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*The Eucharist, gift of God
for the life of the world.*

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A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC MYSTERY*

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The Eucharist constitutes, undoubtedly, one of the biggest divine mysteries, sometime to the humanity transmitted, inaugurating Christ's new Easter, in that He even becomes lamb of the celebration, offered in redemption of the sins. During the Pascal supper and in eve of his death, Jesus institutes this admirable form of remain between us, through the which the bread and the consecrated wine, are transformed, by the communion act, in the spiritual Christ presence: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said: Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt.26, 26-29). Christ's words do not leave doubts about the importance of this mystery, for the eternal salvation: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (Jo.6, 53-54).

According to the Catholic Church interpretation, the miracle of the Christ presence happens during the Eucharistic celebration, in the moment of the Bread and Wine consecration, by the priest's action, without any participation of the assembly, which is limited taking communion the Jesus body. However, this Eucharist's interpretation has been divided the Christians, placing from one side those who believe in the real Christ presence (Catholics

and Orthodox) and from another side those who deny this presence (Protestants), considering the Eucharist barely symbol or memorial of Christ death. Now, I think to be possible a **third way of this mystery interpretation**, without deny the real Christ presence, **conceiving the Eucharist as a whole one, including two moments, beginning with the celebrant priest consecration (institutional component), but alone being accomplished through the communion act of the assembly members (individual component)**. Several reports of the last Supper highlight this comprehensive vision of the Eucharistic mystery, supported on the sequential form of the consecration and communion acts, when Christ distributed, previously, the bread and the wine for the disciples, following the consecration and the immediate communion: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said: Take and eat; this is my body..." (Mt.26, 26). Therefore, the díade "consecration-communion" would be valued if, in the Eucharistic celebration, (just like in the last Supper) the consecration act was followed, at once, by the communion act.

But, the understanding of the Eucharistic mystery is not exhausted in this díade (consecration-communion), being also necessary that the exterior communion act be presented in the interior of the individual conscience, where the mystery must be accomplished. **This hypothesis of centring the Eucharistic mystery in the interior of the human conscience**, is based on the report of **S. Lucas**, according to which, Jesus Christ seems to establish a condition for that the Eucharistic miracle happens, while expressing this final demand: "**Do this in memory of me**" (Lc.22, 19). The sense of this imperative assertion, becomes more perceptible, if it will replace for an equivalent proposition, of conditional type - "**when you will do this, you must remember of Me**", or by another one of the same kind, still more explicit: "**This only will be carried out (done) if you will remember of Me**". Then, we can be conclude, that the "**memory**" or "**remembrance**" of Christ, in the communion act, is a necessary condition for his presence becomes possible! But, if "remembrance" signifies "become conscious the presence of someone", then the Christ demand for to be remembered, in the communion act, only can be understood how a "**conscious and personal memory**". This hypothesis looks also to be confirmed by the last Supper **S. Paul's** version (1Cor.11, 23-29), which not only reaffirms, by twice, the S. Lucas expression (do this in memory of me), as attributes him the meaning of "**conscious remembrance**". Indeed, S. Paul says, who takes communion "**without distinguish**" the body of the Lord, "eats and drinks its own condemnation" (1Cor.11, 29), is acting

"**unworthily**" and "will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord". Now, if "**distinguish**" signifies "**discern intellectually**" or "**take conscience of something**", then is evident the analogy here established, between the miracle of the divine presence and the necessity of a personal and conscious relation in the communion act.

Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to you them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; of this in memory of me. (Lc.22, 19)

Catholic Bible on line, Vatican (English version)

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also 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." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. (1Cor.11, 24-29). - Catholic Bible on line, Vatican (English version)

On the other side, if the sin does integral part of the human existence, the Eucharist while celebration of divine Life, also should be associated to the divine Pardon, and be the great space of reconciliation, between God and the men, as says Fr. Bento Domingues: "If the door is the Baptism, the most important one of the sacraments is the Eucharist, that is also the big sacrament of the sins confession, of the mercy and of the God's pardon...(Public newspaper, 13-01-2008). For that, it must be re-structured, valuing the penitential moment, already existing, followed of the Word's moment, entering then in the central part of the consecration-communion, and concluding with prayer and praise moments to God, that, in the current structure, are scattered along the whole celebration. To situate the communion act in final of the celebration (as now happens), it doesn't dignify the real Christ presence in the Eucharist, considered by Thomas Kêmpis, much more important than the God presence in the ancient Chest of the Alliance and to which the Israel people was giving a greater praise to what is given in the actual communion act.

Moses, your great serf and your special friend, did a chest from incorruptible wood and covered it with pure gold, for in her put the boards of the Law; and I, while corrupt creature, I will dare receiving in my soul the own legislator and most supreme author of the life?... David, the pious king, danced faced with the Chest,... it composed psalms; it ordered that one was singing with joy and he even, very often, sang in the sound of the harp... If the Chest, of the Old Testament, were respected

with so much devotion; if itself had so much care of praising God before her, what respect and which devotion should not have, I and all the believers, when we are in the presence of the august sacrament or we receive the Jesus Christ body! - (T. Kêmpis – The Imitation of Christ)

This hypothesis of Eucharist view, here developed, doesn't intend to withdraw legitimacy to the official Church interpretation, but barely affirm to be possible a new reading and practice of the Eucharistic mystery, without deny the real presence of Christ. In fact, this new vision confers a greater dignity to the believers, becoming them co-celebrators, valuing the interior conscience, as a true Spirit residence, but also raises new problems, questioning the Christ presence continuity in the consecrated species, for there the communion act.

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