OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray.

Nothing is more practical than finding God,
that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.
What you are in love with,
what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you will do with your evenings,
how you will spend your weekends
what you read, who you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything
(attributed to Pedro Arrupe, SJ.)

All: Amen.

READINGS AND REFLECTIONS

Reading 1: 1 John 4:7-16
Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.
In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the
love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

Reading 2: John 15: 12-17
This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you. This I command you: love one another.

Reading 3: Go forth, the Mass is ended.
Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.
Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

Reflection
Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb. In the summer of 2006, David and Mary Joy were married in Evanston, IL. Because Mary Joy is Filipino, the wedding included several additional rites important to the culture, including the Lasso ceremony, a sign of the couple’s unity; and an exchange of coins, a symbol of the couple’s hospitality toward the poor. Immediately before communion, a homeless woman walked up the aisle of the church and placed her hands upon the altar. The priest, initially stunned by the arrival of the unexpected guest, took the woman by the hands and introduced her to the bride and groom. Placing a seat next to his own, he sat with her for the remaining of the nuptial Mass. At the conclusion of the liturgy, the homeless woman joined the procession out of the Church. Little did David and Mary Joy know, their marriage would become a sacrament of the possibilities of divine love, revealed in their own vows, in the Eucharist, and in their offer of hospitality to their unexpected guest. Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

Very few of us will experience many Masses in which the connection between the sacrament of the Eucharist and love for those most in need is manifested so explicitly. Yet, in each celebration of the Mass, Christ gives himself out of the depths of love. As we eat his body and drink his blood, we become united to him. And this sacrament of love transforms us so that we may gradually perform deeds of love in every corner of the world. This transformation is the very purpose of Eucharistic eating and drinking, of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. In other words, we must each know and believe this truth: the Eucharistic life of the Christian is incomplete until deeds of love are performed upon those most in need. We receive the gift of God in the Eucharist so that we might become this gift for the world. Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those who are called to the supper of the Lamb.

Thus, in the midst of considering new words in the Mass, we need to be careful to not turn our experience of Mass into an occasion for too many words or too much instruction. The heart of the Eucharistic liturgy is the reception of Christ’s body and blood. In that moment of silence, God can speak to us an intimate word as if spoken to a spouse. And while our reception of the sacrament lasts but a moment, each time we find
ourselves silent in gratitude before the Blessed Sacrament in any chapel on this campus, we recommit ourselves to this sacrament of love. And the love that we share in the dorm, in the classroom, and in direct service to the poor, increases our capacity to receive the gift of love that is the Eucharist. We receive the Eucharist that we might become the Eucharist.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever been startled by a person or event that at first seemed like an intrusion and later revealed itself as an opportunity for generosity or love? Discuss what happened and how you came to see the situation with new eyes.

2. The reflection above portrays the experience of going to Mass to receive the Eucharist and sharing our love with others as a cycle that continuously loops around from reception to action to reception to action. Whether you have thought of it this way for a long time or are now coming to a new understanding, what are your reactions to this challenging truth?

3. How have these conversations about the changes in the Mass texts helped you think about not only the new words, but also about what we do every time we celebrate the Eucharist together? What are you most looking forward to about participating in the Mass now as you look ahead?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

If you have had fruitful conversations in your Emmaus community about the series “Everything Old is New Again,” consider how valuable it could be for others to hear about your experience and share something similar themselves.

As a group, brainstorm about what you can do – together or individually – to help share what you have talked about with others. Can you each commit to talking with one friend about your conversations, so as to help others see these changes not so much as a hindrance to prayer but as an opportunity to see our Mass with fresh eyes? Alternatively, might your rector be interested in having your group talk to your hall staff or your hall government about what you all might do together as a residence hall? Again, consider your goal as not just “getting used to” new texts, but utilizing this change as a means to get everyone thinking about what going to Mass means to them.

CLOSING PRAYER

(leader or another member of the group)