Please note: If you haven’t read the introduction to these materials, entitled, “Everything Old is New Again: Emmaus Explores the ‘New’ Mass” please do so before beginning on this session!

We hope you enjoy this chance to prepare for the new responses. Please contact Kate Barrett in Campus Ministry at: (kbarrett@nd.edu) with any questions or comments.

Opening Prayer

Leader: 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 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:

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. Hosanna in the highest (Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer).

Readings and Reflections

Reading: Eucharistic Prayer III

You are indeed Holy, O Lord, and all you have created rightly gives you praise, for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit, you give life to all things and make them holy, and you never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.
Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously 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, at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed he himself took bread, and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, broke the bread 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, giving you thanks, he said the blessing, and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:
Take this, 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.

The mystery of faith.

**People:** 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.

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 in thanksgiving this holy and living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church and, recognizing the sacrificial Victim by whose death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, 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.

May he make of us an eternal offering to you, so that we may obtain an inheritance with your elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with your blessed Apostles and glorious Martyrs and with all the Saints, on whose constant intercession in your presence we rely for unfailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray, O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant N. our Pope and N. our Bishop, the Order of Bishops, all the clergy, and the entire people you have gained for your own.

Listen graciously to the prayers of this family, whom you have summoned before you: in your compassion, O merciful Father, gather to yourself all your children scattered throughout the world.

To our departed brothers and sisters and to all who were pleasing to you at their passing from this life, give kind admittance to your kingdom.

There we hope to enjoy forever the fullness of your glory through Christ our Lord, through whom you bestow on the world all that is good.
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, forever and ever.

People: Amen.

Reflection

Each Sunday, we arrive at Mass and listen to the Eucharistic Prayer. For many of us, the prayer may feel like a series of disconnected musical acclamations, statements, and petitions. However, if we carefully pay attention to the structure of these prayers, we may begin to notice a pattern. When the earliest Christians began to pray publicly, many of them adopted a Jewish prayer structure called Berakhah, meaning blessing. The purpose of such prayer was not simply to thank God in general, but to remember the blessings that God has bestowed throughout history in the gift of salvation. This style of prayer named God and thanked him for the wonderful deeds he accomplished in the past. Such prayer concluded with asking for God’s continued involvement in human history, so that the marvelous deeds of the past might become present in the “today” of salvation.

The Eucharistic prayer is ultimately an extended form of this earliest blessing prayer, although the structure is a bit more complex. In many ways, this prayer seeks to teach us a virtue which we might call “extreme gratitude.” Recalling what God has done for us in the past shapes us to expect great things of God in the present. So let’s try a quick recall: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (a perfect “community” of love) chose to create the world as a sign of total love. And even in our Fall, when Adam and Eve rejected this gift of love, God continued to woo us back through the covenant with Abraham; through the exodus of Moses and his people out of Egypt; through the law (the time of kings, like Solomon and David), and through the prophets (Isaiah and Elijah, among others). And then in the fullness of time, the Father sent his Son into the world as a sign of this love.

And to really understand how wonderful the gift of Christ is, we have to remember that Jesus was fully God and fully human. God became a human being like us. And through the proper use of this humanity, Jesus showed us the possibility of love, of radical gratitude. Even on the cross, he did not return violence with violence but instead taught us that sin and death are not the ultimate meaning of the universe. Love is. And in his resurrection, he manifested to us who we are to become. Our bodies are made to be transformed just like his. All creation is meant to share in this transformation. Further, even when Christ ascended into heaven, he didn’t snub the human condition, but remained both fully human and divine such that all of our joys and sorrows become his. And the Church is the school of love in which we are taught this way of love.

So think of the Eucharistic prayer as the Church refreshing our memory of God’s way of giving. In this act of remembering, Christ becomes present to us, giving himself sacramentally through the bread and wine transformed. And we, as the body of Christ, bring our whole selves to God to offer the sacrifice of praise that is to become our life. And God will never reject what we bring, because Christ knows intimately our pains and our joys. Through this act of recalling God’s wonder, we become, amazingly, living signs of Christ’s gift for
the world to contemplate and to receive. When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your
Death, O Lord, until you come again.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Think and talk for a while about giving and receiving gifts. What does it mean give someone a gift? Have you ever given a gift that was not well-received? How did you feel?
2. In what ways do you think God’s relationship with human beings is a gift? How does it change your understanding of gift?
3. When you think about Jesus Christ as God’s gift to us, how does that change your understanding of who Christ is in your life?
4. Look again at the last paragraph above. Do you feel that you are a “living sign of Christ’s gift for the world”? If you really believe that you are – or if you would like to become – a living sign of Christ, how would that change you?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

Can your Emmaus community go to Mass together? Try to go as a group, (or if you go alone) and pray attentively throughout with the main ideas of this session:

- God loves us so extravagantly that we can look at his hand throughout all of history bringing us the hope of salvation, even to the extent of offering us the life and death of his son, Jesus Christ.
- In the Eucharistic prayer we can remember and make real again and again this truth of God’s love.
- Through receiving the body and blood of Christ we become signs of Christ to others.

Get together with your group again after Mass, whether you went together or not, and talk about what it was like to pray with this particular understanding of your relationship to God, to Christ and to others.

CLOSING PRAYER

(leader or another member of the group)