DRAFT EXAMPLE

**OUR PILGRIM JOURNEY
TO THE HOLY**



**We Witness with Love
Through Worship & Welcoming**

**2010-2011**

**Our Mother of Sorrows
Pastoral Plan

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WITNESS WITH LOVE
THROUGH WORSHIP & WELCOMING?**

*This booklet is your travel guidebook to the many ways in which we as a parish can grow in holiness and love this year together as Pilgrims guided by our Pastoral Plan.*

The inspiration underlying Our Mother of Sorrows Pastoral Plan **"Our Pilgrim Journey to the Holy"** is based on the words spoken at the end of each Mass, *"Go, you are sent forth."* These words take particular meaning in our call, commitment and vocation *"to witness with love"* as lay people in the world. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states,

*"Holy Mass, the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished, concludes with the sending forth commission (mission) of the faithful, so that they may fulfill God's will in their daily lives."*

The focus for the implementation of this year's Pastoral Plan is **"To Worship and Welcome."** Our goal is, "We envision a reverent and welcoming Eucharistic community in our common baptism and call to holiness, aware of its role as a priestly people in relationship with God and with one another, and actively involved in liturgical and sacramental celebrations as Ministers of the Assembly."

The Eucharist is the essence of our Christianity, the fulfillment of our Baptism, a saying yes to Jesus' life, death and resurrection. It is the act that incorporates us into community to build the kingdom of God.

"When Jesus said, *'Do this in memory of me*,' what was the THIS he had in mind?" Is the "this" the action of Jesus alone or is it Christ's action *in us* as a community of believers? St. Augustine said, *"We eat the body of Christ to become the body of Christ."* **What does that mean today?**

Eucharist means gratitude, thanksgiving. Jesus' last meeting with his disciples was a meal of thanksgiving and blessing that commemorated the Passover of the Israelites from slavery. However, Jesus changed the blessing before he broke the bread, saying, *"This is my body.*" In effect he was saying, ***"****This bread is not only a reminder of the Passover bread our ancestors ate, this bread is me."* Likewise, "*this wine was his blood, the blood of the new covenant."* The participants in the new covenant became blood relatives, not only of Jesus but of one another; that means taking responsibility for each other as one does in a family.

Paul is explicit about this aspect of Eucharist in his Letter to the Corinthians (1Cor 11:17-34), the main text in the New Testament that deals with the celebration of Eucharist. In this passage, Paul is calling the Corinthians to task because of the way they act when they come together for the Eucharist. Within that context he teaches what the Church community is to be.

In Paul's day, most "churches," were communities that met in houses—not large public buildings. In Acts 2:46, we read, "They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts." They probably gathered at the largest house in order to accommodate everyone. However, archaeological ruins in Greece show that most dining rooms were not big enough to accommodate large groups. Probably no more than 9-12 people could have reclined around the standard dining room table. The rest of the church would have eaten in a larger adjoining courtyard, holding 30-50 people.

The centerpiece of most Christian worship at that time was the context of the Passover meal--the Lord's Supper. Thus the early church probably carried on the tradition of celebrating the Lord's Supper in the context of a meal. One would assume that gathering in homes, having close table fellowship, would have guaranteed tight relationships. In the case of the Corinthians, this was not the case:

 *"In giving this instruction, I do not praise the fact that your meetings are doing more harm than good. First of all, I hear that when you meet as a church, there are divisions among you, and to a degree I believe it; there have to be factions among you in order that those who are approved among you may become known. When you meet in one place, then, it is not to eat the Lord's supper, for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one goes hungry while another gets drunk. Do you not have houses in which you can eat and drink? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and make those who have nothing feel ashamed? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this matter I do not praise you."* 1 Cor 17-22:

Paul was angry with the community and clearly communicated that anger. The scene Paul describes is fairly self-explanatory. You can picture it. The church gathered for communal worship which involved a celebration to nourish and strengthen the community. But apparently the rich and well-to-do Christians who probably hosted the church meeting invited their closest friends to eat with them in the dining room. They came early and ate, drank, and got drunk. The poorer Christians, who worked and came late, were left to eat in the atrium, the courtyard, had nothing to eat and were humiliated.

Why is Paul so angry at the Corinthians? In simple terms, the Corinthian church just didn't “get it.” What didn't they get? They did not understand that **coming together for Eucharist united them as one body, as one entity.** Paul understood Eucharist as the knitting together of individuals into a new reality--that reality being Jesus. Instead, the Corinthian church understood Jesus as a private personal presence who came at no cost. They did not have to change. They could have their divisions, they could leave each other out, they could humiliate each other. Paul describes how the rich had become exclusive and hurried to finish so that they did not have to share. They had developed cliques, there was favoritism. The meal exaggerated these differences and Paul rebukes them for this.

Paul understood that within the Church there were to be no barriers. There was to be no social or class distinctions. Paul created a church of rich and poor; free and slave; Jew and Gentile – people who ordinarily did not associate with each other. But in the Church, they were to relate as brothers and sisters. In effect, Paul created a new understanding of what it means to be human: to be rooted in a faith community that witnesses with love to one another and to the surrounding community to change it. In the Church, all are united in Christ. The Lord's supper is where this happens.

Paul understood that the Church was not the Church if the art of sharing was forgotten. If people kept in their own circle, then they were not followers of Christ. Paul says, "When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat." In other words, yes, you eat. You break bread. You drink the cup. But because your interpersonal relationships are in shambles, because you are not really sharing life together, because your behavior proves you despise what the Church is really all about, you are not eating the Lord's Supper. You are better off eating at home.

So what does this mean for us? Paul sees the relationship between Jesus and the community who shares in the Eucharist as one. The person of Jesus is present in the community. Jesus lives, moves, and has his being only if the community is drawn into Christ's mystery. For Paul, the Eucharistic assembly is a community of individuals fused with a new reality. The celebration is about individuals becoming members of each other and thereby becoming Christ. **THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO WORSHIP & WELCOME**. If this does not happen, it is only a ritual, not a celebration of who we are in Christ.

These reflections are from Sr. Pearl Cesar’s talk on the Eucharist, which was based on the following sources:

Ernesto Cortes, Jr. Unpublished talks and writings.

John Haughey, SJ., "Eucharist at Corinth: You are the Christ," in Thomas E. Clarke, SJ, ed., Above Every Name, Paulist Press, 1980.

John Hogan, "Eucharist and Globilzation."

Rosendo Urrbazo, "Pastoral Ministry in a Multicultural Society," ORIGINS, Vol. 22, Issue 23, January 11, 1992.