shape of this dialogue and the convergences that have emerged. Between the fourth and sixteenth centuries there were, of course, many further developments in practice and theology related to the Lord's Supper. For our purposes, we have chosen not to review these intervening centuries, but rather to move directly to the sixteenth century in which emerged critical historical and ongoing divergences concerning the sacrament between Roman Catholics and the Reformed churches. These divergences have necessarily given shape to our dialogue.

The Reformation and Beyond

In the 16th century both Reformed and Roman Catholic reformers attempted to address liturgical, theological, and practical concerns, but they did so in different manners. The Reformed reformers[11] believed that theological errors had crept into the celebration of the sacrament over the course of the centuries, such as a false understanding of the ordained ministry, of the Mass as a re-sacrifice, and of the real presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine as expressed in the doctrine of transubstantiation. They also perceived certain abuses in the practice of the sacrament, such as private Masses and communion in which believers received only the bread. In response to these concerns, the Reformers simplified the structure of the liturgy, emphasizing the importance of worthy reception of the sacrament by the baptized and stressing the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and not an actual re-offering of it to God the Father. Meanwhile, at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Roman Catholic Church attempted to clarify and thus define what it believed. Theological and ecclesial differences, therefore, created intense conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches of the Reformation, with each side defining its practice and theology of the sacrament explicitly in opposition to the other.

Since the period of the Reformation, both Roman Catholics and Protestants have gone through periods of renewed understanding and practice of the sacrament. Liturgical renewal, began already in the mid-eighteenth century in the Roman Catholic liturgical movement, was manifest in the mid-nineteenth century, for example, in the Protestant Mercersburg movement,[12] and culminated in the twentieth century at the Catholic Second Vatican Council. These developments breathed new life into the celebration of the liturgy for Reformed and Roman Catholic Christians and created convergences in practice. Additionally, twentieth century ecumenical dialogue has prompted us to re-examine our histories, traditions, and rites in search of common roots, and made us mindful of how sixteenth century conflicts have disproportionately focused on our differences. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics have ardently sought to develop a new perspective on the old conflicts so that mutual understanding can be achieved and our unity in

[11] Hereafter, the "Reformed reformers" will be referred to as the "Reformers."

[12] A "high church" confessional and liturgical renewal movement led by Philip Schaff and John W. Nevin at the German Reformed seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

Christ advanced. Through this particular dialogue, we have come to a new appreciation of what the Lord has given us in the sacrament—the very gift of Christ, ever present to us and for us through the Holy Spirit, the source of our unity and common life as disciples of Christ.

1c: Design of This Report

In the body of this report we present the Reformed and the Roman Catholic theologies and practices of the Lord's Supper/Eucharist with attention to five major themes: 1) *Epiclesis*—Action of the Spirit; 2) *Anamnesis*—Remembering; 3) Presence of Christ; 4) Offering and Sacrifice; and, 5) Discipleship. As will be seen below, these themes are marvelously interconnected. Beginning with the invocation of the Holy Spirit (*epiclesis*), we remember God's mighty deeds (*anamnesis*), are attentive to the presence of Christ, offer ourselves with Christ as holy and living sacrifices, and are impelled to live the Eucharist/Lord's Supper in our daily journey to follow Christ faithfully as his disciples. Underlying and connecting all of these themes is the Reformed and Roman Catholic common emphasis on believers' mystical union with Christ.

Following the individual sections on the Lord's Supper/Eucharist from our respective traditions, we present the convergences, divergences, and mutual appreciations that have emerged from our focus on the five themes above. In the conclusion, we articulate the implications of our dialogue for pastoral practice, and highlight those areas of theology and practice that are in need of further dialogue among our communions. We have also appended a chart in which our liturgies/rites for the Eucharist/Lord's Supper are presented side by side. This chart demonstrates the significant parallels in our celebrations of the sacrament that have emerged as we have sought to recover our common roots in the historic practices of the Church catholic.

We acknowledge, of course, with sadness, longing, and hope, that as Reformed and Roman Catholic Christians we do not presently celebrate fully the Eucharist/Lord's Supper at a common Table. The reasons for this are complex and deeply embedded in our distinctive histories and theologies. The goal of this report is not to explore or provide explanations for the present situation. It is rather to present as clearly as we can an account of Roman Catholic and Reformed understandings and practices of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, so that we might grow in mutual understanding, affirm what we hold in common, and invite our communions to remain committed to the process of dialogue on this and other matters of critical significance as we seek to make visible the gift of our unity in Christ.

Section 2: Perspectives on Five Themes for Eucharist/Lord's Supper

2a: A Reformed Perspective on the Five Themes

Sources

To discuss the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the Reformed confessions and liturgies is a complex undertaking, since the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition has never had a single confession or body of confessions, or liturgies to which all its denominations subscribe. Further, each of our denominations has other constitutional sources (e.g. books of church order) that ground our practices of the Lord's Supper. Therefore, we will limit ourselves

here to those confessions recognized in some way by the four Reformed denominations participating in this round of dialogue; we will draw on our several liturgies for the Supper, and use other constitutional sources from our particular Reformed traditions. Current liturgies for the Lord's Supper for each of our communions are appended to the document in parallel form with one of the Eucharistic Rites from the *Roman Missal*.

The primary or baseline confession will be the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563—for three reasons. First, the Catechism is a kind of "ecumenical" Reformed confession, designed to represent and promote theological consensus among the Bullingerian, Calvinist, and Melanchthonian parties in the German Palatinate of the 1560s.[13] Second, the Catechism is still perhaps the most widely loved and used Reformed catechism in the world today. Finally, it is the only common confessional statement among the four Reformed denominations in this dialogue. The other confessions we have consulted, and the denominations in the dialogue that recognize them as authoritative sources,[14] are as follows:

- Scots Confession, 1560 (PC(USA))
- Belgic Confession, 1561 (RCA, CRCNA)
- Second Helvetic Confession, 1566 (PC(USA))
- Westminster Confession and Catechisms, 1648 (PC(USA))
- Evangelical Catechism, 1929 (UCC)
- Confession of 1967 (PC(USA))
- Our Song of Hope, 1978 (RCA)
- Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Testimony, 1986 (CRCNA)
- Study Catechism 1998 (PC(USA))[15]

In addition to these confessional documents, we sometimes also cite the works of theologians like John Calvin who have served as significant interpreters of the Reformed confessional tradition.

Introduction

The Lord's Supper in the Reformed tradition is a repeatable sacrament by means of which the triune God signs and seals to the faithful God's gospel promise.[16] As expressed in our historic confessions, the promise is that "our sins have been completely forgiven" through Jesus Christ,[17] and that "the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ"[18] so that in this mystical union we might share in "his true body and blood."[19]

[13] See Lyle D. Bierma, *The Doctrine of the Sacraments in the Heidelberg Catechism: Melanchthonian, Calvinist, or Zwinglian?* Studies in Reformed Theology and History, New Series, no. 4. (Princeton: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999).

[14] The first six of these confessions and catechisms have official or constitutional standing; the last three have been approved for study and use in teaching and worship.

[15] Lyle D. Bierma, "The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions" (paper prepared for the U. S. Catholic-Reformed Dialogue, May 2008), 1.

[16] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 66, in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 1988).

[17] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 66.

[18] Belgic Confession, Art. 35, in *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Faith Alive, 1988).

[19] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 79.

Historically, our theology and practice of the Lord's Supper have focused on Christ's atoning death. Presently, our Reformed communions celebrate the Supper in remembrance of and in gratitude for Christ's whole life, person, ministry, and work, and in recognition that this Supper is a pledge and foretaste of the eschatological feast that God prepares. Those who partake of the Lord's Supper in faith are granted and assured union with Christ, nourished in their communion with one another as members of the Body of Christ, and called to live in hope and service as Christ's thankful disciples every day.

At the Lord's Supper, the Church gathers to offer its thanksgiving, or Eucharist, and to receive what Christ through the Spirit offers there. At this Table, we acknowledge that Christ is the true host, present as both the giver and the gift. At this Table, we remember the Last Supper, at which Jesus pointed the disciples to his impending death through the signs of bread and wine, but we also remember and give thanks for his incarnation, earthly life and ministry, resurrection, ascension, and present and future reign. At this Table we are mindful of all the tables at which Christ served as host during his lifetime, inviting sinners and all who hunger for righteousness to break bread with him in celebration of the gracious, restorative hospitality of God. We are also mindful that at this Table we share in the joyful, eschatological feast of the people of God who are being drawn by God from east and west, from north and south, to be transformed through true union with the risen Christ and communion with one another in all our rich diversity.[20] This mindfulness presses our Reformed communions to consider carefully what it means for the Church to receive all whom God gathers, and to extend Christ's welcome to this Table where he presides as host, offering his own body and blood—his own self—as holy, life-giving, communion-creating sustenance for the world's peoples.

When we gather to celebrate the Lord's Supper in a worship service, we are already responding to the grace of God who has created and called us to this place.[21] The liturgy begins with our praising God for this abundant goodness. Our acknowledgement of God's goodness and mercy moves us to confess together how far we fall short, and how much we ever stand in need of God's forgiveness in order to approach God at all. God answers our confession with words of pardon and assurance of forgiveness. As those who are forgiven and reconciled in Christ we are made worthy and ready to receive the living Word, first as it is proclaimed and then as it is offered in the sacramental meal.

As the liturgy moves to the proclamation of the Word, by the power of the Spirit we hear what the Lord has to say to us today. Through the accounts of God's dealings with the people of Israel and the early Church, and particularly through the testimonies regarding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we encounter again the living Christ. The promises we hear in proclamation

[20] Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); United Church of Christ, *Book of Worship* (New York: United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, 1986), 44.

[21] Some of our Reformed congregations celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly; others do not. Regardless of whether the Supper is celebrated, we respond to the proclamation of the Word with prayers of thanksgiving (Eucharist), intercession for the Spirit's work in us and the world, and the offering of our gifts and ourselves for God's use in the world.

are then sealed as we come to the Table and receive the signs of bread and wine. In the meal we see and touch the goodness of God in Christ—the same goodness we praise at the opening of worship and hear in the Word proclaimed. From the Table, we intercede for ourselves and the world, and are sent out to proclaim God's gracious benevolence to the whole world, and with our eyes newly opened to see the goodness of God already at work in all the places into which we are sent.

In what follows, we summarize the Reformed theology of the Lord's Supper with attention to the five major themes identified earlier: 1) *Epiclesis*—action of the Holy Spirit; 2) *Anamnesis*—remembering; 3) Presence of Christ; 4) Offering and sacrifice; and 5) Discipleship.

***Epiclesis*—Action of the Holy Spirit**

With respect to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the work of the Holy Spirit figures prominently in Reformed confessions and liturgies. It is only because of the mysterious and incomprehensible work of the Holy Spirit that those who come to the Table in faith truly receive the gift that Christ by his Spirit there offers: his true body and blood as spiritual food for the spiritual journey; an ever deeper engrafting, or union, with his mystical body; and a strengthening of faith for service in the Church and the world.

Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit the sacraments have no effect. Concerning the Lord's Supper and what transpires there, the Scots Confession states:

> This union and conjunction which we have with the body and blood of Christ Jesus in the right use of the sacraments *is wrought by means of the Holy Ghost*, who by true faith carries us above all things that are visible, carnal, and earthly, and makes us feed upon the body and blood of Christ Jesus, once broken and shed for us but now in heaven, and appearing for us in the presence of his Father. . . . The Holy Spirit, who can never be separated from the right institution of the Lord Jesus, will not deprive the faithful of the fruit of that mystical action.[22]

Likewise, the Belgic Confession asserts that the sacraments are "visible signs and seals . . . by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. So they are not empty and hollow signs to fool and deceive us."[23] The Reformed tradition confesses that the Spirit labors ceaselessly in the Church through Word and Sacrament and in human hearts to grant faith to those whom God calls. The Spirit is God's free gift to the Church and is active in the Body of Christ, unbidden. Yet, in their celebrations of the Supper, churches in the Reformed tradition explicitly pray for the Spirit to come and act in the sacrament. Current liturgies in the Reformed communions commonly include an *epiclesis* such as this one from the PC(USA):

[22] Scots Confession, Chap. 21, in *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, part 1, *Book of Confessions* (Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, 2002), (emphasis added). See also the Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 21, in *Book of Confessions*, 5.196; Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 76, 79; Belgic Confession, Art. 33, 35; Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 67, 78. http://www.creeds.net/reformed/belonging/catechismconfirmation.pdf. (August 6, 2010)

[23] Belgic Confession, Art. 33. See also Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 19, *Book of Confessions*, 5.180-181.

> Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with the living Christ, and with all who are baptized in his name that we may be one in ministry in every place.[24]

In light of such a prayer, we can ask just what the congregation is bidding the Holy Spirit to do here? What is the action of the Holy Spirit? The short answer is simply, to effect the promise of the sacrament. Calvin writes:

> Now, that sacred partaking of his flesh and blood, by which Christ pours his life into us, as if it penetrated into our bones and marrow, Christ testifies and seals to us in the Supper—not by presenting a vain and empty sign, but by *manifesting there the effectiveness of his Spirit* to fulfill what he promises. And truly he offers and shows the reality there signified to all who sit at that spiritual banquet, although it is received with benefit by believers alone, who accept such great generosity with true faith and gratefulness of heart.[25]

In the sacrament, the "effectiveness of Christ's Spirit is manifested" with respect to both the signs and those who receive them. Christ has promised, says the Heidelberg Catechism, that "as surely as I receive from the hand of the one who serves and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord given me as sure signs of Christ's body and blood, so surely he nourishes and refreshes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood."[26] According to Calvin, in the sacrament the Spirit *effects* that very promise of Christ, communicating Christ's body and blood by means of the signs of bread and wine.[27] The effectiveness of the Spirit is also manifested among believers who come to the Table insofar as faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift by which Christ and his benefits are received.[28] So by the Spirit, by faith, by the nourishment of our souls in the Supper with Christ's body and blood, we are ever more deeply engrafted into the mystical Body of Christ so that we may "be the Body of Christ in the world."[29]

In the PC(USA)'s Great Thanksgiving prayer cited above, and in similar prayers from the UCC, the Spirit is summoned explicitly upon the people

[24] "Great Thanksgiving," in *Book of Common Worship*, 129.

[25] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Lewis Ford Battles, 2 vols., The Library of Christian Classics, 20–21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 4.17.10 (emphasis added). Significant phrases in this quotation are as follows in the original Latin text: *et quidem non obiecto inani aut vacuo signo, sed efficaciam spiritus sui illic proferens . . . . Et sane rem illic signatam offert et exhibit . . . .*

[26] See also Belgic Confession, Art. 33, 35.

[27] Calvin writes, "For what is the nature of a sacramental union between a thing and its sign? Is it not because the Lord, by the secret power of this Spirit, fulfills what he promises?" *Commentary on the Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1846), 3:209.

[28] See, e.g., The Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 21, *Book of Confessions*, 5.200.

[29] See n. 28 above.

and upon the gifts of bread and wine. In some of our Reformed churches, the summons for the Spirit is explicit with respect to the people and ambiguous with respect to the elements.[30] This reserve likely reflects a liturgical and theological anxiety about the prospect of suggesting that the Holy Spirit somehow "changes" the bread and wine so that they themselves "become" the body and blood of Christ.[31] Yet even in this form of the *epiclesis*, it cannot be doubted that the bread and wine are taken to be *true* signs—instruments by which Christ through his Spirit works effectually. The action of the Holy Spirit with regard to the sacramental celebration as a whole, which includes both the faithful and the elements, is duly understood.[32]

Again, in offering the *epiclesis*, we are praying for the Spirit to effect the promise of the sacrament. Nevertheless, we do not believe that, ultimately, it is *because* the people of God have offered this prayer for the Holy Spirit to act, that the Holy Spirit acts, as if God acted at our behest or fancy. God bestows grace freely and sends the Spirit freely—as God wills, when God wills. This brings us to the more general question, "Why do Christians need to pray at all?" The Heidelberg Catechism answers:

> Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us.
>
> And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly asking God for these gifts and thanking him for them.[33]

The *epiclesis*, or prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit, is the last rhapsodic movement of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. It is, in a strong sense, part of our liturgical thanksgiving. In offering the *epiclesis*, we are indeed "groaning inwardly" to God (Romans 8:23), longing for God to act by the Spirit to effect the sacrament and the sacrament's benefits for those who partake in faith. We are "groaning inwardly" for God to act as God has promised to act. But we are also expressing our thankfulness to God for having promised certain gifts, namely, *to send* the Spirit, and by the Spirit, *to gift* us with the communion of Christ. We are expressing our thankfulness to God for acting as God promises to act. In all this groaning and thanksgiving, we ultimately

[30] The *epiclesis* in the RCA's liturgy is: "Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ." The *epiclesis* in the CRC's liturgy is: "Show forth among us the presence of your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit, to sanctify us and your whole church through this sacrament."

[31] See e.g., Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 78.

[32] That is, most generally, in the Holy Spirit's being the bond of our union with Christ by or through whom all the benefits of Christ accrue to us; in the Spirit's prompting us to "lift up our hearts" and to pray; in the Spirit's being the one who "brings these things to remembrance and interprets to us the meaning of these events," thus prompting our *anamnesis* (James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace* [Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 1996], 86); and in the Spirit's effecting our communion with Christ and prompting our response of self-offering in return (see e.g., Belgic Confession, Art. 33 and 35, where this may be inferred).

[33] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 116.

express our trust in the promise of Christ: "If you ask anything of my Father in my name, he will give it to you" (John 16:23).[34]

Noteworthy here, especially because it is so central to the Reformed liturgical and theological tradition, is the parallel between the *epiclesis* offered in the Lord's Supper and the *epiclesis*, or Prayer for Illumination, offered prior to the reading and proclamation of the Word.[35] In his liturgy for the Lord's Day, Calvin instructs that before the sermon a prayer shall be offered by the minister in which "he begs God to grant the gift of the Holy Spirit, in order that his Word may be faithfully expounded to the glory of his name and the edification of the Church, and be received with becoming submission and obedience."[36] One liturgy of the CRC opens such a prayer with: "Almighty God, grant us your Spirit, that we may rightly understand and truly obey your Word of truth." So the people pray to God with respect to the proclamation of the Word and the communion of the Lord's Supper, petitioning God to send the Spirit in order that Word[37] and Sacrament might be efficacious in the lives of God's people.[38]

***Anamnesis*—Remembering**

Since the mid-twentieth century, ecumenical scholarship has recovered the Hebraic and New Testament understanding of *anamnesis* (remembrance), particularly as it relates to the Church's celebration of the Lord's Supper. These studies address both the nature and the scope of remembering, and have prompted our Reformed communions to explore our own liturgies and confessional traditions in order to deepen our understanding and practice of remembrance in the Lord's Supper. The central shift is away from viewing the Supper as a human act of bringing to mind the past event of Christ's sacrificial death—an act of human memory—toward a recognition that the remembrance that takes place is a making present of and a participation in the person of Christ and his work through the Spirit. Succinctly stated, "The word *anamnesis* . . . does not simply denote recollecting some remote date of

[34] Referenced by Heidelberg Catechism, Q &A 117. This theme is also explicated in the treatment of prayer in other Reformed confessions and catechisms, which cite not only John 16:23 but also Mark 11:24 and Matthew 7:7-8. See, e.g., the Westminster Larger Catechism, Q & A 196 (*Book of Confessions*, 7.306), and the Westminster Confession, Chap. 9: "The Holy Spirit, *whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him*, is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption" (*Book of Confessions*, 6.053; emphasis added).

[35] The Reformed tradition has always embraced Calvin's maxim that "the sacraments have the same office as the Word of God: to offer and set forth Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace" (*Institutes*, 4.14.17).

[36] Calvin, "Forms of Prayer for the Church," in *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, trans. Henry Beveridge, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1958).

[37] In terms of preaching, the Reformed tradition understands that the Word is proclaimed by Christ himself through the minister, who is his mouthpiece or instrument. See, e.g. Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.1 (in which Calvin speaks of ministers as those who "represent his [Christ's] person"), 4.8.2., and even 4.14.11. The catechisms and confessions reflect this in their expositions of "The Word of God" or "Holy Scripture." See, e.g., Second Helvetic Confession, Chap.1, *Book of Confessions*, 5.001ff.

[38] Westminster Larger Catechism, Q & A 157, *Book of Confessions*, 7.267. See also the first paragraph under "The Word of God in Proclamation and Sacrament" in the RCA Directory for Worship. https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=1864 (August 6, 2010).

bygone history. . . . Rather, it means remembering in such a way that we see our participation in the past event and see our destiny and future as bound up with it."[39] The Church's act of remembering past, present and future becomes the means by which we realize "our participation and fellowship in . . . Christ [through] the work of the Holy Spirit."[40]

The Reformed tradition has always had a strong sense of remembrance as an essential aspect of the Lord's Supper, which derives from Christ's own words of institution in the gospel accounts of the Last Supper. This emphasis on remembrance, however, has often been understood in a minimalist way as "mere memorial," particularly associated with the theology of Zwingli.[41] "Mere memorial" has been construed as the act of the congregation simply recalling the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Whatever the Reformers meant by remembrance, they certainly did not mean that the benefits of the Supper depended primarily on the congregation's willful acts of memory and devotion. The Reformers and the Reformed confessions make clear that the remembrance that occurs in the Supper is grounded in the action of God, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who enables us to realize "our participation and fellowship in the sufferings of Christ…. He brings these things to our remembrance and interprets to us the meaning of the events. We remember Christ—yet it is not so much we who remind ourselves of these events, but Jesus Christ, who brings his passion to our remembrance through the Holy Spirit."[42] In this sense, the Holy Spirit makes the redeeming work of Christ present to the congregation, and communicates here and now the benefits of what has already been accomplished and completed in Christ's once and for all sacrifice on the cross. The *anamnesis* is a re-presentation of Christ and his benefits through Word and sacramental signs in the power of the Spirit. As Calvin describes it, "the bread and wine are visible signs which represent to us the body and the blood. . . . It is therefore for good reason that the bread is called 'body' since not only does it represent it to us, but also presents it."[43]

Having shown that the fruits of remembrance depend on the Spirit's action in the Supper, we also note that in the Reformed tradition the congregation is not only acted upon but also shares in these acts in the remembrance. Through its participation in the sacramental remembrance and re-presentation of the work of Christ, the congregation submits and opens itself to the

[39] Torrance, *Worship*, 84-85.

[40] Ibid., 86.

[41] Some recent scholars, however, have challenged this characterization of Zwingli's eucharistic theology, suggesting that he was no "mere" memorialist. For instance, Swiss historical theologian Gottfried Locher points out that "for the humanist, Platonizing, student of Augustine, *memoria* ['remembrance'] does not mean a retrospective looking back but a re-presenting, an effective presence of the suffering of the Lord." *Streit unter Gästen* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 10-11. Rereadings of Zwingli by Jaques Courvoisier (*Zwingli: A Reformed Theologian* [Richmond: John Knox, 1963]) and Julius Schweizer (*Reformierte Abendmahlsgestaltung in der Schau Zwinglis* [Basel: Reinhardt, 1954?]) also move beyond the old caricature, enriching contemporary Reformed understandings of *anamnesis.*

[42] Torrance, *Worship*, 86.

[43] John Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. and ed. J. K. S. Reid, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 147.

work of the Spirit, who makes Christ's one perpetual sacrifice[44] efficacious for their communal and individual lives. The congregation receives this remembrance as gift and shares in this sacred rehearsal and representation of salvation history. At a deeper level, as we take Christ's body and blood, once offered on the cross for our salvation, "we see ourselves made partakers in it [and] may assuredly conclude that the power of his life-giving death will be efficacious in us."[45] As the congregation remembers the redeeming work of Christ and communes at the Table, the Spirit nourishes them with Christ's own body and blood, deepens their union with Christ, assures them of their participation in the person and work of Christ, and manifests this participation through their witness and service in the world. As the PC(USA)'s *Directory for Worship* puts it, "In remembering, believers receive and trust the love of Christ present to them and to the world; they manifest the reality of the covenant of grace in reconciling and being reconciled; and they proclaim the power of Christ's reign for the renewal of the world in justice and in peace."[46]

As we consider *what* is being remembered in the Lord's Supper, we will see that our current liturgies and theology expand on the Reformers' overwhelming emphasis on remembering the once for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. The Westminster Confession reflects the core Reformed sense of the Supper, which was "instituted for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of [Christ] himself in his death" for the forgiveness of sin.[47] In the Reformed understanding of the Supper, the re-presentation of Christ's death is not a re-sacrifice. Rather, Christ gives himself in the present "as the one who has already given himself to us, unsurpassably, in his life, death and resurrection."[48] This sacramental self-giving "does not repeat the unrepeatable, but it does attest what it mediates, and mediate what it attests—the one whole Jesus Christ, who in his . . . humanity, his body and blood, is at once both the Giver and the Gift."[49]

This focus on remembering in the Supper Christ's perfect, once for all sacrifice for the sin of the whole world testifies to the Reformed tradition's recognition of the pervasive, devastating reality of human sin, the inability of human beings to free themselves from their sin and guilt, and the immensity of God's grace in overcoming sin and restoring relationship in Christ, through the Spirit. Without losing this central focus, recent scholarship has broadened our sense of *anamnesis* in the Lord's Supper and is reflected in the most recent communion liturgies of our Reformed churches. This is exemplified in one of the prayers of the PC(USA) as it moves from opening thanks to God for creation, through the *Sanctus*, to a full recounting of Jesus' ministry:

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[44] John Calvin, "Catechism of the Church in Geneva," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. by J.K.S. Reid, Library of Christian Classics, XXII (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 137. This language of "the one perpetual sacrifice" allows us to talk about remembrance in a way that recognizes our participation in Christ's sacrifice here and now. Christ is not re-sacrificed. Rather, the effects of his sacrifice are perpetually realized in the Supper, through the Holy Spirit.

[45] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.1.

[46] *Directory for Worship*, W-2.4004.

[47] Westminster Confession, Chap. 31/29, *Book of Confessions*, 6.161.

[48] George Hunsinger, "The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54, no. 2 (2001): 170.

[49] Ibid.

> He lived as one of us, knowing joy and sorrow. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, opened blind eyes, broke bread with outcasts and sinners, and proclaimed the good news of your kingdom to the poor and needy….[50]

Following the words of institution, the prayer continues, "Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine."[51] The "gracious acts" clearly refer not only to the sacrificial death of Jesus, but also to the entire shape of his life and ministry. Similarly, the "Meaning of the Sacrament" in the RCA's communion liturgy recalls the full scope of Christ's incarnate presence and work:

> We come in remembrance that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent of the Father into the world to assume our flesh and blood and to fulfill for us all obedience to the divine law, even to the bitter and shameful death of the cross. By his death, resurrection, and ascension he established a new and universal covenant of grace and reconciliation that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken by him."[52]

The effect of this expanded *anamnesis* is to deepen our understanding and assure us of our union with and participation in the whole Christ—his person, his salvific work in history, and the benefits he has won and now grants through the Spirit. For the sixteenth-century Reformers, remembering focused primarily on the once for all nature of Christ's sacrifice, so it has been salutary to see the fuller remembrance of Christ's work in our recent liturgies. In addition, contemporary reflections on *anamnesis*, both Catholic and Protestant, have introduced an eschatological dimension to the Church's acts of remembering. At the Table, we not only recall the past and receive Christ here and now, but also remember the promises that God has made for the Church's and the world's future. At the Table we remember and pray for that day when heaven and earth will be made new, God's glorious reign will be complete and uncontested, human suffering and tears shall be no more, and the unity of Christ's Church will be manifested as all gather at the one, joyful banquet feast of the Lamb. As we gather at the Lord's Table in the present we receive this eschatological reality as both gift and obligation.

Presence of Christ

Churches of the Reformed tradition affirm the true presence of Christ in every service of worship and in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.[53] We confess that Christ is the one who welcomes those who gather, and it is Christ, through the minister, who proclaims the Word and hosts those who have gathered in faith at his Table.[54] In the same way that Christ, in his per-

[50] "Great Thanksgiving A," in *Book of Common Worship*, 70.

[51] Ibid., 71.

[52] *Worship the Lord*, ed. Eric Routley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 567.

[53] Belgic Confession, Art. 35; Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 21, *Book of Confessions*, 5.205.

[54] As also noted below (p. 70, note 171), among the Reformed churches represented in this dialogue, the celebration of the sacrament is provided for and overseen not only by the minister, but also by elders, deacons and/or other authorized lay persons.

son and by his power (*virtus*), is present to all creation, Christ, in his person and by his power, is present in, among, and to the gathered fellowship.[55] Such presence is effected by the incomprehensible agency (*virtus*) of the Holy Spirit.[56]

With respect to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Christ himself invites us to the Table, and, by the incomprehensible power of his Spirit, nourishes us with his body and blood, which is food for the soul just as bread and wine are "aliments" for the body.[57] The bread and wine are true signs by which Christ himself, at the hand of the minister,[58] effectively proffers[59] his body and blood as spiritual food.[60]

In this sense, these signs, or elements, are efficacious, though not efficacious of themselves. Rather, God in Christ has designated them for the purpose of communicating spiritual food,[61] and the Spirit uses them as instruments to this end. The minister speaks the Words of Institution as God's word, and it is this word which sets apart, or "consecrates," common, ordinary bread and wine for an uncommon, extraordinary purpose[62]: namely, the true communication of Christ's body and blood as food for our souls.[63] The people ask God to send the Spirit (*epiclesis*) so that "the bread which we break and the cup which we bless may be to us the communion of the body

[55] Calvin, "The Catechism of the Church of Geneva," in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. and ed. J. K. S. Reid, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 137 (Q & A 354-55); Heidelberg Catechism, Q &A 47.

[56] Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 21, *Book of Confessions*, 5.198. Scots Confession, Chap. 21, *Book of Confessions*, 3.21.

[57] Heidelberg Confession, Q & A 75; Belgic Confession, Art. 35; Calvin, "Catechism," 135-36 (Q & A 341).

[58] Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 19., states that we receive the sacraments "as from the hand of God" and that "the substance of the sacraments is given [us] by the Lord" (*Book of Confessions*, 5.173, 174; see also Chap. 21). Calvin (*Institutes*, 4.3.1) also speaks of ministers as those who "represent his [Christ's] person." With regard to the Lord's Supper itself, Calvin writes in his commentary on Isaiah 6:7: "By the hand of the minister he presents to us his body, that it may be actually enjoyed by the godly." *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1850), 1:211.

[59] In his treatments of the Lord's Supper, Calvin frequently employs cognates of the Latin word *exhibere*, which means "to offer, to proffer, to hand over" and not merely "to exhibit," as in "to represent."

[60] Belgic Confession, Art. 33.

[61] Calvin, "Catechism," 135-36 (Q & A 341); Westminster Confession, Chap. 29/27 (*Book of Confessions*, 6.151): "The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them," but the "efficacy of a sacrament" depends upon "the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution." See also Westminster Larger Catechism, Q & A 161, *Book of Confessions*, 7.271.

[62] So the Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 19, "The Consecration of the Sacraments" (*Book of Confessions*, 5.178): "For they are consecrated by the Word, and shown to be sanctified by him who instituted them. To sanctify or consecrate anything to God is to dedicate it to holy uses; that is, to take it from the common and ordinary use, and to appoint it to a holy use. For the signs in the sacraments are drawn from common use, things external and visible. . . . In the Lord's Supper, the outward sign is bread and wine, taken from things commonly used for meat and drink; but the thing signified is the body of Christ which was given, and his blood which was shed for us, or the communion of the body and blood of the Lord." See also Westminster Confession, Chap. 29/27, *Book of Confessions*, 6.151, and Westminster Larger Catechism, Q & A 169, *Book of Confessions*, 7.279.

[63] Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 21, *Book of Confessions*, 5.194.

and blood of Christ."[64] Calvin writes regarding this mystical communion, or nourishing:

> Christ does not simply present to us the benefit of his death and resurrection, but the very body in which he suffered and rose again. I conclude, that Christ's body is *really*, (as the common expression is)—that is, *truly* given to us in the Supper, to be wholesome food for our souls. I use the common form of expression, but my meaning is, that our souls are nourished by the substance of the body, that we may truly be made one with him, or, what amounts to the same thing, that a life-giving virtue from Christ's flesh is poured into us by the Spirit, though it is at a great distance from us, and is not mixed with us.[65]

The foregoing discussion, of the consecration of the elements as effective signs and the "true communication" of Christ's body and blood by their means, raises the question of the relation between the sign and the thing signified. For Calvin, whose view is embraced by the Reformed churches gathered in this dialogue, sacramental signs can be distinguished from that which they signify, but they cannot be separated from it. The sign and the thing signified are conjoined such that the thing signified is offered to and received by the believer simultaneously with the sign. So sacraments are, in the strong sense, a "means of grace." They are instruments through which the Holy Spirit effectively conveys the spiritual reality they promise.[66] Following Calvin, many Reformed confessions emphatically declare that the signs are "not empty."[67]

Even as we affirm that Christ, in his humanity, has ascended to heaven, we also confess that Christ is truly present at the Table to nourish us with his body and blood, the gift that Christ truly offers and truly communicates by the secret, miraculous, and incomprehensible power of the Holy Spirit. As the Belgic Confession states, "Jesus Christ remains always seated at the right hand of God his Father in heaven—but he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith."[68] One the one hand, the Reformed tradition seeks to maintain the truth of Christ's incarnation and full

[64] Liturgy of the RCA. See also the liturgies of the other Reformed churches in this dialogue in the addendum.

[65] John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John W. Fraser, ed. D. W. and T. F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 246.

[66] This paragraph is based on Bierma, "Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions." In this paper, Bierma examines various views held in the Reformed tradition. See also Brian A. Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," in *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982); Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953; Tyler, TX: Geneva Divinity School Press, 1982); Jan Rohls, *Reformed Confessions: Theology from Zurich to Barmen*, trans. John Hoffmeyer, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997); and Paul Rorem, "*The Consensus Tigurinus* (1549): Did Calvin Compromise?" in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor: Calvin as Confessor of Holy Scripture*, ed. Wilhelm H. Neuser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

[67] For example, Belgic Confession, Art. 33, states: "So they are not empty and hollow signs to fool and deceive us, for their truth is Jesus Christ, without whom they would be nothing."

[68] Belgic Confession, Art. 35. See also Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 49, 76.

humanity following his ascension as the guarantee that "we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he [Christ] will also take us up to himself… "[69] If Christ has a flesh like ours and is "seated at the right hand of God the Father," then Christ cannot be literally, physically present in the aliments of bread and wine. On the other hand, the Reformed faith is insistent that in the Spirit's power Christ is truly present and truly nourishes the faithful with his own flesh and blood in the Supper.

In a manner of speaking, Christ, by the indwelling of his Spirit, is also present in those who come to the Table in faith.[70] Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, believers have already been gifted with faith and engrafted into the mystical Body of Christ. With the mouth of this faith, then, they truly feed on what is truly offered by Christ at his Table, his true body and blood, as spiritual food for the spiritual journey.[71]

However, those who come to the Table come not alone but in the fellowship of their local congregation and in the company of all the faithful in heaven and on earth. That is to say, the true Church of all times and places encompasses all those engrafted into Christ's mystical body. We come mindful of this "communion of the saints" gathered at the Table to be nourished by Christ. Indeed, the Supper effects our deeper engrafting into this mystical Body of Christ, binding us to each other and summoning us to our mutual calling. The Westminster Confession says that Christ instituted the Supper to "seal" to believers "their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body."[72] Among the "duties" owed to Christ because of our engrafting in his mystical body is our participation in and embodiment of Christ's ministry in the world, just as expressed in the *epicleses* of our liturgies:

> By your Spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the Body of Christ in the world.[73]

Having encountered Christ's presence at the Table, believers are sent forth, in union with Christ, to manifest Christ's presence in the world.

We realize that this engrafting into Christ, which the Supper effects, and Christ's ministry in the world, which we embody, will not come to complete fruition until the eschaton. So in expressions such as "Come, Christ Jesus!" and "Christ will come again!" and "until Christ comes," the liturgies confess eschatological longing for the coming of Christ, for the renewal of all

[69] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 49.

[70] Calvin, "Catechism," 136 (Q & A 344); Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 76. We recognize (e.g., with Calvin) that the gathered body is a *corpus permixtum*, an issue that became important regarding the *manducatio indignorum/impiorum*. See e.g., Belgic Confession, Art. 35; Westminster Confession, Chapter 31/29.7, *Book of Confessions*, 6.167; Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 19, 21, *Book of Confessions*, 5.183, 204.

[71] Scots Confession, Chap. 21 (*Book of Confessions*, 3.21): "True faith apprehends Christ Jesus."

[72] Westminster Confession, Chap. 31/29, *Book of Confessions,* 6.161.

[73] PC(USA) Liturgy. See also those of the other traditions in the addendum.

creation according to God's final vision, and for our union with Christ in all its fullness.[74] Further, the disparity between the true presence of Christ by his power and Spirit in the Supper, and the fact that Christ has physically ascended and "remains seated at the right hand of God his Father in heaven…,"[75] is the reality that underlies—and indeed compels—the eschatological longing inherent to this sacramental celebration.

Offering and Sacrifice

Offering and sacrifice are prevalent in both Reformed confessions and liturgies for the Lord's Supper. As noted in our discussion of *anamnesis*, there has been a gradual shift in the Reformed tradition from an emphasis on simply the atoning sacrifice of Christ for the forgiveness of sins to a recognition of the breadth of the redeeming work of Christ: his incarnation, ministry, passion, resurrection, and ascension. So also with offering. There has been a broadening of our understanding that now embraces the fullness of God's gift given in Christ—not only forgiveness of sin, but also reconciliation, unity, and life eternal.

Reformed sacramental theology stresses God's initiative in the offering of grace, a divine initiative to which we respond in faith, gratitude, and discipleship. Drawing from Reformed confessions and liturgies, we highlight several senses in which offering takes place in the Supper. These various senses follow a progression from grace to gratitude, from gift to response. This progression also reflects the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving in our Lord's Supper liturgies:

> God offers the gift of creation and of life itself;
>
> God offers the gift of hope and renewal throughout salvation history;
>
> Christ offers a sacrifice in taking our nature, living, dying, and being raised on behalf of God's people;
>
> In the Lord's Supper, Christ offers and we receive both Christ and Christ's benefits of forgiveness, renewal, reconciliation, unity, communion, victory over death, eternal life, and love;
>
> In the Lord's Supper, the Spirit is offered or poured out so that the bread and wine are for us the communion of the body and blood of Christ;

[74] "A Formula of Agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ on entering into full communion on the basis of *A Common Calling* [1997],"10 (citing the Leuenberg Agreement [1973], II.2.15, 16). http://oga.PCUSAPCUSA.org/ecumenical relations/resources/formula.pdf (August 13, 2010).

[75] Belgic Confession, Art. 35: "Jesus Christ remains always seated at the right hand of God his Father in heaven—but he never refrains on that account to communicate himself to us through faith." See also Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 49, 76. The Reformers were insistent that if indeed Christ is human in exactly the ways we are human, if his flesh is our flesh and he has ascended to "heaven" and remains there, then he cannot be literally, physically present in the aliments of bread and wine.

> In response, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices of thanksgiving—in the Lord's Supper and in all of life—in acts of love and justice. We become the Body of Christ in the world.

God Offers the Gift of Creation and of Life Itself

Reformed confessions present God as the creator and giver of life. When God, who is "completely . . . good, and the overflowing source of all good,"[76] created all things, "everything God had made was very good, and was made for the profit and use" of human creatures.[77] The Presbyterian Study Catechism presents God's work of creation as an act of grace and blessing:

> God's decision to create the world was an act of grace. In this decision God chose to grant existence to the world simply in order to bless it. God created the world to reveal God's glory, to share the love and freedom at the heart of God's triune being, and to give us eternal life in fellowship with God.[78]

These gifts of creation and life extend to God's providential care. Thus we confess that God "still preserves my body and soul," as well as "provides me with all the necessaries of life, and preserves me from all danger," and that God does this out of "divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part.[79]

Although these confessional affirmations of God's goodness and life-giving power do not explicitly mention the Supper, current Reformed liturgies for the Lord's Supper highlight this theme. In our liturgies, the broader context of offering typically appears in the Preface of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. The gift of life and creation are identified at the very beginning: "You have given us life and being…" (RCA); "We thank you for all the gifts of creation and the gift of life itself" (UCC); and, "We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature. We praise you for forming us in your image and calling us to be your people" (CRC).

Seeing creation and life itself as a gift offered by God provides the context, then, for seeing God's work of salvation, including the saving work of Christ, all of which is symbolized and offered in the Lord's Supper. This, in turn, becomes the basis for offering ourselves in thankful service to God.

God Offers the Gift of Hope and Renewal throughout Salvation History

Reformed confessions present God not only as life-giver but also as redeemer who proclaims the good news of salvation "already in Paradise" as well as through the prophets, believers, and acts of redemption accomplished in ancient Israel.[80] Thus ancient Israel "had not only external and earthly but also spiritual and heavenly promises in Christ."[81] The PC(USA) Study Catechism elaborates God's redemptive work in and through Israel:

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[76] Belgic Confession, Art. 1.

[77] Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 7, *Book of Confessions*, 5.032.

[78] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 26.

[79] Evangelical Catechism, Q & A 16-18. http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/evangelical-catechism.html (August 6, 2010). See also Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 26.

[80] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 19.

[81] Second Helvetic Confession, Chap. 13, *Book of Confessions*, 5.088.

> God made a covenant with Israel, promising that God would be their light and their salvation, that they would be God's people, and that through them all the peoples of the earth would be blessed. Therefore, no matter how often Israel turned away from God, God still cared for them and acted on their behalf. In particular, God sent them prophets, priests and kings. Each of these was "anointed" by God's Spirit—prophets, to declare God's word; priests, to make sacrifice for the people's sins; and kings, to rule justly in the fear of God, upholding the poor and needy, and defending the people from their enemies.[82]

God's promises were "repeated and made clearer from time to time" as well as "embraced with joy" and "received by all the faithful" prior to the appearance of Jesus Christ.[83]

Current Reformed Lord's Supper liturgies lift up this ongoing work of God's salvation in words of thanksgiving: "We thank you that you did not abandon us in our rebellion against your love, but sent prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation" (CRC); "We offer you praise for women and men of faith in every age who stand as witnesses to your love and justice" (UCC); and "When we rebelled against you refusing to trust and obey you, you sent us prophets to call us back to your way" (PC(USA)). In the Lord's Supper, we recognize that as we receive God's gifts of grace in Christ today, we stand among that great cloud of witnesses with whom God has continually renewed covenant and hope.

Christ Offers a Sacrifice in Taking our Nature, Living, Dying, and Being Raised on behalf of God's People

As we saw in our discussion of *anamnesis* above, contemporary Reformed liturgies evidence a broad understanding of the nature of Christ's sacrifice and self-offering. Historically, our Supper liturgies and sacramental theology focused on Christ's sacrificial death. We have begun to recover a fuller sense of the breadth of Christ's work expressed in our confessions so that both our sacramental theology and practice now apprehend the offering of Christ within the broad picture of God's redemptive work. Thus the Presbyterian Study Catechism affirms:

> Despite our turning from God, God did not turn from us, but instead sent Jesus Christ in the fullness of time to restore our broken humanity. Jesus lived completely for God, by giving himself completely for us, even to the point of dying for us. By living so completely for others, he manifested what he was—the perfect image of God. When by grace we are conformed to him through faith, our humanity is renewed according to the divine image that we lost.[84]

[82] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 36.

[83] Scots Confession, Chap. 4, *Book of Confessions*, 3.04.

[84] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 21.

This broader view is also seen in our widespread confessional emphasis on Christ's threefold office as prophet, priest, and king.[85] Even when the confessions highlight Jesus' sacrificial death—his priestly work—they do not ignore the significance of Christ's incarnation, life, resurrection, and ascension.

Reformed confessions do emphasize Christ as God's offering or sacrifice for the purpose of reconciling the world to God. The Belgic Confession says that God "poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation, giving to us his Son to die, by a most perfect love, and raising him to life for our justification, in order that by him we might have immortality and eternal life."[86] Similarly, the Westminster Shorter Catechism says that "Christ executeth the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God."[87] The Presbyterian Study Catechism ties Christ's priestly, sacrificial work to his larger self-offering and to the benefits he offers us: "He was the Lamb of God that took away the sin of the world; he became our priest and sacrifice in one. Confronted by our hopelessness in sin and death, Christ interceded by offering himself—his entire person and work—in order to reconcile us to God."[88]

Our current Reformed liturgies for the Supper also present Christ's sacrificial death within God's broader work of forgiveness and reconciliation. Christ's sacrificial death is not lifted up as the only or even the most significant moment in God's redemptive act through Christ. One specific example, the liturgy for the Lord's Supper developed for shared use among the "Formula of Agreement" churches, illustrates this broader reality: "We gratefully recall and remember the wonder of Jesus' incarnation…his bearing of the cross with its death, and his rising from the tomb by the power of God…."[89]

All communions name the gift of Christ's death on the cross as central to our celebration of the Lord's Supper, but not as the sole dimension of Christ's offering. The CRC's liturgy for the Supper places a greater emphasis on the atoning/forgiving aspect of Christ's sacrifice than do the liturgies of the other Reformed communions. The words of the memorial declare "that [the Lord Jesus] took upon himself our flesh and blood, and bore the wrath of God against our sin. We confess that he was condemned to die that we might be pardoned, and suffered death that we might live." During the distribution, the CRC liturgy explicitly points to forgiveness as a primary effect of partaking, reminding the congregation that Christ's precious body and blood were given "for the complete forgiveness of all our sins." We also note across our Reformed communions an increased emphasis on the sacrifice of

[85] See Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 31; Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q & A 24-26, *Book of Confessions*, 7.024-026; Westminster Larger Catechism, Q & A 43-45, *Book of Confessions*, 7.153-155; Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 39-41.

[86] Belgic Confession, Article 20.

[87] Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q & A 25, *Book of Confessions*, 7.025.

[88] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 40.

[89] The Formula of Agreement Liturgy [for Eucharist] in *Guidelines and Worship Resources for the Celebration of Full Communion* (1998). http://images.rca.org/docs/worship/LiturgyFormulaOfAgreement.pdf (August 13, 2010).

Christ and its atoning work in the Church's penitential seasons.[90] But more generally, at the Lord's Table the assembly remembers the fullness of God's saving activity, including God's action in the incarnation, life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

In the Meal of the Lord's Supper, Christ Offers and We Receive Both Christ and Christ's Benefits of Forgiveness, Renewal, Reconciliation, Unity, Communion, Victory over Death, Eternal Life, and Love

Reformed confessions see the Lord's Supper as offering Christ and his benefits. Eating the bread and drinking the wine "in accordance with Christ's appointment" means partaking in Christ and receiving "from the risen Lord the benefits of his death and resurrection."[91] As the Evangelical Catechism states, in this sacramental meal "we receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as the nourishment of our new life, strengthen the fellowship with Christ and all believers, and confess that he has died for us."[92] The chief gift given in the Supper is deeper union and communion with Christ, who with himself gives us all the benefits of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension: new life, forgiveness and reconciliation, communion with neighbor, unity as the Body of Christ, and the love of God in Christ Jesus from which nothing can separate us. Our Reformed liturgies evidence differing emphases in naming what is received in the Supper, but each focuses on our participation in Christ and his benefits. These are received as both gift and call.

The Supper not only communicates these gifts to recipients but also offers a multi-sensory confirmation of these very gifts. Thus, "as surely as" we see the bread of the Lord broken for us and the cup given to us, "so surely his body was offered and broken for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross." Moreover, "as surely as" we receive the elements and taste them, "so surely he nourishes my soul for eternal life with his crucified body and poured-out blood."[93] We receive not just physical nourishment, but Christ our Savior: "Just as truly as we take and hold the sacraments in our hands and eat and drink it in our mouths, by which our life is then sustained, so truly we receive into our souls, for our spiritual life, the true body and true blood of Christ, our only Savior. We receive these by faith, which is the hand and mouth of our souls."[94]

In the Meal of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit Is Offered, or Poured Out, So That the Bread and Wine Are for Us the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ

As has been amply demonstrated above, both our Reformed confessions and liturgies emphasize the Spirit's role in the meal, making us sharers in Christ. After saying that Christ wants to teach us that the meal nourishes our souls for eternal life, the Heidelberg Catechism says, "But more important,

[90] For example, options for the "Great Thanksgiving," such as in the CRC Holy Week preface before the *Sanctus*: "We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who became the paschal Lamb that was sacrificed for our salvation." This also appears in the PC(USA)'s post-*Sanctus* thanksgiving for Christ at Maundy Thursday: "The cup of suffering which he drank has become for us the cup of salvation," and the UCC preface for Lent, "Because you have come in Jesus Christ, enduring the cross so that we might know eternal life."

[91] Confession of 1967, II.B.4, *Book of Confessions*, 9.52.

[92] Evangelical Catechism, Q & A 125.

[93] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 75, 79.

[94] Belgic Confession, Art. 35.

he [Christ] wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge, that we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body."[95] Christ and the Spirit are deeply connected in the meal: "When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus Christ is truly present, pouring out his Spirit upon us. By his Spirit, the bread that we break and the cup that we bless share in our Lord's own body and blood."[96] As a repeatable sacrament, "…the Lord's Supper indicates that as we turn unfilled to him again and again, our Lord continually meets us in the power of the Holy Spirit to renew and deepen our faith."[97]

In our discussion of the *epiclesis* we described the Church's prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit as "the last rhapsodic movement of the prayer of thanksgiving." In offering this prayer, the Church expresses its thanksgiving and its longing "for God to act by the Spirit to effect the promise of the sacrament and the sacrament's benefits for those who partake in faith."[98] We acknowledge God's freedom in response to our bidding, but trust that God will grant the outpouring of the Spirit so that the simple gifts of bread and wine may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

We Offer Ourselves as Living Sacrifices of Thanksgiving—in the Lord's Supper and in All of Life—in Acts of Love and Justice. We Become the Body of Christ in the World

Reformed confessions echo Romans 12 in saying that we offer ourselves as living sacrifices in response to God's grace in Christ. Thus, the Heidelberg Catechism says that through Christ's death our old selves are put to death "so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer rule us, but that instead we may dedicate ourselves as an offering of gratitude to him."[99] The Catechism adds that, as members of Christ by faith, believers share in his anointing and are themselves anointed "to present [themselves] to him as a living sacrifice of thanks."[100] The Evangelical Catechism concludes its section on the Lord's Supper by noting that our communion with Christ requires us to "have no pleasure in sin, but earnestly flee and avoid it," so that we may "cheerfully and confidently say, 'Lord Jesus, for thee I live, for thee I suffer, for thee I die! Lord Jesus, thine will I be in life and death!'"[101]

While some Reformed Communion liturgies explicitly mention the "sacrifice" of Christ and some do not,[102] all mention the sacrifice or offering of God's people. Such words are found in the *epiclesis*, oblation, or dedication in the various liturgies: "We offer ourselves to you as holy and living sacrifices" (RCA); "With thanksgiving, we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service" (PC(USA)); "We present to you our very lives, committed to your service in behalf of all people" (UCC); and, "We present ourselves a living sacrifice and come to the table" (CRC).

[95] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 79.

[96] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 78.

[97] Study Catechism 1998, Q & A 70.

[98] See p. 19 above.

[99] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 43.

[100] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 32.

[101] Evangelical Catechism, Q & A 128.

[102] The RCA and CRC liturgies do; the UCC, PC(USA), and "Formula of Agreement" liturgies do not.

The offering of the people of God, so explicit in the oblation, is intimated in the beginning of many of our liturgies for the Supper through the presentation of our tithes and offerings along with bread and wine, as well as in the people's response to the invitation to "Lift up your hearts," with the words, "We lift them to God."[103] Several of our Reformed Supper liturgies make explicit provision for God's people to carry forward the bread and the wine during the Lord's Supper ceremony. Some Reformed Christians see this as theologically confusing, suggesting perhaps that we first give or offer something to God before God offers us the sacrament of the Lord's Supper and thus undermine the priority of God's action in the Supper. Other Reformed Christians, however, consider it to be appropriate that God's people carry forward the bread and the wine, enacting the theology of the twentieth-century RCA confession, "Our Song of Hope" which says, "Jesus takes up our bread and wine to represent his sacrifice, to bind his ministry to our daily work, to unite us in his righteousness."[104] However, in the case of either practice,[105] all of our communions give absolute priority to God's initiative in the multi-dimensioned offerings remembered and made in the Lord's Supper, and share the conviction that we are called to offer ourselves to God in a response of thanksgiving and daily service to the glory of God.

Discipleship

The Reformed understanding of discipleship is grounded in our theology of grace: our active service is a response to the unmerited divine favor that has been extended to us in Jesus Christ. This pattern of action-as-response to the gracious action of God is set forth clearly in the opening words of the Heidelberg Catechism. The believer's "only comfort in life and in death" is "that I am not my own, but belong . . . to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ"; and this has been made possible by Christ, who "by the Holy Spirit" not only "has set me free from the tyranny of the devil," but also "assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him."[106] The insistence on active response to God's grace is repeated elsewhere in the Catechism, where belonging to the One who is prophet,

[103] The liturgies of the UCC, RCA, and PC(USA) include specific rubrics for the congregation's offering of moneys along with the elements of bread and wine.

[104] Our Song of Hope, VI.19. https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=313 (December 3, 2008).

[105] Both sides ground their views in Scripture, noting that the Lord's Supper echoes several biblical accounts of Jesus providing food and drink to many (e.g., the feeding of the multitudes, the wedding at Cana, the resurrected Christ feeding his disciples on the shore). In support of the first view, one can observe that Jesus often shared his meal with tax collectors and sinners, who came to the table with nothing. And when the meal included fish that the disciples had caught, Jesus had provided the fish by telling them where to cast their nets (John 21:1-14). In support of the second view, one can observe that on several occasions people provided ordinary food or drink (loaves and fish, water) that Jesus used to nourish large numbers of people (John 2:1-11, John 6:5-14). Even in this second view, it is worth observing that what people provided was not adequate for the need at hand. The loaves and fish were not sufficient to feed the crowd, and the water was not what was needed at a wedding banquet when the wine had been consumed. Still, Jesus used these inadequate "gifts" and in return gave something far greater than what was offered to him. So too, we receive gifts from Christ that are far greater than any humble, ordinary gifts we offer in worship.

[106] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 1.

priest, and king[107] means that the believer is obligated "to confess his name, to present myself to him as a living sacrifice of thanks, [and] to strive with a good conscience against sin and the devil."[108]

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a crucial context for reinforcing and nurturing this action-as-response. Furthermore, in Reformed sacramental theology, the faithful response that flows from participation at the Lord's Table has to do not only with our belonging to Christ, but also with our belonging to all others who are members of his body. We recall here that the historic Reformed confessions are clear that the Supper is, among other things, for the strengthening of the participants' ongoing engagement in "all duties which they owe unto him," including those duties that they owe to "each other, as members of his mystical body."[109]

The Reformed conception of the formation that takes place in the Supper, then, has always made much of the way of life that must flow from our communion with

Christ: a pattern of living that takes with utmost seriousness the ways in which union with Christ cannot be divorced from union with all who belong to his Body. Expressing these themes, the PC(USA)'s *Directory of Worship* offers this instruction for the prayer of invocation at the Table: on behalf of the congregation, the presider asks the triune God "to unite them in communion with all the faithful in heaven and on earth" and "to keep them faithful as Christ's body, representing Christ and doing God's work in the world."[110] Thus, the Lord's Supper is a joining together with the Church universal—fellow Christians "in heaven and on earth"—in a way that creates a sense of solidarity with those who have suffered for the faith in the past, and with those in the Church on earth who are victims of a various forms of oppression. Our fully conscious participation in this universal, unifying Supper, given by Christ, ought to provide sufficient motivation for "representing Christ and doing God's work in the world."

These same themes recur in the various Great Prayers of Thanksgiving in our Reformed liturgies. Through our sharing in the Lord's Table, the Spirit "enables us to remain faithful in hope and love" (CRC); the Spirit "unites us in ministry and sends us out to be the Body of Christ in the world" (PC(USA)); and, through the sacrament we are empowered to be "salt and light and leaven for the furtherance of God's will" (UCC).

Properly understood, formation for discipleship is integral to all stages in the drama that occurs at the Table. Not only is Christ offered to us in the sacrament, but, as was illustrated in our discussion of "offering," the gathered participants in turn offer themselves to Christ. The strong emphasis in John Calvin's own theology on union with Christ is reaffirmed as a basis for discipleship in the *epiclesis*: We pray for the Spirit to descend upon us so "that we may grow up in all things into Christ our Lord" (RCA).

In all of this, the basic pattern is the same. The believer, by God's sovereign grace, comes to belong to Christ. This in turn incorporates the believer into communion, not only with Christ but also with all who belong to Christ.

[107] Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 31.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Westminster Confession, Chap. 31/29.1, *Book of Confessions*, 6.161.

[110] PC(USA), *Directory for Worship*, W-2.4005.

The Lord's Supper nurtures and empowers this rich sense of communion with Christ and his whole Church, thus obligating us to move into the world as instruments of what we have heard and seen and tasted at the Table. That this goes beyond a mere "private" struggle against sin is made clear by John Calvin's insistence regarding the proper effects of participation in the Supper:

> We shall very much benefit from this sacrament if this thought is impressed and engraved on our minds: that none of the brethren [or sisters] can be injured, despised, rejected, abused, or in any way offended by us, without at the same time injuring despising, and abusing Christ by the wrongs we do…. we cannot love Christ without loving him in the brethren.[111]

While the call to discipleship is present, then, in the early Reformed confessions, liturgies, and theological writings, in the twentieth century a series of new Reformed confessional statements were produced, expanding the call to discipleship in relation to new social and cultural realities. This updating has expanded our understanding of the task of the believing community, and while the emphasis remains on our need to be nurtured sacramentally for service to Christ and all who belong to his Body, there is also recognition of the need to serve neighbors of other faiths, as well as those who claim to have no faith.

In struggling with new manifestations of injustice and oppression in our world, Reformed Christians have in recent years given new emphasis to the eschatological character of the Lord's Supper as an anticipation of the ancient promise that the day is surely coming when "the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food. . . . And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations" (Isaiah 25:6-7). In the light of this promise, even now we can "rejoice in the foretaste of the kingdom which he will bring to consummation at his promised coming, and go out from the Lord's Table with courage and hope for the service to which he has called them,"[112] and with assurance that "Christ is present in His world proclaiming salvation until He comes, a symbol of hope for a troubled age."[113]

Those who have been to the Table can confidently depart with this prayer on their lips: "You promise to all who trust your forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end."[114] This commitment to the way of discipleship is grounded in a sacramental deepening of our union with the Christ who "is our life-giving food and drink," the One who "will come again to call us to the wedding feast of the Lamb."[115]

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[111] Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.38.

[112] Confession of 1967, II.B.4, *Book of Confessions*, 9.52.

[113] Our Song of Hope, VI.19.

[114] "United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the Form of a Doxology," in *Book of Worship*, 514.

[115] Our World Belongs to God: A Contemporary Confession, Art. 38. http://www.crcna.org/pages/our_world_gods_people.cfm (August 6, 2010).

Sources

When asked to articulate Catholic doctrine on the Eucharist, Roman Catholics name as primary sources the sacred Scriptures, liturgical texts,[116] and the conciliar and magisterial teaching of the Church throughout the ages. These include the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and the writings of the Fathers, and the Doctors of the Church. Specifically in this document, we have paid close attention to the decrees of the Council of Trent and Second Vatican Council, the *Roman Missal*, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Introduction

This section summarizes the Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist with respect to the same five themes we just examined in the Reformed tradition: 1) *Epiclesis*—action of the Holy Spirit; 2) *Anamnesis*—remembering; 3) Presence of Christ; 4) Offering and sacrifice; and 5) Discipleship. Before discussing these five points, however, it would be helpful to summarize the four major sections of the Catholic eucharistic liturgy and their interconnection.

The Introductory Rites gather the members of the Body around the priest as the visible presence of Christ the Head of the Body. In this gathering the Church is made visible, Christ's true presence within the community is proclaimed, and those gathering are called to surrender themselves to God's transformative action as they prepare to enter into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection that is being celebrated.

The Liturgy of the Word proclaims God's mighty deeds on behalf of believers, but especially in the reading and preaching of the gospel, Christ becomes present to the community of believers—teaching them, challenging them, and urging them to fidelity as disciples of Christ.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist we so completely unite ourselves with the saving work of Christ that we place ourselves on the altar, are transformed and renewed, and are invited to approach the messianic banquet table to be nourished by a gracious, lavishly generous God.

The Concluding Rites send us forth with a divine blessing to live what we have remembered and celebrated. Thus the Mass ends, but the Eucharist is a reality also to be lived every day by the community of believers.[117]

***Epiclesis*—Action of the Holy Spirit**

While the Roman Canon (revised as the Roman Catholic Eucharistic Prayer I) has no explicit *epiclesis* over the gifts (one can argue that it is implied), most other eucharistic prayers[118] in use in the United States have both an *epiclesis* over the gifts (before the institution narrative) and an

[116] The Roman Catholic liturgical texts quoted in this document are from the English translation of the third edition of the *Roman Missal* (Latin *editio typica*, 2008; English approved translation, 2010).

[117] See the section "The movement of the celebration" in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 1348-1355 (hereafter *CCC*).

[118] The one exception is the Eucharistic Prayer for Children III which has no explicit *epiclesis* over the gifts (the prayer asks the Father to "bless these gifts of bread and wine and make them holy"). Nor is there an explicit *epiclesis* over the people; without mentioning the Holy Spirit, the prayer for the people asks that we "be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit" rather than ask for our unity, as do the *epicleses* in the other eucharistic prayers (1975/85 text).

epiclesis over the people (after the institution narrative).[119] In Eucharistic Prayer II, for example, this is expressed as follows:

> Before the institution narrative:
> Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray,
> *by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall*,
> so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord,
> Jesus Christ.
>
> After the institution narrative:
> Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ,
> we *may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit*.[120]

To give another example, before the institution narrative Eucharistic Prayer III states, "Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: *by the same Spirit* gracious make holy these gifts we have brought to you for consecration, *that they may become the Body and Blood* of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ."[121] After the institution narrative it adds, "grant that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son *and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body*, one spirit in Christ."[122] This restoration of the *epiclesis* in the revised eucharistic liturgy points to its significance as an action of the Holy Spirit in changing the elements and transforming the community. It also makes clearer the trinitarian action of the whole eucharistic rite. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of a fourfold action of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments: first, the Holy Spirit "prepares the Church to encounter her Lord."[123] The Spirit "gathers the children of God into the one Body of Christ," and the grace of the Spirit "seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart, and adherence to the Father's will."[124]

Second, "The Holy Spirit... recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly."[125] The *Catechism* goes on to say that "primarily in the Eucharist, and by analogy in the other sacraments, the liturgy is the *memorial* of the mystery of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the Church's living memory."[126] Thus the *Catechism* makes a connection between the Holy Spirit and *anamnesis*. Specifically,

> in the Liturgy of the Word the Holy Spirit "recalls" to the assembly all that Christ has done for us. In keeping with the nature of liturgical actions and the ritual traditions of the churches, the celebration "makes a remembrance" of the marvelous works of God in an *anamnesis* which may be more or less developed. The Holy

[119] Because the two *epicleses* are divided by the institution narrative, they are called a "split" *epiclesis*.
[120] Emphasis added.
[121] Emphasis added.
[122] Emphasis added.
[123] *CCC*, 1092.
[124] *CCC*, 1097-98.
[125] *CCC*, 1092.
[126] *CCC*, 1099.

> Spirit who thus awakens the memory of the Church then inspires thanksgiving and praise (*doxology*).[127]

What is critical here is that the act of "remembering" (*anamnesis*) is not the same as "recalling." It is in the remembering that the past act is made present in the here and now by the Holy Spirit.

Third, the Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ. In the Eucharist, this happens (is effected) not only in the act of remembering (*anamnesis*) but also in the *epiclesis*: "The *Epiclesis* ('invocation upon') is the intercession in which the priest begs the Father to send the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, so that the offerings may become the body and blood of Christ and that the faithful, by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God."[128]

Fourth, the Holy Spirit brings us into communion with Christ. "In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his Body."[129] The fruit of the Holy Spirit's work in the liturgy is our communion with the Trinity and with each other. In the Eucharist, the *epiclesis* is "a prayer for the full effect of the assembly's communion with the mystery of Christ." Indeed, in almost all cases the *epiclesis* over the people is to bring the community into unity with each other and God. Even when unity is not explicitly mentioned, joy is the dominant effect of the coming of the Holy Spirit.[130] The Holy Spirit makes us a living sacrifice to God by our "spiritual transformation into the image of Christ, by concern for the Church's unity, and by taking part in her mission through the witness and service of charity."[131] So the Holy Spirit is also the ground for connecting Eucharist and discipleship.

One point that the *Catechism* highlights throughout its treatment of the Eucharist is that the Spirit works *with* us, in a sense that takes seriously human cooperation with grace: "When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which he has aroused in us, he brings about genuine

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[127] *CCC*, 1103.

[128] *CCC*, 1105. And in no. 1353: "In the *epiclesis*, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the *epiclesis* after the anamnesis).In the *institution narrative*, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all."

Historically, there has been a difference in emphasis between the Western and Eastern churches with respect to consecration. The Eastern Church has emphasized the role of the Holy Spirit and, consequently, has a stronger emphasis on the *epiclesis*, locating the change in the elements at the *epiclesis*. The Western Church, in contrast, has had only an implied *epiclesis* up until the newly composed eucharistic prayers approved after Vatican II. For it, the emphasis has been more strongly on the *verba* ("This is my body. . . .This is my blood."), locating transubstantiation of the elements here. Presently, in the Latin Church, both the epiclesis and *verba* are appreciated to be one prayer.

[129] *CCC*, 1108.

[130] See note 118.

[131] *CCC*, 1109.

cooperation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church."[132]

***Anamnesis*—Remembering**

The ritual *anamnesis* (to remember, to make memorial) is an element that follows the institution narrative in all ten of the U.S. eucharistic prayers. In the *anamnesis* "the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him."[133] An example would be the *anamnesis* in Eucharistic Prayer III:

> Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate *the memorial* of the saving Passion of your Son, his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into heaven, and as we look forward to his second coming, we offer you . . .[134]

The *anamnesis*, therefore, makes explicit that what the Christian community is doing in the eucharistic liturgy is placing itself within the dynamic rhythm of the whole paschal mystery of Christ: his life, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, sending of the Spirit, and the promise of his return. It is important to keep in mind here the connection between *anamnesis* and the Holy Spirit that we noted earlier, for it is through the power of the Spirit, who is "the church's living memory," that the mystery of Christ is made present in the Eucharist.[135]

The *Catechism* begins its section on the sacramental sacrifice by recalling Jesus' words "Do this in remembrance of me."

> We carry out this command of the Lord by celebrating the *memorial of his sacrifice*. In so doing, *we offer to the Father* what he has himself given us: the gifts of his creation, bread and wine which, by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the words of Christ, have become the body and blood of Christ. Christ is thus really and mysteriously made *present*.[136]

Thus Catholic doctrine sees the teachings on *anamnesis*, sacrifice, and the real presence of Christ as intimately connected.

The notion of "remembering," which has its origin in the Hebrew word *zkr*, is not the mere recalling of a past event, but a celebration of God's action in the present. As the *Catechism* notes,

> In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men. In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is

[132] *CCC*, 1091. See also 1099: "The Spirit and the Church *cooperate* to manifest Christ and his work of salvation in the liturgy" (emphasis added).

[133] *CCC*, 1354.

[134] *Roman Missal* (2010), Eucharistic Prayer III, (emphasis added).

[135] *CCC*, 1099.

[136] *CCC*, 1357.

> celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them.
>
> In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's Passover, and . . . the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present.[137]

Presence of Christ

Sacrosanctum Concilium speaks of multiple presences of Christ in the Eucharist:

> He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, "the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross," *and most of all in the eucharistic species*. By his power he is present in the sacraments, so that when anybody baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes. He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the church. Lastly, he is present when the church prays and sings, for he has promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).[138]

The liturgical texts support the Constitution's assertion of Christ's personal presence in the eucharistic celebration. For example, with respect to the liturgy constitution's assertion that Christ is present in the very proclamation of the word, the assembly's acclamatory response before and after the gospel uses second person, direct address pronouns: "Glory to *you*, O Lord" and "Praise to *you*, Lord Jesus Christ." [139]

The *Catechism* repeats the constitution's language of Jesus being especially present under the eucharistic species. It describes the manner of Christ's presence as follows:

> The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend." In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained*." "This presence is called 'real'—by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real'

[137] *CCC*, 1363-64. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. David N. Freedman [New York: Doubleday, 1992], 5:669) describes the act of remembrance in the Lord's Supper as follows: "When believers gathered around this table, they remembered the past, to be sure; they remembered the stories of the suffering and death of the risen Lord—but not merely as a historical recollection. In remembering that past, they owned the stories as their stories (including the story of Peter's "remembering," Mark 14:72). This remembering involved a "pleading guilty" to the death of Jesus but also a sharing in that death and in the new covenant (with its forgiveness) which Christ established. *This remembering was constitutive of identity and community and determined conduct in the present*" (emphasis added).

[138] No. 7 in *Vatican Council II*, 121.

[139] Emphasis added.

> too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present."[140]

The *Catechism* then goes on to repeat the teaching of the Council of Trent, which affirms the doctrine of transubstantiation.[141] The eucharistic presence of Christ "begins at the moment of the consecration and endures as long as the Eucharistic species subsist."[142]

The real and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist confirms the efficacy of the *epiclesis* (the invocation of the Holy Spirit), for it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the bread and wine are truly transformed into his risen body and blood. Moreover, it is the real and substantial presence of the risen Christ that makes the *anamnesis* (the remembering) a true re-presentation (the making present) of the living salvific mysteries and not merely the recollection of a past event. Because Christ, the great High Priest, is substantially present, the faithful, in joining themselves to him, are also united to his once-and-for-all sacrifice and so acquire its everlasting saving benefits, the forgiveness of sins and the risen life of the Holy Spirit. Finally, because the risen Christ is substantially present in the Eucharist, the faithful, in receiving him, are truly conformed into his own risen likeness, and so are able to live more fully their call to discipleship.

It is important to note that the understanding of transubstantiation embraces notions of symbol and eschatological anticipation but cannot be reduced to them. Pope Paul VI was concerned to correct such misunderstandings in his 1965 encyclical *Mysterium fidei* where he also addressed the sacramental nature of Christ's physical or bodily presence in the sacrament.

> To avoid any misunderstanding of this type of presence, which goes beyond the laws of nature and constitutes the greatest miracle of its kind, we have to listen with docility to the voice of the teaching and praying Church. Her voice, which constantly echoes the voice of Christ, assures us that the way in which Christ becomes present in this Sacrament is through the conversion of the whole substance of the bread into His body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood, a unique and truly wonderful conversion that the Catholic Church fittingly and properly calls transubstantiation. As a result of transubstantiation, the species of bread and wine undoubtedly take on a new signification and a new finality, for they are no longer ordinary bread and wine but instead a sign of something sacred and a sign of spiritual food; but they take on this new signification, this new finality, precisely because they contain a new "reality" which we can rightly call ontological. For what

[140] *CCC*, 1374.

[141] *CCC*, 1376 states: "The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: 'Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.'"

[142] *CCC*, 1377.

> now lies beneath the aforementioned species is not what was there before, but something completely different; and not just in the estimation of Church belief but in reality, since once the substance or nature of the bread and wine has been changed into the body and blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and the wine except for the species—beneath which Christ is present whole and entire in His physical "reality," corporeally present, although not in the manner in which bodies are in a place.[143]

This belief in the real and substantial presence of Christ in the eucharistic species has several consequences for Catholic worship and devotion. First, "in the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord."[144] In addition, the faithful adore and worship Jesus present in the Eucharist, "not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."[145]

The *Catechism* goes on to speak more specifically about adoration. It acknowledges that the tabernacle (a decorated wood or metal receptacle that holds the reserved Sacrament) was originally intended as a worthy repository for the Eucharist that would be given to the sick and others who had to be absent from Mass. However, "as faith in the real presence of Christ in his Eucharist deepened, the Church became conscious of the meaning of silent adoration of the Lord present under the eucharistic species."[146]

Indeed, eucharistic adoration has been a long tradition in the Catholic Church, resting in the belief that Christ's presence in the bread and wine after they have become his body and blood is substantial and enduring. Moreover, gestures of adoration take place within the shape of the liturgy itself: at the genuflection of the priest (and the bow of the assembly if they are standing) after the elevations of the Host and Chalice; at the genuflection of the priest before he receives Communion; at the communicants' bow before they receive (in the U.S.); in the prolonged period of silence or communal song of praise at the conclusion of the Communion procession; and in the period of adoration at the Repository on Holy Thursday after the procession with the Eucharist. The adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is an extension of the adoration that begins in the Mass itself.

Although it does not develop the point at length, the *Catechism* recognizes that there is a sense in which "real presence" has to do not only with the eucharistic elements but also with those who receive it. The point is made most explicitly in the section on how the Eucharist "makes the Church": "Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body." In this connection, the *Catechism* cites the sermon by St. Augustine that we quoted in the general "Introduction"

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[143] Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*, no. 46. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_03091965_mysterium_en.html (October 6, 2010).

[144] *CCC*, 1378.

[145] Ibid.

[146] *CCC*, 1379.

> If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table of the Lord; it is your sacrament that you receive. To that which you are you respond "Amen" ("yes, it is true!") and by responding to it you assent to it. For you hear the words, "the Body of Christ" and respond "Amen." Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your *Amen* may be true.[147]

In addition to its expression in the *Catechism*, this emphasis has also been operative in recent Catholic theological reflection on the Eucharist and social justice.[148]

Offering and Sacrifice

Sacrifice language has been one of the historically divisive matters between our churches. At issue is whether the sacrifice on the cross is repeated. Eucharistic Prayer I (a revision and translation of the Roman Canon) helps us address this question. The prayer, after the institution narrative, continues with these words after the *anamnesis*: " . . . we, your servants and your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty from the gifts that you have given us, this pure victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim, the holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of everlasting salvation." What is remembered and offered is the risen Christ substantially present in the Bread and Wine, "a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim."

Just as the celebration of Passover makes present the Exodus event to Jewish believers, the Eucharist is Christ's Passover in which "the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present" to the Christian community.[149] In this connection the *Catechism* quotes the Second Vatican Council's "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (*Lumen gentium*), no. 3: "As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which 'Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed' is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out." The *Catechism* goes on to say:

> Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."[150]

It then makes two further points about the Eucharist as sacrifice. First, the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice:

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[147] *CCC*, 1396; see page 8 above.

[148] It has been argued that this emphasis is found in the New Testament, e.g., in 1 Cor 11:17-32, where Paul speaks of eating the bread and drinking the cup in an unworthy manner. Thus the Corinthians may have *thought* that they were coming together to celebrate the Lord's Supper (v. 20), but their behavior towards the poor precluded an authentic celebration of the Eucharist. See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor's excellent analysis in "Eucharist and Community in First Corinthians (Part II)," *Worship* 51 (1977) 65-68.

[149] *CCC*, 1364.

[150] *CCC*, 1365.

Jesus, who offered himself on the cross, now offers himself through the ministry of the priest in an "unbloody" manner.[151] At the same time, the community is invited to unite itself to Christ's sacrifice; thus the Eucharist is also a time for each individual to renew his or her own self-giving surrender to fidelity to God. Second, the Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. "The Church which is the Body of Christ participates in the offering of her Head. With him, she herself is offered whole and entire." This includes all of the members of Christ's body, whose "praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ and with his total offering, and so acquire a new value."[152]

Catholic doctrine has often spoken of the "propitiatory" nature of Jesus' sacrifice, that is, that it expiates sin. The *Catechism* quotes the Council of Trent on this point: "Since in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner . . . this sacrifice is truly propitiatory."[153] This notion, however, requires some expansion. Christ lovingly offered his holy and innocent life to the Father out of love for the whole of humankind. It is this loving offering that makes Jesus' sacrifice an act of *propitiation* or expiation for sin. The whole sinful history of humankind is an affront to the goodness and love of the infinite God. Justice itself, and not the arbitrary demands of an angry God, demands that reparation be made to God for such an offense, so that human beings might be reconciled to God and be made holy once again. Jesus' loving sacrificial offering of his own holy and innocent life to the Father on behalf of humankind made reparation for all the sinful (unloving) acts that were and are an affront to the goodness and love of God, and thus human beings were reconciled to the Father and made holy. Jesus' propitiatory sacrifice, then, does not quell the wrath of an angry God, but rather, having met the demands of justice, makes it possible once more for those who come to faith in Christ to become authentic sons and daughters of the Father. The Council of Trent expresses this as follows:

> And insasmuch as in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass is contained and immolated in an unbloody manner the same Christ who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross, the holy council teaches that this is truly propitiatory and has this effect, that we, contrite and penitent, with sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence, draw nigh to God, *we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid*. For, appeased by this sacrifice, the Lord grants the grace and gift of penitence and pardons even the gravest crimes and sins.[154]

It is this one propitiatory sacrifice that is made present within the eucharistic celebration.

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[151] *CCC*, 1367.

[152] *CCC*, 1368.

[153] *CCC*, 1367.

[154] *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder (Rockford, IL: Tan, 1978), 145-46 ("Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass," Chap. 2 [Council of Trent, Session 22]).

The *Catechism* summarizes that the Eucharist is a sacrifice for three reasons: "because it *re-presents* (makes present, enacts) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its *memorial* and because it *applies* its fruit."[155] The Eucharist makes present the one sacrifice of Christ so that all believers, from every age, might be united to it, and so reap its salvific benefits, that is, forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with the Father. As the Council of Trent states,

> [Christ], our Lord and God, was once and for all to offer himself to God the Father by his death on the altar of the cross, to accomplish there an everlasting redemption. But because his priesthood was not to end with his death, at the Last Supper "on the night when he was betrayed," [he wanted] to leave to his beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands) by which the bloody sacrifice which he was to accomplish once for all on the cross would be re-presented, its memory perpetuated until the end of the world, and its salutary power be applied to the forgiveness of the sins we commit.[156]

It is worth noting that the *Catechism* begins its teaching on sacrifice with what *Christ* offered, and relates all other meanings of sacrifice back to it. But this sacrifice of Christ also involves God the Father's offering of Jesus to the Church. This understanding is reflected in the Catholic liturgical tradition, such as, for example, in the wording of Eucharistic Prayer IV:

> Look O Lord, upon the Sacrifice which *you yourself have provided for your Church*, and grant in your loving kindness to all who partake of this one Bread and one Chalice that, gathered into one body by the Holy Spirit, they may truly become a living sacrifice in Christ to the praise of your glory. [157]

Discipleship

Every eucharistic celebration dynamically moves toward the concluding rites during which we are explicitly sent forth to live what we have celebrated. Indeed, two new formulae for dismissal written by Pope Benedict XVI and included in the 2010 third edition of the *Roman Missal* make our discipleship even stronger: "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." and "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." But even earlier in the Mass there are indications that we are challenged to live what we have celebrated as faithful disciples of the Lord. For example, the purpose of the homily is so that "the mysteries of the faith and the *guiding principles of the Christian life* are expounded from the sacred text during the course of the liturgical year."[158] The two eucharistic prayers for reconciliation remind us of our responsibility to reach out to those whom we have hurt or those from whom we are alienated. In the Eucharistic Prayer for Masses for Various Needs and Occasion: I. The Church on the Way to Unity we pray that the Church manifests the covenant of the Father's love and until Christ comes again and

[155] *CCC*, 1366.

[156] *Canons and Decrees*, 144 ("Doctrine Concerning the Sacrifice of the Mass," Chap. 1., quoted in *CCC*, 1366.

[157] Emphasis added.

[158] No. 52, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in *Vatican Council II*.

we pray that we proclaim the work of God's love. In the same eucharistic prayer, IV. Jesus, the Compassion of God we pray that the Lord open our eyes to the needs of all, inspire us to comfort through our words and deeds those who labor and are burdened, and keep our service of others faithful to the example and command of Christ.

Sacrosanctum Concilium clearly places the liturgy in the wider context of the Christian life when it says:

> 11. But in order that the liturgy may be able to produce its full effects, it is necessary that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds should be attuned to their voices, and that they should cooperate with divine grace lest they receive it in vain (see 2 Cor 6:1). Pastors of souls must, therefore, realize that, when the liturgy is celebrated, their obligation goes further than simply ensuring that the laws governing valid and lawful celebration are observed. They must also ensure that the faithful take part fully aware of what they are doing, actively engaged in the rite, and enriched by it.
>
> 12. The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. Christians are indeed called to pray with others, but they must also enter into their rooms to pray to their Father, in secret (see Mt 6:6); furthermore, according to the teaching of the apostle, he must pray without ceasing (see 1 Th 5:17). We also learn from the same apostle that we must always carry around in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that the life too of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh (see 2 Cor 4:10-11). That is why we beg the Lord in the sacrifice of the Mass that, "receiving the offering of the spiritual victim," he may fashion us for himself "as an eternal gift."[159]

The *Catechism*, too, lists several "fruits of Holy Communion." These connect the Eucharist to Catholics' overall life of faith and their relationship with the Church—Church understood in a fairly broad sense. The first fruit of the Eucharist is that it "augments our union with Christ."[160] Holy Communion "preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism." It provides spiritual nourishment just as material food provides bodily nourishment.[161] Second, the Eucharist "separates us from sin."[162] This includes wiping away venial sins and preserving us from future mortal sins.[163] The *Catechism* explains the latter as follows: "The more we share the life of Christ and progress in his friendship, the more difficult it is to break away from

[159] *Vatican Council II*, 123.

[160] *CCC*, 1391.

[161] *CCC*, 1392.

[162] *CCC*, 1393.

[163] *CCC* defines venial sin as follows: "One commits *venial sin* when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent" (1862). "Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent" (1857).

him by mortal sin."[164] The third fruit is that the Eucharist "makes the Church. …Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens [our] incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism."[165] Fourth, the Eucharist commits us to the poor: "To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren."[166] Thus, the Eucharist should commit us to social justice. The fifth and final fruit of the Eucharist is that it signifies the unity of Christians. "The more painful the experience of the divisions in the Church which break the common participation in the table of the Lord, the more urgent are our prayers to the Lord that the time of complete unity among all who believe in him may return."[167] The Catechism's language clearly suggests that this fruit is only partially realized as long as our churches remain divided.

The *Catechism* ends this section with several paragraphs on the Eucharist as a pledge of eternal glory.[168] This point could just as well have been made under the rubric of fruits of the Eucharist in that, like the fruit of unity, it signifies the "not yet" of the kingdom. Our discipleship is always lived in the context of waiting in joyful hope for the coming of the Savior.

Section 3: Convergences and Divergences

In studying our theologies and liturgies of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, our Roman Catholic and Reformed dialogue teams tried not only to understand each other better but also to identify areas of convergence and divergence on each of the five themes that together we explored. In what follows, we specify these points of agreement as well as ways in which our understandings continue to differ. These points of convergence and divergence summarize what has been elaborated above in each of our discreet discussions of the five themes. For the benefit of the reader, we provide page references to the specific sections from which these summaries derive. At the close of each section below we express, as Roman Catholic and Reformed Christians, what we appreciate about the theology and practice of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper of our partners in dialogue, especially in relation to our differences in understanding. This discussion is not an official statement endorsed by our respective communions. Rather, it reflects the perspectives of our dialogue teams—the fruit of our mutual and prayerful study, writing, and conversations together. We offer it in the hope that it will provide a basis for further reflection and dialogue.

3a: Epiclesis—Action of the Holy Spirit[169]

Reformed and Roman Catholic dialogue participants recognize significant convergence in our understanding of the action of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper/Eucharist. Centrally, we agree that it is through the work of the Spirit that the sacrament becomes effective. While we agree that the Spirit's presence and work in the sacrament is manifest, we also

[164] *CCC*, 1395. The forgiveness of mortal sin is proper to the Sacrament of Penance.

[165] *CCC*, 1396.

[166] *CCC*, 1397.

[167] *CCC*, 1398.

[168] *CCC*, 1402-1405.

[169] See above, Reformed discussion of *epiclesis*, pp. 15-19, and Roman Catholic discussion, pp. 43-46.

acknowledge that the Spirit's presence is inscrutable and the Spirit's work mysterious.

We agree that it is the Spirit who gathers and prepares the Church, as well as individual persons, for encounter in the sacrament with Christ, who has lived, died, risen, ascended, and now reigns as Lord of the Church.

We agree that in, with, and through Word and Sacrament, the Spirit makes Christ present here and now. Through Word and Eucharist/Lord's Supper, all that Christ has done for us, and all of Christ's benefits are offered and given. In faith, the Church receives the person and work of Christ. For both the Reformed and Roman Catholics, the Spirit makes present the whole paschal mystery—the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. For Roman Catholics, however, a key emphasis of the Eucharist is on the one sacrifice of Christ that is offered to the Father, through the Spirit, by the Church in union with Christ.

We agree that through the sacrament, the Spirit grants, renews, strengthens, and deepens faith; more fully conforms us to the person of Christ; and inspires the Church's thanksgiving, praise, and faithful living in response to the presence and offering of Christ.

We agree that the Holy Spirit effects and deepens our union and communion with Christ, the Son, and thus also, our union and communion with the Father and Holy Spirit. Through the sacrament, the Spirit also effects and deepens our union and communion with each other, and with all the saints who have died in faith. The Spirit forms us, the living and the dead, as the Body of Christ—many members joined together under the one rule of Christ, the Lord and Head of the Church.

For Roman Catholics, the union that the Spirit effects in the Eucharist is one in which the Church is so joined to Christ that it is united with the one sacrifice of Christ and shares in Christ's own self-offering to the Father. The Reformed affirm that in the Supper the Spirit effects deeper union with Christ, but not as a joining in Christ's one sacrifice to the Father. Thus, the self-offering of the congregation that the Spirit effects at the Lord's Table is a response, in thanksgiving, to the unique self-offering of Christ.

We acknowledge that in the sacramental rites of all our communions, the Church prays, explicitly or implicitly, for God to send the Spirit with respect to both the gifts of bread and wine and the gathered congregation, so that the faithful might receive and be nourished by the body and blood of Jesus Christ. As concerns the faithful, we agree that God answers the *epiclesis* by sending the Spirit who creates a disposition of readiness, obedience, receptivity, thanksgiving, and longing in the congregation. As concerns the bread and wine, Roman Catholics believe that the Spirit changes the bread and wine into "the body and blood, soul and divinity" of the risen Jesus Christ. That is to say, that under the appearance of bread and wine itself, the whole risen Christ is given and received. The Reformed believe that the Spirit uses the bread and wine as instruments, or true signs, by means of which the faithful are nourished by the true body and blood of Christ.

As a result of our dialogue, the Roman Catholic participants have come to a greater understanding and appreciation of the Reformed churches' conviction that the *epiclesis*, or calling down of the Holy Spirit, engenders within the worshipers a deeper readiness, obedience, and receptivity to the work of Christ, a renewed spirit of thankfulness for the gift of Christ, and a longing

to be more deeply united to him and to see the day when Christ's kingdom is fulfilled on earth as in heaven. The Reformed participants have come to a greater understanding and appreciation for the Roman Catholic sense of the Church's action, in and with the Spirit, as efficacious in the celebration and fulfillment of the Eucharist.

3b: Anamnesis—Remembering[170]

Together we agree that when we celebrate the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, we are remembering Christ's person and work in a way that goes beyond mere human recollection of a past event. In our liturgical practice and theological reflection, Roman Catholic and Reformed Christians share a common sense of *anamnesis* as a making present of and participation in the person, work, and benefits of Christ, through the Spirit. This shared conviction has three interrelated elements.

First, we recognize that remembering is intimately related to the presence of Christ. As we remember Christ, we realize Christ's presence with us. Our conversations about Christ's presence in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, therefore, should be held together with our common reflections on *anamnesis*.

Second, we agree that remembering brings about a participation in Christ that encompasses past, present, and future. Through our remembering, we realize not only Christ's presence to us here and now, but our very fellowship in Christ. This common conviction should be kept together with the shared emphasis on the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice in which we participate. As we remember, we enter into the "once and perpetual" sacrifice that Christ has offered on our behalf. Through this participation, we also "remember" and believe that our future is entirely bound up with what Christ has done and is doing now.

Third, as was said in the discussion of *epiclesis* above, the Church's act of remembering is effective by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is an act of God working through the Church. Thus we acknowledge together that the Church's *anamnesis*, through which is realized our participation in Christ's person, work, and benefits, is ever a gift. God's action is always primary in this event.

Though we share the conviction that *God's* action is primary in the act of remembering, our communions also agree that the Church gathered at the Eucharist/Lord's Supper is engaged as an active partner in remembering. As the congregation comes to receive the sacrament, it opens itself to the work of the Spirit, enters into the presence of Christ, realizes its participation in Christ (past, present and future), and offers up its praise and thanksgiving as it remembers God's acts of salvation.

Having identified significant convergence in our understanding of *anamnesis*, we also note differing emphases on this theme. Reformed Christians make a clear distinction between Christ's activity and the activity of the faithful who engage in *anamnesis*. The people's activity is always secondary and dependent on Christ's activity. For this reason, when Reformed Christians affirm real participation in Christ through the sacrament, we do not understand that we offer Christ's sacrifice to the Father. Instead, we believe

[170] See above, Reformed discussion of *anamnesis*, pp. 19-24, and Roman Catholic discussion, pp. 46-48.

that we participate in Christ, who offered himself as a sacrifice to the Father. Roman Catholic Christians, on the other hand, confess that the Church is so joined to Christ that it is united with the one sacrifice of Christ and, in the Eucharist, participates in Christ's own self-offering to the Father.

A second difference in emphasis concerns the breadth of what is remembered in the sacrament. As previously discussed, Reformed Christians in recent years have expanded the scope of the *anamnesis* of Christ's work, both in confessional formulations and in liturgical expression. While earlier documents focused almost exclusively on Christ's sacrificial death as that which was remembered, confessions and liturgies since the mid-twentieth century have emphasized that the life and ministry of Christ and the hope of Christ's return are also central to the sacramental remembrance. While Roman Catholic doctrine has also taken into account the saving nature of Christ's life, the *anamnesis* itself focuses on the death, resurrection, and second coming of Christ. This apparent difference in emphasis merits further dialogue about the role of Christ's life in the Church's *anamnesis*.

As a result of our dialogue, Reformed participants have gained appreciation for the depth of Roman Catholic conviction regarding the church's participation in Christ's offering itself, and see this as a profound invitation to ponder more fully the mystery of our unity with the risen Christ. Roman Catholic participants have come to appreciate the Reformed communions' emphasis on God's action in their understanding of sacramental remembering. This emphasis is evident in the Reformed tradition's conviction that the church does not share in Christ's own self-offering at the Table but rather receives what Christ has offered, which highlights the depth and breadth of human dependence on God's grace.

3c: Presence of Christ[171]

Our dialogue has confirmed that both the Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions have always held that Christ is truly present in the Supper, and present in multiple ways. For the Reformed, Christ gives his presence through the Word, calls us to the Table, is present by the Spirit in those who come to the Table in faith, bids us through the minister to participate in the effective signs of bread and cup, and by the Spirit nourishes us with his body and blood and more deeply engrafts us into his mystical body. For Roman Catholics, too, Christ is present by his power in the sacraments, in the Word, in the ministry of the priest, and in the praying and singing of the Church.

However, our traditions differ in their understanding of how Christ is distinctively present in the Supper. We can trace this difference to the historical development of our respective theologies of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper and believe it helpful to briefly summarize these developments here. Latin and Greek patristic sources display rich eucharistic imagery and theology, including two principal ways to describe how Christ nourishes believers with his very body and blood. Some patristic theologians maintained that Christ is present through a conversion of the elements themselves, while others described Christ as mystically engrafting believers yet more deeply into his

[171] See above, Reformed discussion of "presence," pp. 24-29, and Roman Catholic discussion, pp. 48-52.

real presence.[172] The Roman Catholic tradition developed and maintains a synthesis of these two positions. The Reformed theologians of the Protestant Reformation, however, principally followed an interpretation of Augustine on Christ's eucharistic presence, which stresses the mystery of the Spirit's engrafting believers more deeply into Christ's real presence. As it is clear in our separate presentations above, therefore, both traditions, in their historical catholicity and present constructive positions, are interested in the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper.

If both traditions insist that what believers receive at the Table is not mere blessed bread but Christ himself, what exactly does that mean? For Roman Catholics, it means a substantial presence by which the whole Christ makes himself wholly present on the altar. Christ is truly, really, and substantially present under the form of the eucharistic elements. This takes place by what the Catholic Church calls a "transubstantiation," or change in the substance, of the eucharistic bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, a change that is effected at the moment of consecration and lasts as long as the eucharistic species subsist.

By taking up this interpretation of the Augustinian mode of presence, whereby believers are fed by Christ who engrafts them more deeply into his mystical body, the Reformed tradition, too, specifically holds to the true presence of Christ. However, it wishes to distance itself from any idea of a "real" conversion of the elements themselves, and thus from the doctrine of transubstantiation. Christ himself is indeed effectively offered by, with, and through the signs of bread and wine, which assures believers that as they partake, they are engrafted more deeply into Christ's mystical body and are thereby nourished by his flesh and blood. But the flesh and blood of Christ themselves remain in heaven, at the right hand of God, since his human body cannot be located in several places at once. It is through the mysterious agency of the Holy Spirit that our mystical union with Christ's flesh and blood communicated by the signs is brought about, a point which we take up in more depth at the end of this section.

The Catholic Church also recognizes this Augustinian feature of Christ's presence and mystical union in the Eucharist, but as we saw earlier, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* places the discussion of mystical engrafting into Christ in the section on "The Fruits of Communion," which follows the treatment of the presence of Christ as such. For Roman Catholics, the Eucharist is a fundamental cause of the Church itself, whereas for the Reformed tradition the mystical communion of believers with Christ is presupposed by the Supper and forms the basis of the sacrament in which believers are engrafted yet more deeply into Christ and nourished by his body and blood.

One of the most important things that participants in this dialogue have learned to appreciate, therefore, is the deep historical roots of the

[172] On the real presence of Christ, see, for example, Pierre Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie, la présence réelle et la transubstantiation* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1905); Josef Rupert Geiselmann, *Die Eucharistielehre der Vorscholastik* , Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur-und Dogmengeschichte, vol. 15 (Paderborn: F. Schönigh, 1926); Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J., *The Eucharist in the West: History and Theology*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998). See also Johannes Betz, *Die Eucharistie in der Zeit der griechischen Väter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg: Herder, 1961-64); idem, *Eucharistie: In der Schrift und Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979).

convergences and divergences cited here. Despite our differences, the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions are able to say together that in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper Christ is truly present, offering at the Table for our nourishment what he once offered on the cross, so that we receive not just the blessed elements but Christ himself.

A Further Clarification on Presence

As noted above, the Reformed position is that the risen body of Christ at the right hand of the Father cannot be located in several places at once. While this might seem to accentuate the differences between the Catholic and Reformed positions because of the Catholic teaching on the real presence, there also exists between our two traditions a possible convergence on the eucharistic presence of the body of Christ. We agree that Christ in his risen body is in heaven at the right hand of God. We also agree that in the Eucharist he communicates in a life-giving manner the substance of his body and blood. Even though we have not arrived at a common understanding concerning how this presence is communicated through the eucharistic signs of bread and wine, we share similar perspectives on how Christ's glorified flesh relates to his presence in the Eucharist. Both of our theological traditions have taken up this question of the "how" (or modality) of Christ's eucharistic presence. Here we repeat the quote from Calvin already cited and compare it to one from Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Mysterium fidei*, also previously cited.

Calvin writes:

> Christ does not simply present to us the benefit of his death and resurrection, but the very body in which he suffered and rose again. I conclude, that Christ's body is *really*, (as the common expression is)—that is, *truly* given to us in the Supper, to be wholesome food for our souls. I use the common form of expression, but my meaning is, that our souls are nourished by the substance of the body, that we may truly be made one with him, or, what amounts to the same thing, that a life-giving virtue from Christ's flesh is poured into us by the Spirit, though it is at a great distance from us, and is not mixed with us. [173]

On this same point, in his encyclical *Mysterium fidei* Pope Paul VI says:

> To avoid any misunderstanding of this type of presence, which goes beyond the laws of nature and constitutes the greatest miracle of its kind, we have to listen with docility to the voice of the teaching and praying Church. Her voice, which constantly echoes the voice of Christ, assures us that the way in which Christ becomes present in this Sacrament is through the conversion of the whole substance of the bread into His body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood, a unique and truly wonderful conversion that the Catholic Church fittingly and properly calls transubstantiation. As a result of transubstantiation, the species of bread and wine undoubtedly take on a new signification and a new finality,

[173] John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John W. Fraser, ed. D. W. and T. F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 246 (see note 65, p. 26 above).

> for they are no longer ordinary bread and wine but instead a sign of something sacred and a sign of spiritual food; but they take on this new signification, this new finality, precisely because they contain a new "reality" which we can rightly call ontological. For what now lies beneath the aforementioned species is not what was there before, but something completely different; and not just in the estimation of Church belief but in reality, since once the substance or nature of the bread and wine has been changed into the body and blood of Christ, nothing remains of the bread and the wine except for the species—beneath which Christ is present whole and entire in His physical "reality," corporeally present, *although not in the manner in which bodies are in a place*.[174]

It is the last clause of Paul VI's quote that Reformed Christians find particularly pertinent. Christ's corporeal presence in the Eucharist is "not in the same manner in which bodies are in a place." We know from Scripture that the risen Jesus was recognized and even touched during his Easter appearances. Catholics and Reformed Christians agree that after his ascension Christ is physically present at the right hand of the Father in his risen body. We agree that in regard to the Eucharist we distinguish between Christ's bodily presence in a place, e.g, at the right hand of God, and his bodily presence sacramentally. From the Catholic perspective he is bodily present in the Eucharist but not in the same manner (or modality) that he was present in the Easter appearances. Thomas Aquinas explained Christ's bodily presence in the Eucharist as being without dimension or extension according to its proper quantity (as in the Easter appearances where he was seen and touched), but indeed according to its substance (as in his incarnate and glorified humanity). This means he is really present, even physically as Paul VI affirms, while his risen body remains in heaven. This is why Catholics reverence the consecrated species and even adore Christ in the Eucharist.

The Reformed perspective also emphasizes that the risen body of Christ remains in heaven during the Lord's Supper. The Reformed tradition asserts that Christ communicates his life-giving glorified flesh to believers through the incomprehensible activity of the Holy Spirit. Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper is distinctly sacramental, a point that Reformed theology has traditionally affirmed. However, the bread and wine do not become the body and blood of Christ. Therefore, Reformed Christians consider it inappropriate to reverence the eucharistic elements. While we recognize this remaining divergence, nevertheless, we hope that the convergence on the spatial nature of the risen body of Christ may open up new possibilities for further discussion on this matter in the future.

3d: Offering and Sacrifice[175]

With respect to what is offered or sacrificed in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions converge on several points and diverge on several others. Using the language of offering and sacrifice,

[174] Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei,* no. 46 (see note 139, p. 50 above).

[175] See above, Reformed discussion of offering and sacrifice, pp. 29-38, and Roman Catholic discussion, pp. 52-55.

both traditions tend to agree on what God in Christ offers and sacrifices on our behalf, but differ on the questions of what *we* offer or sacrifice to God.

Roman Catholics and Reformed converge in seeing the Eucharist/Lord's Supper as grounded in God's gracious work in creation and salvation history, as a sacramental means of encountering Christ's redemptive self-offering, and as moving worshipers to offer themselves as living sacrifices of thanksgiving in imitation of Christ.

Both communions agree that God's gracious work in creation and in the history of salvation form the background for the Eucharist/Lord's Supper. God is the creator and giver of life, the source of all good, and the one whose providential care sustains all. The Eucharist/Lord's Supper recalls the great events in which God acts to offer or give salvation, and in particular such events as the Exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt and the return of God's people from the Exile. Through these events, God is restoring and renewing God's creatures and all creation, rescuing them from sin and evil. These events give shape to our understanding of God's character as one who offers life and hope despite our fallenness.

In addition, we agree that, against this background, the Eucharist/Lord's Supper highlights Christ's redemptive self-offering which culminates in his death and resurrection. Christ's sacrificial self-offering is the culmination of God's redeeming and renewing work. Through this self-offering, the world is reconciled to God and creatures are reconciled to one another. The Eucharist/Lord's Supper not only highlights Christ's self-offering, but also serves as a means of grace by which Christ offers and we receive the benefits of his redemptive and reconciling work.

Finally, both traditions agree that in this sacrament, worshipers offer themselves as living sacrifices of thanksgiving in response to God's grace in Jesus Christ. The act of participating in the sacrament is not only a receiving of the grace offered by God, but also a presentation of ourselves as an offering of praise and thanksgiving to God. This self-offering is part of the larger offering of ourselves as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1). In all of these ways, then, the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions share a common understanding of what God offers to us and what we offer to God through the Eucharist/Lord's Supper.

Despite the many significant ways in which our communions converge, we also diverge on some important claims about the Eucharist/Lord's Supper. First, the Reformed communions speak of Christ being offered to us, but do not say that we offer Christ in the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. Roman Catholics say that Christ invites us into his act of self-offering, so that the priest and people offer the eucharistic Christ to the Father as an act of worship. Roman Catholics also say that, if we are in Christ, then our act of self-offering is also a means by which we offer Christ. In contrast, the Reformed tradition is not willing to speak of our offering of Christ to the Father, or of our self-offering as, in part, an offering of Christ. Rather, Reformed confessions emphasize that the Lord's Supper is God's gift to us, which we receive from God's grace and to which we respond.

Second, the two traditions differ on the Eucharist/Lord's Supper as a "re-presentation" of Christ's sacrifice. Roman Catholics see the Eucharist as a re-presentation and real participation in Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross. It is an unbloody re-presentation and memorial of Christ's once-for-

all sacrifice. In contrast, Reformed Christians see the sacrament as a visible presentation of the message of the Gospel and as a means of grace, but not as actually continuing Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In short, the difference here is over each tradition's understanding of the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ.

Finally, the two traditions differ over the role of the minister or priest in the sacramental offering. In the Reformed tradition, Christ hosts the meal and offers himself to the congregation through the office of the minister.[176] Roman Catholics see the priest, acting in the person of Christ, as offering Christ's one sacrifice to the Father on behalf of the people, as well as representing the Church in the faithful's self-offering, in union with Christ, to the Father.

As a result of our dialogue, Reformed participants have grown in appreciation for the Roman Catholic understanding of how the Church's profound union with Christ is expressed as an actual participation Christ's own self-offering, to the Father. Roman Catholic participants appreciate the Reformed impulse to preserve the priority of God's action as distinct from the Church's action in response to what God has done and is doing.

3e: Discipleship[177]

The Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions both strongly affirm the connection between Eucharist/Lord's Supper and Christian discipleship. Historically, this theme has appeared in numerous key documents of our respective communities, and in recent years it has reappeared in works of both Reformed and Roman Catholic theology.[178] This is an area where the convergences are many and clear and the divergences are fewer and sometimes manifested as different tendencies in our two traditions.

Both traditions emphasize that the Eucharist/Lord's Supper deepens our union with Christ. Additionally, both affirm that the sacrament strengthens our communion with the Body of Christ, the Church. In our liturgies, this deepened communion with and participation in the Body of Christ is understood also to permeate the Christian's daily witness in the world. In the RCA's Supper liturgy, for example, the *epiclesis* includes the prayer, "Send your Spirit that we may grow up in all things into Christ our Lord." In the Roman Catholic Mass, the "Prayer after Communion" is an explicit or implicit petition that the eucharistic celebration will have an effect in our daily lives. And one of the imperatives in the Roman Catholic dismissal rite is, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord."

Related to this area of convergence is the theme of daily dying to sin and living for God that grows out of our participation in the Eucharist/Lord's Supper. In both Roman Catholic and Reformed theology, this dying and living have found specific expression in a commitment to social justice. Indeed, the very first reference to the sacrament in 1 Corinthians 11 is in the

[176] As previously noted (p. 24, note 54), among the Reformed churches represented in this dialogue, the celebration of the sacrament is provided for and overseen not only by the minister, but also by elders, deacons and/or other authorized lay persons.

[177] See above, Reformed discussion of discipleship, pp. 38-42, and Roman Catholic discussion, pp. 55-57.

[178] To mention but a few: Monika Hellwig, *The Eucharist and the Hunger of the World* (New York: Paulist, 1976); Rodica Stoicoiu, "Eucharist and Social Justice," in David M. McCarthy, *The Heart of Catholic Social Teaching: Its Origins and Contemporary Significance* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), Joseph A. Grassi, *Broken Bread and Broken Bodies: The Lord's Supper and World Hunger* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985).

context of discipleship and ethics: "All who eat and drink without *discerning the body* [i.e., paying attention to the needs of the Body of Christ that is the Church], eat and drink judgment upon themselves" (1 Corinthians 11:29). As our opening discussion of the history of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper also showed, care for the poor has been a key implication of the sacrament since the early days of Christianity. The Church has emphasized this connection throughout the ages, but the last one hundred years or so have seen an expansion of both Reformed and Roman Catholic reflection on the relationship between discipleship and economic justice. This interconnection between the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, the life of Christian discipleship, and justice for the poor is repeatedly expressed in more recent confessions, theological writings, and practices in both of our traditions.

Finally, both Roman Catholic and Reformed Christians view the connection between our participation in the sacrament and our growth in discipleship within an eschatological framework. In the Eucharist/Lord's Supper the Church receives a pledge and foretaste of the fulfillment of God's kingdom of justice and shalom that is both already present and yet to come. In light of this eschatological perspective, both traditions express confidence in the fact that the Eucharist/Lord's Supper is a celebration of and participation in God's promised kingdom. As the Church receives the body and blood of Christ, the Spirit enables the Church to die to sin and rise to new life in Christ. We are nourished toward greater faithfulness in our daily witness to the present and coming kingdom of God, while also recognizing that our discipleship will only reach perfection when God's glorious kingdom is fully come.

This dialogue, therefore, has disclosed significant convergences between Reformed and Roman Catholic understandings of the relationship between the sacrament and discipleship. However, we do have a somewhat different understanding of the relationship between the Eucharist/Lord's Supper and the forgiveness of sin. Roman Catholics believe that the Eucharist effects the forgiveness of venial sins and can help to preserve us from future mortal sin. The Reformed Christians believe that through our participation in the Supper the Spirit assures us that in Christ our sins are already forgiven and that our union with Christ both requires and enables us to avoid sin. In either understanding, however, the intended result is a greater joy, thanksgiving, and faithfulness in our lives as disciples of Christ.

In conclusion, in the area of Eucharist/Lord's Supper and discipleship, we express mutual appreciation for the significant convergences we have identified between our communions. More generally, we give thanks to God for the ways in which our engagement with the five themes of *epiclesis*, *anamnesis*, presence of Christ, sacrifice/offering, and discipleship have increased understanding, respect, and appreciation among us all, and have provided a basis for further dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Reformed communions.

Section 4: Pastoral Implications

The Eucharist/Lord's Supper Is Fundamental to Our Union with Christ, the Community, and Our Ethical Call

The eventual goal of all ecumenical dialogue is the reestablishment of full visible unity among all Christian traditions. The final expression of this unity will be to celebrate the Eucharist/Lord's Supper together in full unity of faith and communion. Our appreciation and knowledge of each other's understanding of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper has grown deeper as a result of our dialogue. Because visible unity does not exist we are not yet at the point where we can participate fully in this sacrament together.[179] Nevertheless, we can be joined in those things which this sacrament calls us to do and be for one another. The Eucharist/Lord's Supper is fundamental to our union with Christ and so we take hope in the realization that as we grow closer to Christ, we grow closer to one another until that unity among his followers for which he prayed will be realized in fullness. The Eucharist/Lord's Supper is also fundamental to our union with the local community in which we find ourselves. Namely, that we will not stand aloof from the issues and struggles of our neighbors in the communities in which we live, but rather strengthened by this sacrament, we go forth as agents of positive change, bringing the gospel message of hope and wholeness especially to the most vulnerable in our society. Thus, the Eucharist/Lord's Supper is essential to our ethical call to help the world, or at least that small part of it in which we find ourselves, to become what God has created it to be.

Practical Ways to Use This Document in Local Settings

The best ecumenism always happens on the local level. While it is good and necessary for religious leaders and theologians to meet in dialogue to discuss matters essential to the recovery of Christian unity, no amount of discussion or dialogue will have lasting impact if the insights, knowledge, and understanding gained therein do not find their way in to the everyday lives of Reformed and Roman Catholic Christians. Roman Catholic and Reformed ecumenical officers, pastors, and laity are encouraged to find creative ways for continuing this dialogue on the local level. This might include:

In General

- A jointly sponsored five to eight week course which explores the five topical areas outlined in the document
- Individual study between the local Roman Catholic and Reformed pastors
- Joint presentations at clergy days of enrichment

[179] Reformed and Roman Catholic Christians acknowledge that there exists a real but imperfect ecclesial communion between our ecclesial bodies. The pain of this imperfect communion is most poignantly manifested in the rite of communion. Roman Catholics view the reception of Holy Communion as the visible sign of full ecclesial communion. Where this full ecclesial communion does not yet exist, the invitation to receive Holy Communion cannot in conscience be extended to other Christians in attendance at a celebration of Roman Catholic Eucharist. Likewise, Roman Catholics who attend Reformed celebrations of the Lord's Supper must refrain from receiving communion there, even though the Reformed liturgies of the Lord's Supper invite all the baptized, including Roman Catholics, to receive at the table. The pain of this reality is deeply felt by Reformed Catholic and Reformed Christians alike.

On Epiclesis
- Invite partner churches on or around Pentecost to do a study on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of our churches and how we understand this in our sacramental life
- "Dialogue nights" jointly sponsored by a Reformed and Roman Catholic congregation, on the importance of the Holy Spirit in our respective traditions.

On Anamnesis
- Joint study of the notion of sacred remembering in our traditions
- A six week Lenten study of the same culminating on Good Friday
- Invite partner churches to attend each other's Good Friday services, reflecting on how we carry the power of that all through the year as a way of sacred remembering

Presence of Christ
- A joint Easter study series on the abiding presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament in the lives of our churches

Offering/Sacrifice
- Invite each other to celebrations of confirmation or acceptance of new members with an emphasis on offering ourselves in service to Christ and the Church
- As our traditions permit, invite each other to attend celebrations of those who have given their lives in service to Christ and his Church, such as ordinations, installations of new pastors, sending of missionaries, celebrations of significant wedding anniversaries, etc., while lifting up insights from this document

Discipleship
- Create partnerships between local Roman Catholic and Reformed congregations to respond to the issues and concerns of all the people who are present in our communities
- In communities that already do partner for charity and justice, to use insights of this document to study how their sacramental life informs these actions

Areas for Future Dialogue

As this round of the dialogue comes to a close, we are excited by the possibilities that lie before us, even as we acknowledge the challenges ahead. This has been by far the most ambitious round of the dialogue, and some would say the most challenging. Yet through it all we have remained committed to join our prayer to that of Christ, "that they all may be one…that the world might believe…" (John 17:21ff), and so we have indeed drawn closer to one another. Still there remains much work to be done on our journey together. Having spent the last six years discussing the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist/Lord's Supper, we noted how each of our traditions turns to particular sources and authoritative references when they seek to articulate the authentic interpretation of their faith tradition. We must also acknowledge that our deliberations were hampered by several ecclesiological issues that arose which were sometimes the cause of considerable tension. Thus we believe that it would be good for us in the future to explore together

these ecclesiological issues which still stand before us, including how our sacramental theology relates to the theology of ministry and ordination, the relationship between an individual congregation and the universal Church, understanding each other's polity, and the nature of the Church and how authority is exercised within that understanding in service to the Body of Christ. Particular emphasis may be paid to how the charism of *episkopé* is understood and exercised in Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions. In the course of such a discussion we might even be so bold as to take up the invitation of the late John Paul II given in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* (1995) to discuss the how the ministry of the Bishop of Rome might be a help and not a hindrance in the cause of Christian unity.

A great amount of discussion in the current round was also centered on the role of the Holy Spirit in the celebration of the sacrament, especially on the *epiclesis* in the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving. This emphasis caused us to wonder more generally about the Spirit's labor in the shared practice of praying the "Lord's Prayer." Perhaps we might wish to expand this discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church.

Another area upon which there was considerable agreement, but about which there is much more to discuss, is the call to discipleship and mission which flows out of the celebration of the sacraments. A thorough discussion of how each of our traditions understand and approach the concept of "mission" and "evangelization," with special emphasis on its soteriological, Christological, ecclesiological, and anthropological dimensions, might be particularly fruitful.

The possibilities are rich, the challenges are real, but if our experience in this last round has taught us anything, it is that through his Spirit, the Lord Jesus continues to work in powerful and sometimes surprising ways to the glory of the Father. We are confident that God will continue to pour the Holy Spirit upon us as we continue the work of unity. "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

Our Prayer at the End of This Round of Dialogue

Eternal God, Creator of all that is and yet will be,
in the fullness of time you sent your Son to redeem the world,
and daily you send the Holy Spirit to bring new life and peace.
Faithful to the exhortation of Jesus,
we ask you to send your Holy Spirit in abundance
upon the members of the Reformed—Roman Catholic Dialogue
and upon the people in our respective traditions
that through Word and Sacrament
we may continue to grow in deeper communion with your Son
and therefore in deeper communion with each other
until that day when we can share in full communion around your table.
We thank you for the grace of inspiration, patience, and
perseverance which you
have given to the members of the dialogue these past forty-five years.

We ask that you continue to guide us as we prepare for the next round of dialogue
that all we do might begin with your inspiration,
be sustained by you
and by you be joyfully ended.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Addendum
Roman Catholic and Reformed Liturgies for Eucharist/Lord's Supper

A classic principle of liturgical theology is *lex orandi, lex credendi*: the law of prayer is the law of belief. In other words, rituals reflect what a community actually believes, sometimes more so than formal theological statements. This addendum offers a comparison of all of our communities' liturgies of the Eucharist/Lord's Supper. The chart illustrates on a practical level many of the convergences and divergences that are outlined in our Report.

Eucharist Liturgy Comparison

RC	CRCNA	UCC	RCA	**PC(USA)**
Began in 1964, ended revision in 1969. Third edition, Latin text, 2002; English text, 2010.	Form finalized in 1981 and found in current hymnal, 1987). http://www.crcna.org/pages/1981_sacrament.cfm	Final product published 1986; draft booklets in 1982 after receiving 1977 directive. *The New Century Hymnal.* Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1995.	Received order in 1991, adopted by synod in 1994, by classes in 1995.	Began revision in 1980, completed in 1993. *Book of Common Worship.* The Theology and Worship Ministry Unit. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993.

Outline of Service of Word and Sacrament:

Gathering Entrance Chant or hymn Sign of the Cross Greeting Penitential Act *Kyrie* *Gloria* Collect	**Gathering** Opening Hymn Call to Confession Confession Declaration of Pardon Response Dedication Hymn	(Word and Sacrament II) **Gathering** Concerns of the Church Prelude Hymn of Adoration Greeting Invocation Act of Praise	**Gathering** *Votum* Sentences Salutation Hymn Confession Pardon Law Psalter and *Gloria Patri*	**Gathering** Call to Worship Prayer of the Day Hymn of Praise Confession and Pardon The Peace Canticle, Psalm, Hymn

Word First Reading Responsorial Psalm Second Reading Gospel w acclamation Homily Profession of Faith Prayers of the Faithful	**Word (liturgy begins "Communion" section here)** Prayer Scripture Readings Sermon Prayer Hymn Creed Intercessory Prayer Offertory	**(Word** Reading of Scripture Sermon *Baptism* Affirmation of Faith Hymn, Anthem, or Other Music	**Word** Prayer for Illumination Lessons Sermon Prayer for Blessing Confession of Faith	**Word** Prayer for Illumination First Reading Psalm Second Reading Anthem, Hymn, Psalm Gospel Reading Sermon
Eucharist Preparation Gifts/Altar Prayer over the Gifts Eucharistic Prayer Lord's Prayer Sign of Peace Breaking of the Bread Communion Communion Song Period of Silence/Song Prayer after Communion	**Eucharist** Minister's Words Thanksgiving Memorial Prayer of Consecration Preparation of Elements Invitation Dedication Communion Thanksgiving (Ps. 103) Hymn	**Eucharist** Prayers of the People Confession of Sin Silence Assurance of Pardon Passing the Peace Offertory Lord's Prayer Invitation Communion Prayer Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine Resurrection Acclamation Sharing of the Elements Prayer of Thanksgiving	**Eucharist** Peace Offering Doxology Meaning of Sacrament Invitation Communion Prayer Communion Thanksgiving Intercession	**Eucharist** Hymn, Canticle, Psalm *Baptism* Invitation Prayers of the People Offering Invitation to the Lord's Table Great Thanksgiving Lord's Prayer Breaking of the Bread Communion of the People
Sending Greeting Blessing Dismissal (Hymn)	**Sending** Dismissal (Hymn)	**Sending** Benediction Hymn of Parting Postlude	**Sending** Hymn Benediction	**Sending** Hymn Charge and Blessing

Summary of Entire Rites:
Headings below use each denomination's published language, when available.)

RC	CRNCA	UCC	RCA	PC(USA)
Pres. of Gifts/Prep. of Altar *Eucharistic Prayer* *Lord's Prayer* *Breaking of Bread* *Communion* *Prayer* *Greeting / Blessing / Dismissal*	*Invitation* *The Thanksgiving* *Lord's Prayer* *Preparation of Elements* *Invitation/Dedication* *The Communion* *The Thanksgiving*	*Offering* *Lord's Prayer* *Invitation* *Communion Prayer* *Breaking Bread/Pouring Wine* *Sharing the Elements* *Prayer of Thanksgiving*	*Offering* *Doxology* *Meaning of Sacrament* *Invitation* *Communion Prayer* *Lord's Prayer* *Communion* *Thanksgiving*	*Offering* *Invitation to Lord's Table* *Great Thanksgiving* *Lord's Prayer* *Breaking of the Bread* *Communion of the People*

Offertory

		Offering L: We shall bring to Christ's table with our offering the bread and wine for the supper. Christ invites to this table all who profess the Christian faith, who endeavor to be at peace with their neighbors, and who seek the mercy of God. (Music) **Lord's Prayer** L: Let us pray as Christ our Savior has taught us.	Offering (As the offerings are gathered there may be an anthem or other musical offering. The elements for the Lordís Supper may be brought forward with the offering.) Doxology (This hymn, or another ascription of praise, may be used as the offerings are brought forward.)	**Offering** Let us return to God the offerings of our life and the gifts of the earth. The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps 24:1) **(Music)** *The offering is collected.* **Ascription of Praise** L: Yours, O Lord, are grandeur and power, majesty, splendor, and glory. P: All in heavens and on the earth is yours, all of your own we give you.

Invitation:

Presentation of the Gifts / Preparation of the Altar: *Priest*: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the bread we offer you: fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life. ***All*: Blessed be God for ever.** *Priest*: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, for through your goodness we have received the wine we offer you: fruit of the vine and work of human hands, it will become our spiritual drink. ***All*: Blessed be God for ever.** [stand]	Minister: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the gospels tell us that on the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, he appeared to some of his disciples and was made known to them in the breaking of bread. Come, then, to the joyful feast of our Lord. [If the communion elements are not already on the table, they may be brought forward at this point.]	**"Invitation"** L: Jesus said: I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst. P: In company with all who hunger for spiritual food, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the sharing of this life-giving bread.	"Meaning of the Sacrament" Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy Supper which we are about to celebrate is a feast of remembrance, of communion, and of hope. We come in remembrance that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent of the Father into the world to assume our flesh and blood and to fulfill for us all obedience to the divine law, even to the bitter and shameful death of the cross. By his death, resurrection, and ascension he established a new and eternal covenant of grace and reconciliation that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken by him. We come to have communion with this same Christ who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the world. In the breaking of the bread he makes himself known to us as the true heavenly Bread that strengthens us unto life eternal. In the	**Invitation** Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God! They will come from east and west, and from north and south to sit at table in the kingdom of God. According to Luke, when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples, he took the bread, and blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. This is the Lord's table. Our Savior invites those who trust him to share the feast which he has prepared.

Priest: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father. *All*: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.** **Prayer over the Gifts** [Then the Priest, with hands extended, says the Prayer over the Offerings, at the end of which the people acclaim:] *All*: **Amen.**			cup of blessing he comes to us as the Vine in whom we must abide if we are to bear fruit. We come in hope, believing that this bread and this cup are a pledge and foretaste of the feast of love of which we shall partake when his kingdom has fully come, when with unveiled face we shall behold him, made like unto him in his glory. Since by his death, resurrection, and ascension Christ has obtained for us the life-giving Spirit who unites us all in one body, so are we to receive this Supper in true love, mindful of the communion of saints. **Invitation** (The minister, in the name of Christ, shall extend an invitation to all present concerning participation in the Sacrament. All baptized Christians present who are admitted to the Lordís Supper are to be invited to participate.)	

Great Thanksgiving

All text below is as printed in the liturgy. Preface Dialogue Preface Sanctus Memorial Acclamation Doxology and Great Amen **Eucharistic Prayer:** ***Preface Dialogue:*** *Priest*: The Lord be with you. ***All*: And with your spirit.** *Priest*: Lift up your hearts. ***All*: We lift them up to the Lord.** *Priest*: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. ***All*: It is right and just.** **Preface** [generally variable; here is the invariable one for Eucharistic Prayer IV:] It is truly right to give you thanks, truly just to give you glory, Father most holy, for you are the one God living and true, existing before all ages and	Words as section-headers below describe the liturgy, but are not printed in the liturgy unless in quotations. Opening Dialogue Preface Sanctus "The Institution" "The Memorial" "Prayer of Consecration" **"The Thanksgiving"** **Opening Dialogue** M: Lift up your hearts. P: We lift them up to the Lord. M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. P: It is right for us to give thanks. It is our joy and our peace, at all times and in all places to give thanks to you, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord.	Words as section-headers below describe the liturgy, but are not printed in the liturgy unless in quotations. Opening Dialogue Preface Sanctus Words of Institution Epiclesis **"Communion Prayer"** **Opening Dialogue** Pa: God be with you. P: And also with you. Pa: Lift up your hearts. P: We lift them to God. Pa: Let us give thanks to God Most High. P: It is right to give God thanks and praise. **Preface** Pa: Eternal God, who has created the heavens and the earth, giving breath to every living thing, we thank you for all the gifts of creation and for the gift of life itself. We thank	Words as section-headers below describe the liturgy, but are not printed in the liturgy unless in quotations. Opening Dialogue Preface Sanctus Post-Sanctus Anamnesis – Oblation Memorial Acclamation Epiclesis "Communion Prayer" Opening Dialogue The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** Lift up your hearts! **We lift them up to the Lord.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.** Preface Holy and right it is, and our joyful duty to give thanks to you at all times	Words as section-headers below describe the liturgy, but are not printed. Opening Dialogue Preface Sanctus Post-Sanctus Words of Institution Anamnesis – Oblation Memorial Acclamation Epiclesis (Intercessions) Doxology **Opening Dialogue** L: The Lord be with you. P: And also with you. L: Life up your hearts. P: We lift them to the Lord. L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. P: It is right to give our thanks and praise. **Preface** It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks and praise, O Lord our God, creator and ruler of the universe. In your wisdom, you made all

abiding for all eternity, dwelling in unapproachable light; yet you, who alone are good, the source of life, have made all that is, so that you might fill your creatures with blessings and bring joy to many of them by the glory of your light.
And so, in your presence are countless hosts of Angels, who serve you day and night and, gazing upon the glory of your face, glorify you without ceasing.
With them we, too, confess your name in exultation, giving voice to every creature under heaven as we acclaim:

Holy, Holy (Sanctus):
***All*: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts.**
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Preface
M: We bless you for your continual love and care for every creature.

We praise you for forming us in your image and calling us to be your people.

We thank you that you did not abandon us in our rebellion against your love, but sent prophets and teachers to lead us into the way of salvation.

Above all we thank you for sending Jesus, your Son, to deliver us from the way of sin and death by the obedience of his life, by his suffering upon the cross, and by his resurrection from the dead. We praise you that he now reigns with you in glory and ever lives to pray for us.

We thank you for the Holy Spirit, who leads us into truth, defends us in adversity, and out of every people unites us into one holy church. Therefore with the whole company of saints in heaven and on you for making us in your own image, for forgiving us when we act as though you have no claim on us, and for keeping us in your steadfast care.

We rejoice in Jesus Christ, the only one eternally begotten by you, who was born of your servant Mary and shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it. We remember Christ's death, we celebrate Christ's resurrection, and, in the beloved community of your church, we await Christ's return at the end of history. We take courage from abiding presence of your Holy Spirit in our midst. We offer you our praise for women and men of faith in every age who stand as witnesses to your love and justice. With all the prophets, martyrs, and saints, and all the company of heaven, we glorify you:

and in all places, O Lord our Creator,
almighty and everlasting God! You created heaven with all its hosts and the earth with all its plenty.
You have given us life and being, and preserve us by your providence. But you have shown us the fullness of your love in sending into the world your Son, Jesus Christ,
the eternal Word, made flesh for us and for our salvation.
For the precious gift of this mighty Savior who has reconciled us to you we praise and bless you, O God.
With your whole Church on earth and with all the company of heaven we worship and adore your glorious name.

Sanctus
All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!

things and sustain them by your power. You formed us in your image, setting us in this world to love and to serve you, and to live in peace with your whole creation. When we rebelled against you refusing to trust and obey you, you did not reject us as your own. You sent prophets to call us back to your way. Then in the fullness of time, out of your great love for the world, you sent your only Son to be one of us, to redeem us and heal our brokenness.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with choirs of angels, with prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:

***Sanctus*:**
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest.
[kneel]
[There are ten choices in the United States for the Eucharistic Prayer. Here is Eucharistic Prayer II:]
You are indeed Holy,
O Lord, the fount of all holiness.
[*Epiclesis*]
Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, be sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

[Institution Narrative]
At the time he was betrayed and entered willingly into his Passion, he took bread and, giving thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you. In a similar way, when supper was ended, he took the chalice and, once more giving thanks, he gave it to his disciples, saying: Take this, earth we worship and glorify you, God most holy, and we sing with joy.

***Sanctus*:**
All sing: Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty! God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

"The Institution"
M: We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered, gave us this memorial of this sacrifice, until he comes again.

"The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup

Sanctus:
All: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

Words of Institution
Pa: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

(Silence)

***Anamnesis* – Oblation**
Most righteous God,
we remember in this Supper
the perfect sacrifice offered once on the cross by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sin of the whole world.

In the joy of his resurrection and in expectation of his coming again, we offer ourselves to you as holy and living sacrifices.

Memorial Acclamation
Together we proclaim the mystery of the faith:

All: Christ has died!
Christ is risen!
Christ will come again!

Epiclesis
Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray, that the bread which we break and the cup which we bless

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Post-*Sanctus*
(Minister continues)
You are holy, O God of majesty, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. In Jesus, born of Mary, your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He lived as one of us, knowing joy and sorrow. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, opened blind eyes, broke bread with outcasts and sinners, and proclaimed the good news of your kingdom to the poor and needy. Dying on the cross, he gave himself for the life of the world. Rising from the grave, he won for us victory over death. Seated at your right hand, he leads us to eternal life. We praise you that Christ now reigns with you in glory, and will come again to make all things new.

all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.
Priest: The mystery of faith.
All: **We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.**
or **When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again.**
or **Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**
[*Anamnesis* and Offering]
Therefore, as we celebrate the memorial of his Death and Resurrection, we offer you, Lord, the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation, giving thanks that you have held us worthy to be in your presence and minister to you.
[*Epiclesis* over the people]

is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Cor. 11:23\-26)

"The Memorial"
All: We shall do as our Lord commands. We proclaim that our Lord Jesus was sent by the Father into the world, that he took upon himself our flesh and blood, and bore the wrath of God against our sin. We confess that he was condemned
to die that we might be pardoned, and suffered death that we might live. We proclaim that he is risen to make us right with God, and that he shall come again in the glory of his new creation. This we do now, and until he comes again.

P: Amen. Come, Christ Jesus!

Epiclesis
Pa: Gracious God, we ask you to bless this bread and cup and all of us with the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Through this meal, make us the body of Christ, the church, your servant people, that we may be salt, and light, and leaven for the furtherance of your will in all the world.

P: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit!

may be to us the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Grant that, being joined together in him, we may attain to the unity of the faith and grow up in all things into Christ our Lord.

And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf, and these grapes from many hills into one cup, grant, O Lord, that your whole Church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Words of Institution (may accompany breaking of bread; may be said later)
We give you thanks that the Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup, saying:
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you and for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.

***Anamnesis* – Oblation**
(Minister continues)
Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine and joyfully celebrate his dying and rising, as we await the day of his com-

Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.
[Intercessions]
Remember, Lord, your Church, spread throughout the world, and bring her to the fullness of charity, together with N. our Pope and N. our Bishop and all the clergy. Remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection, and all who have died in your mercy: welcome them into the light of your face. Have mercy on us all, we pray, that with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with the blessed Apostles, and all the Saints who have pleased you throughout the ages, we may merit to be co-heirs to eternal life, and may praise and glorify you through your Son, Jesus Christ.
Doxology and Great Amen:

"Prayer of Consecration"
M: Heavenly Father, show forth among us the presence of your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit, to sanctify us and your whole church through this sacrament. Grant that all who share the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ may be one in him and may remain faithful in love and hope. And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf and these grapes from many hills into one cup, grant, O Lord, that your whole church may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray:

ing. With thanksgiving, we offer our very selves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service.

Memorial Acclamation
Great is the mystery of faith:
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Epiclesis
Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, united in ministry in every place. As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

(Intercessions may be included here)

Priest: Through him, and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever and ever. ***All*: Amen!†** [stand]				In union with your church in heaven and on earth, we pray, O God, that you will fulfill your eternal purpose in us and in all the world. Keep us faithful to your service until Christ comes in final victory, and we shall feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm. **Doxology** Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

COMMUNION RITE **Lord's Prayer:** *Priest*: At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say: ***All*: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;** **thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** **Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.** *Priest*: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.	All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be . . .	(Prayed earlier, following the taking of the offering.)	(Prayed later, following intercessions.)	Let us pray for God's rule on earth as Jesus taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

All: **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.** **Sign of Peace:** *Priest*: Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles, Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever. *All*: **Amen.** *Priest*: The Peace of the Lord be with you always. *All*: **And with your spirit.** Deacon or Priest: Let us offer each other the sign of peace. [And all offer one another a sign, in keep with local customs, that expresses peace, communion, and charity. The Priest gives the sign of peace to a Deacon or minister.]				

Breaking of the Bread

Breaking of the Bread: ***All*: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.** [kneel] [The invocation may even be repeated several times if the fraction is prolonged. Only the final time, however, is **grant us peace** said.]	**"Preparation of the Elements"** [as the minister breaks the bread and pours the cup] M: The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. P: We who are many are one body, for we all share the same loaf. M: The cup for which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ. P: The cup which we drink is our participation in the blood of Christ. **"The Invitation"** M: Congregation in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him alone for their salvation. All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him, are now invited to come	**"Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine"** (while taking the elements) Pa: Through the broken bread we participate in the body of Christ. Pa: Through the cup of blessing we participate in the new life Christ gives. **"Resurrection Acclamation"** Pa: [Alleluia!] Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. P: I died, and behold I am alive for evermore. [Alleluia!]	"Communion" (The minister shall declare the Words of Institution. In full view of the people the minister shall take the bread and say:) The Lord Jesus, the same night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it (The minister shall break the bread.) and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me." (Lifting the cup, the minister shall say:)	(Words of Institution here, if not earlier) Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body; for it is one loaf of which we all partake. (Minister breaks loaf) When we break the bread, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? (Minister fills cup) When we give thanks over the cup, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?

	with gladness to the table of the Lord. **"The Dedication"** All: Holy Father, in thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in the joy of his resurrection, in the hope of his coming again, we present ourselves a living sacrifice and come to the table of our Lord. [as the minister indicates the elements] M: The gifts of God for the people of God.			After the same manner also, he took the cup when they had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Communion of the People

Communion: *Priest*: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb. *Communion Minister*: The Body of Christ. ***Communicant*: Amen.** *Communion Minister*: The Blood of Christ. ***Communicant*: Amen.** **Communion Song:** [While the Priest is receiving the Body of Christ, the Communion Chant (or song) begins.] [sit] **Period of Silence *or* Song of Praise:** [If appropriate, a sacred silence may be observed for a while, or a psalm or other canticle of praise or a hymn may be sung.] [stand] **Prayer after Communion:** *Priest*: Let us pray. [*All pray in silence with the*	**"The Communion"** [when the people are ready to eat the bread] M: Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. [when the people are ready to drink the cup] M: Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins. **"The Thanksgiving"** M: Congregation in Christ, since the Lord has fed us at his table, let us praise his holy name with thanksgiving. [Sing together Psalm 103 or say in unison]: All: Praise the Lord, O my soul;	**"Sharing the Elements"** Pa: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready. (while giving the elements) Pa: The body of Christ, the living bread. P: Amen! Pa: The blood of Christ, the saving cup. P: Amen! "**Prayer of Thanksgiving"** L: Let us pray. Eternal God, you have called your people from east and west and north and south to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. We thank you for Christ's presence and for the spiritual food of Christ' body and blood. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep us faithful to your will. Go with us to the streets, to our homes, and to our places of labor and leisure that whether we are gathered or scattered, we	(In partaking of the bread it shall be said:) The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. (In partaking of the cup it shall be said:) The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ. "Thanksgiving after Communion" Brothers and sisters, since the Lord has now fed us at his Table, let us praise Godís holy name with heartfelt thanksgiving! Bless the Lord, O my soul, **and all that is within me, bless his holy name.** Bless the Lord, O my soul, **and do not forget all his benefitsó**who forgives all your iniquity, **who heals all your diseases,** who redeems your life from the Pit, **who crowns you with**	**Invitation** The gifts of God for the people of God. **Communion** *The body of Christ, given for you.* *The blood of Christ, shed for you.* **Prayer After Communion** L: Bless the Lord, O my soul; P: And all that is within me bless God's holy name! L: Bless the Lord, O my soul, P: And forget not all God's benefits.

Priest for a while, unless silence has just been observed. Then the Priest says the Prayer after Communion, at the end of which the people acclaim:] ***All*: Amen.** CONCLUDING RITE **[Brief announcements]:** [stand] **Greeting:** *Priest*: The Lord be with you. ***All*: And with your spirit.** **Blessing:** **Option A: Simple Form** *Priest*: May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ***All*: Amen.** **Dismissal:** *Deacon or Priest*: Go forth, the Mass is ended. *or* God and announce the Gospel of the Lord. *or* Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. *or* Go in peace. ***All*: Thanks be to God.** **[Recessional and Closing Song]**	all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases; he redeems my life from the pit and crowns me with love and compassion. He satisfies my desires with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle's (Ps. 103:1\-5). *All: [Hymn—optional]	may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we rejoice to pray. Amen.	**steadfast love and mercy.** The Lord is merciful and gracious, **slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.** He does not deal with us according to our sins, **nor repay us according to our iniquities.** For as the heavens are high above the earth, **so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;** as far as the east is from the west, **so far does he remove our transgressions from us.** As a father has compassion for his children, **so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him,** who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, and will also give us all things with him. **Therefore shall my mouth and heart show forth the praise of the Lord, from this time forth forevermore. Amen.** ***From Psalm 103, with additions*** (Service continues with Intercessions closing in the Lord's Prayer.)	