



J. ALLAN MITCHELL LECTURE

**Deacons as Guardians and Promoters of the Animating Mystery of Christ:  
“He Must Carry The Gospel of Blood to the Corners of the World.”<sup>i</sup>**

By Dcn James Keating, Ph.D

Hosted June 5, 2022



Within the Rite of Ordination, the deacon is given the book of the Gospels from the Bishop.<sup>ii</sup> The reception of the Book of the Gospels symbolizes the deacon's mission. Each Sunday after his ordination, the deacon proclaims this Gospel as its ordinary minister and occasional preacher. Then, upon conclusion of the Eucharistic Liturgy, the deacon is positioned follow the laity out of the Church building and live among them as an envoy of the servant mysteries of Christ. This life among the laity is signaled in the 'dismissal rite' of the Mass when the deacon urges the laity and himself to, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." This "diaconal going forth" to live holy orders within a lay lifestyle carries a mystery of grace.<sup>iii</sup> This grace elicits an evangelical response from the laity. It is the hope of the Church that by placing clerics among the laity in their daily lives, this grace will support their efforts to appropriate the power of the Eucharist in their mission to transform culture.<sup>iv</sup> Both the grace of Holy Orders in the deacon and the grace of the Eucharist and Baptism in the lay person cooperate to ignite evangelization within the nooks and crannies of secular culture. The deacon embodies a particular calling to "abide" in the secular world. He is a cleric living a lay lifestyle for one reason alone: to animate and support the evangelical and martyrological mission of the laity.

### ***Sacred Blood as life-giving***

While the diaconal mission of proclaiming the Gospel at the Liturgy assists the laity to internalize the Good news, the more subtle liturgical duty of the deacon to prepare, guard, and distribute the Precious Blood of Christ serves the laity in their mission to give witness (martyrdom) to Christ in culture.<sup>v</sup> "At Mass the Deacon has his own part in proclaiming the Gospel, from time to time in preaching God's Word... in preparing the altar and in serving the celebration of the Sacrifice, in

distributing the Eucharist to the faithful, especially under the species of wine.”<sup>vi</sup> It is Christ’s own blood that animates the laity — the Church — keeping Her vibrant, vigorous and vital within daily life. The liturgical minister who mediates the source of this animation is the deacon.<sup>vii</sup>

In Mark’s [Gospel] the sons of Zebedee are asked, in response to their mother’s request that they should sit beside Him in His kingdom: ‘can you drink the cup that I must drink, or be baptized with the baptism with which I must be baptized?’ They reply that they can and [Christ replies] ‘The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptized, you shall be baptized.’ (Mk 10:38-9). It is in receiving the Blood of Christ that believers are given the strength to remain faithful to their call to publicly witness to the Gospel. As Cyprian of Carthage noted, ‘How can we instill in them the strength to drink the cup of martyrdom if we do not first permit them to drink of the cup of the Lord in the Church?’<sup>viii</sup>

At the ancestral source of the diaconate, the Levitical priesthood in the Old Testament, we meet the inchoate origins of a Deacon’s ministry around the altar. “You established a threefold ministry of worship and service for the glory of your name. As ministers of your tabernacle, you chose the sons of Levi and gave them your blessing as their everlasting inheritance.”<sup>ix</sup>

It was the Levites who assisted the priests in preparing the sacrifice of bulls, goats, and sheep. In the Old Testament, the sprinkling of blood was a medium for consecration, an act of setting people aside for service to God. The victim was slain in order that its life, in the form of blood, may be released. Furthermore, its flesh was burnt in order that it might be transformed as an offering, a life presented in reverence to God. For the Hebrews, blood was sacred as *it carried life from God to the living thing and thus, blood sustained life*. At liturgical rituals in the

Old Testament, the priests understood life to be contained in the blood and so it was not to be ingested. Rather, in reverence to God, life's Author, it can only be poured upon the earth, upon the people and upon the altar. (DT 12:23; Lv 17:11). To the Hebrews blood was a sign that life "belongs" to God and blood must not be profaned, not consumed.

While the blood could be ingested, it remained a powerful symbol in Hebrew life and ritual. Blood "marks" a man *as God's own*, hence the Passover (Ex 12) where no destruction came to the Hebrews if their dwellings were marked with blood on the door post. It was by means of blood that one's life was not only spared but ordered toward a mission. It was through blood, the spiritual or vital principle that God comes into contact with persons. The Hebrews understood blood to give life and even carry the "spirit" or the "breath" of the living thing.

In offering animal sacrifice to God, the priests and Levites of the Old Testament maintained an ordered worship for the people. In this worship, the people who desired order were willing to sacrifice animals to God in a mode of intercession, gratitude, and fear. It was the Levites who prepared the altar during the preparation of the sacrifice. During the preparation of the sacrifice, it was the Levites who prepared the altar.<sup>x</sup> The Levites also assisted with the purification of the temple and cleansed the "utensils" also needed for the sacrifice (2 Chron 29:15ff).<sup>xi</sup>

"The priests were too few and could not flay all the burnt offerings, so until other priests had sanctified themselves...the Levites helped the priests until the work was finished..." ( 2 chron 29: 33).

## ***Blood of Christ***

The work of the priests and Levites, as those who offer life to God, came to its ultimate completion in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. Now, Christ is the one sacrifice that unites God and humanity. His is a perfect offering of love and obedience, reconciling humanity to God the Father in ways bulls and sheep could never attain. Here on the altar of Calvary, the inner life of God, which the Hebrews sought to understand and did so only as in a “mirror darkly” (I cor. 13:12; Heb 1:1-3), is now clearly revealed in its fullness. The inner life of God is self-donating love, a dynamism of giving and receiving love within God Himself, now revealed in Christ’s own life poured out upon the altar for “the many” (Mt 20:28). It is this Trinitarian Love now revealed in Christ upon Calvary which reconciles God and humanity. It is the vocation of those who participate in “Christ’s death until He comes” (1 cor. 11:26), the baptized, to become servants of divine reconciliation by their public witness.

Deacons are sent to the remote corners of society to catch the baptized up into this flowing divine life; a life sourced in Christ’s own blood and sacramentally celebrated as divine life itself is shared. “From the pierced heart of Jesus rivers of graces were to be poured out upon the world to sanctify the Church.”<sup>xii</sup> It is the deacon who assists in distributing these graces during the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Communion Rite and embedded in the *liturgy of charity*, that is, his ministry among the laity. The deacon lives among those who participate in the life blood of God’s own self-gift, helping to assure that their love does not grow cold (Mt 24:12) and that their devotion<sup>xiii</sup> to the Eucharistic Mystery yields effective public witness.

In light of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, consuming blood during worship, albeit under the form of wine, is no longer a contradiction to the ways of the Hebrew Priests and Levites.<sup>xiv</sup> Consuming “blood” is no longer an affront to God

in that He willed that communion with the Divine be effected as such “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you” (Jn 6:53).

Sacramental consummation becomes a way to participate, liturgically, in “life and Life to the full” (Jn 10:10). Since the sacrifice of Christ is intended to be divine love shared, there is no blasphemy or insult in sharing His Blood, as it is the reality which effects and signifies this communion with God. Hence, consuming God’s Life as Precious Blood is not a communion trespassed, but one that is fulfilled. The blood of the Eucharistic cup *is identical to the charity of God.*<sup>xv</sup>

Bl. Dom Marmion wrote that it is in drinking from the chalice of His Divine blood, from which we share in God’s joy, that we “*excite charity*” in our lives.<sup>xvi</sup> In the liturgy, the deacon is the custodian of the blood and the chalice. It is fitting that he serve the chalice so as to excite charity in the Church’s members and reaffirm his own calling to bear the love of Christ to those in need.

The Hebrews believed that it was by way of blood that God comes in direct contact with bodies.<sup>xvii</sup> The deacon, the consecrated one who cares for the precious blood, is called to “come in contact” with the body of Christ, the Church, in its spiritual and human needs. This is known as ministry. The Body of Christ, the Church, draws life from the “vine” (Jn.15:4), the very mystery of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. Such spiritual life is sustained by abiding in faith, hope, and love. This faith, hope, and love needs to be nourished at the source of holiness, even while one engages in the work, commitments, joys, and failures of ordinary life. If the Church fails to receive such nourishment, then the Blood of Christ, the Eucharist, does not flow through the culture. Only when the laity bear witness to the body and blood of Christ **that consumes them** within Eucharistic participation, can we say that the world has hope of being evangelized. Benedict XVI, echoing St

Augustine, points to this paradox in the sacramental world wherein the means of grace received absorbs the recipient instead of the recipient absorbing what has been received.

“By receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ we become sharers in the divine life in an ever more adult and conscious way.... Stressing the mysterious nature of this food, St Augustine imagines the Lord saying to him: ‘I am the food of grown men; grow, and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh, into yourself, *but you shall be changed into me.*’ It is not the Eucharistic food that is changed into us, but rather it is we who are mysteriously transformed by it. Christ nourishes us by uniting us to himself; “he draws us into himself.”<sup>xviii</sup>

Vitalizing that witness “of grown men” is the deacon, a sacred minister embedded in the culture as the custodian of the chalice. Here, with and among the laity, he spiritually and morally embodies the mystery of the service of Christ sacramentalized. This embodiment within ministry expresses itself in listening for and to the pain of the Body of Christ so as to discern its needs. The deacon, guardian of the Blood of Christ, pours his self-donative service into the wounds of the “body,” vivifying it with a grace born of Holy Orders.<sup>xix</sup> The diaconate, like all sacraments, finds its essence in mediating grace and Christ, not in mediating the deacon himself. <sup>xx</sup> There is evidence that deacons, from the earliest days of the church, were ministers of the precious blood of Christ. Justin in the 2nd century speaks about deacons distributing “wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced.” St Augustine in the 4th century mentions that the deacon St. Lawrence, “was a minister of the Blood of Christ; there, for the name of Christ, he poured out his own?”<sup>xxi</sup>

Since the deacon is among the laity “as one who came not to be served but to serve,” (Mt 20:28) he affirms the Eucharistic mystery dwelling within the communicants and longs to encourage them to create a culture flowing from its effects. As blood circulates through the body, giving and sustaining life, so the deacon circulates the charity of Christ within the Body of Christ, the Church. His ministry circulates love. He is an envoy of Christ’s own service he comes to animate the laity in the midst of the culture by carrying the grace of Holy Orders to them in prayer and charity. This ministry, the circulation of charity is the effect of the blood of Christ.<sup>xxii</sup> It is an effect that seeks to cooperate with the highest motive of Christ’s own sacrifice: reconciliation between God and Man.

“The life which flows through the organism—as Holy Spirit or Eucharistic blood—is that which GIVES every member its form and function and consequently at the same time relates it internally to the whole.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

As one who guards and distributes the blood of Christ, the deacon wants to see lay persons reach their “form and function” by their giving witness to the effects that the Eucharist has had upon their lives of faith. The deacon lives among the laity “as one who serves” to encourage just such a witness (Lk 22:27).

The deacon remains among the laity not only to serve their spiritual and material needs, but to also strengthen them in their vocation *to embody the sacrifice of Christ within culture*. Here, the deacon stands with the laity as they suffer the rejection of culture when witnessing to the reconciliation of God and Man that Christ’s own blood achieved. In this, they draw from the “life” given them in the blood of Christ at the Eucharist. This life enables a martyrdom which participates in the grace of Christ’s own witness on the cross as He unleashed the power to “draw all men to himself” (Jn.12:32). The deacon ministers to those who



evangelize and to those who suffer in their bodies, reminding them that Christ will use their sacrifices to complete His own and reconcile this culture to Himself.

“Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, to consecrate the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing the reproach that he bore. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the one that is to come.

Through him [then] let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” (Heb 13:12ff)

The progressive transformation wrought in the Church by the grace of the Precious Blood is in accord with this baptismal truth: “I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me” (Gal 2: 20).<sup>xxiv</sup> What is living in the deacon specifically, distinguished from the laity, is his permanent availability to the servant mysteries of Christ.<sup>xxv</sup> This “availability” — to be sent to others, bearing these mysteries as his own brand mark — is the grace he mediates through the animating power of blood. It is fitting that the cleric who cares for and distributes the animating principle of the Eucharist at the Communion rail — the chalice of sacred blood, divine life itself — is the one embedded within culture, side by side with the laity in their mission to circulate the Gospel to fellow citizens. By caring for the Blood of Christ at Mass, and with his availability to animate lay witness in culture, the deacon serves “the glory of the lay person in the transformation of culture.”<sup>xxvi</sup>

## *Interior Renewal of the Church*

“But when Christ came as high priest...he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkling of a heifer’s ashes can sanctify those who are defiled so that their flesh is cleansed, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.” (Heb 9:11-14)

The renewal of consciences is the substantive moral effect of the Blood of Christ enlivening the members of the Church. This renewal is attained by one fully participating in Holy Communion and having his or her mind altered by such participation. Any witness the laity are going to give will have its origin in consciences nourished on the Blood of Christ, and its life giving grace to sustain such a witness. Over years of nourishing the conscience upon the salvific Blood of Christ at the Eucharist, there comes an increased fidelity to that conscience when called in public witness. The deacon acts as an envoy between the altar and the culture when he listens, teaches, and counsels believers, noticing where their witness to the Gospel has grown anemic. In such cases, he opens their hearts to the confessional, if need be, and to the altar in the hope that consciences come to life again as they share in the spiritual nutrients of the sacramental life. In heralding the sacramental life, the deacon embodies his true identity as that servant-envoy from the Gospel of Luke (Chapter 14). It was a servant who helped secure the fulfillment of God’s deepest desire by saying, “I want my house full” (Lk 14). In this same Gospel, God sends the “deacon” out from the Eucharist — the “great banquet” — with these commands, “Go out to the highways and hedgerows and compel them to come in so that my home may be filled” (Lk 14:23). By inviting all

to the banquet (sacramental life), the deacon also fulfills his own deepest desire: to introduce others to God's house of love as the true forum for conscience formation.

### ***The Deacon's Liturgical Service***

To sustain his own vocation as envoy, the deacon is called to a deep and abiding love of this "true forum." When assisting at the Liturgy, the deacon is entrusted with the chalice and stands as the one who offers at the altar rail what is most personal to Christ: His own inner life. This inner life of Christ consists of His desire to give all out of love for humanity in obedience to the Father. That which is most *personal* to Christ, His love of the Father and Church, has become *public*.<sup>xxvii</sup> *This is salvation as self-revelation, as invitation to "the many" (Mt 20:28) to come and participate in Christ's own inner life.*

Deacons prepare themselves to animate the Church by cultivating a sacred imagination within themselves. This imagination, "takes him to the heart of human need. The ministry of a deacon is...agile and deliberative. [He] is attentive to human pain in all its forms as he discerns that portion of the Gospel which is to be poured into the wounds of human suffering."<sup>xxviii</sup> As the deacon develops this sacred imagination he moves further away from "this passing age" (Rom 12:1ff) and closer to being that envoy configured to Christ. As the deacon deepens his consciousness of Christ's own mission by serving on the altar, it is fitting that this same deacon gives **the life blood of Christ's own service** to enliven the conscience of the Church at Holy Communion (Mk 10:45). Furthermore, it is appropriate that the deacon prepares the wine and water, which he mingles at or near the altar, given that they are elements that will soon carry the same flow of life that came from the side of the dying Christ. The deacon acts as a conduit of this flowing life,

both at the altar rail and in the culture — at the restaurant dining table, the school cafeteria, or the prison lunch room. He becomes the bearer of divine life to all the hidden places of the Body of Christ, just as blood reaches to the deepest shadowed caverns of the human body.

The deacon's ministry *is blood poured out* so that those on the “highways and in the hedgerows” (Lk14) will enter the banquet aided by the animating Spirit of Christ carried in Holy Orders. As noted above, God comes in contact with human body by means of blood.<sup>xxix</sup> The deacon, as consecrated custodian of the chalice, spends his ministry coming in contact with embodied human need. The deacon also receives the grace of ordination and, like the life which is inhabiting Christ, the deacon is now ordered to “Jerusalem” to the gift of self-donation (Mk 10:38). The deacon encourages the laity to release the life of Christ into the culture and simultaneously, to die to a “passing age” (Rom 12:1ff). The deacon encourages reconciliation between individual members of the Church and her Bridegroom, Christ. He is in a way, like a “marriage counselor” who attentive to where there may be a break in communication between God and his People (Eph 5:32).<sup>xxx</sup>

The Precious Blood is the link between the bestowal of divine mercy and human misery. This blood must run unobstructed and regularly from the altar of sacrifice that is the Eucharist in the hopes of it raising all to a new life. In the privileged role of assistant at the altar, the deacon prepares and distributes the precious blood for and to the people so that they might “taste” (Ps 34:8) new life. In this, the deacon approaches a most noble dimension of his embeddedness, both within the liturgy and culture. His love for the Eucharist compels him to serve that deepest desire of God, “I want my house full” (LK14). Having received knowledge of this deepest desire of God, the deacon spends his days listening for human misery and unveiling the remedy for it in the sacraments of reconciliation and the Mass — the

two fonts of mercy after Baptism. The Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without, at the same time, cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins:

For as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it, so that it may always forgive my sins. Because I always sin, I should always have a remedy. <sup>xxx</sup>

Placed in the hidden portions of secular life, the deacon listens for misery and is quick to invite those in pain to where he knows life and forgiveness are flowing. He gently gives witness to the sacramental life as one who is rich in mercy, while also satisfying to our deepest human needs.

“The deacon, consecrated and conformed to the mission of Christ, lord and servant, has a particular concern for ***the vitality*** and genuineness of the exercise of *diakonia* in the life of the believing community.”<sup>xxxii</sup> The communion cup particularly reminds us that the Eucharist is what keeps our baptismal commitment alive until we die with Christ, so as to rise with Him.

There is a fittingness to the deacon being the custodian of the cup of the Lord, the blood of Christ, as it is he who accompanies the laity in their witnessing to the culture. He prays that ***they remain animated*** by the blood of Christ exactly for that evangelical purpose.<sup>xxxiii</sup> In the simple prayer of the deacon said quietly at the altar, we summarize the hope of his ministry among the laity: “By the mingling of this water and wine may we come to share in divinity of Christ who humbled himself to share in our humanity.” <sup>xxxiv</sup> Deep within the folds of ordinary life, the deacon prays and labors to promote the flow of the Blood of Christ as it circulates within the Church.

### *Christ's Victory*

*So over hearts in showers of grace  
There falls the saving Precious Blood.  
But lo! His Blood, by faithful hands  
Is borne away to many lands,  
His love and mercy to proclaim.”*

*-August Halter*

### *Notes*

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<sup>i</sup> PROCEEDINGS of the THIRD PRECIOUS BLOOD STUDY WEEK June 10-14 1968 St. Charles Seminary Library, Carthagena Station Celina, Ohio SAINT JOSEPH'S COLLEGE, 279.

<sup>ii</sup> The deacon as well as the priest share in the apostolic ministry of the Bishop. All that I say in this essay about diaconal ministry around the altar is true of the priest as well since he is first ordained a deacon and then remains one after priestly ordination, The bishop as well has diaconate sublated into priesthood and then into the episcopacy, so that embodies the fullness of Holy Orders.

<sup>iii</sup> Of course living a lay lifestyle is not intrinsic to diaconate as monks and other religious can be ordained deacons. Also in noting that deacons live a lay lifestyle I am conscious that some think this description to be imprecise as it could denote that the deacon is not a cleric. Of course the deacon is a cleric but being one, in most cases, that is married, with children and holding a secular job leads me to describe his life as such. I am open to a better description.

<sup>iv</sup> See James Keating, *Configured to Christ: On Spiritual Direction and Clergy Formation* (Ohio: Emmaus Road, 2021) Chapter 16, "Growing in Love of Lay Life: Evangelizing Martyrs", 275-283; "The faithful should "distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall to them as members of the human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair *they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since no human activity, even of the temporal order, can be withdrawn from God's dominion.*" Thus, every person, through these gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal CCC 912-913

<sup>v</sup> "The Church's mission stands in continuity with the mission of Christ: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). From the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross and her communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church draws the spiritual power needed to carry out her mission." John Paul II, *ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA* (2003) 22; I am using this term to include both "white" and "red" martyrdom. There are many situations where one's life (red) is not threatened for being a Catholic in public but one's job may be or one's social network is, etc.(white). Deacons are placed within the daily life of the laity to encourage fidelity.

<sup>vi</sup> GIRM 94

<sup>vii</sup> When Holy Communion is distributed under only one species this custody role of the deacon is less apparent but still pertains due to our teaching that "Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts" (CCC 1377); see also Lawrence Feingold on the theme of Eucharistic concomitance, *The Eucharist* (Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2018) 282-285.

<sup>viii</sup> Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003) 100

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- <sup>ix</sup> Prayer of Consecration, deacon ordination rite
- <sup>x</sup> EP Sanders, *Judaism: practice and belief 63bce-66 ce* (London: SCM press 1994)
- <sup>xi</sup> See Christopher Begg, "The Levites in Josephus" *Hebrew Union College Annual* (vol 75) 2004, p 15ff; also, Dcn David A. Lopez "Order of Levitical Blessing: Fruitfully Reclaiming a Patristic, Liturgical Typology of the Diaconate" *Antiphon*, Vol 19 No 1 (2015), pp 52-78.
- <sup>xii</sup> Bl Dom Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries* (St Louis: Herder, 1939) 372
- <sup>xiii</sup> Karl Rahner, *The Celebration of the Eucharistic Mystery* (NY: Herder, 1968) 79ff; "For St Thomas a defect in human devotion is the only reason for the actual limitation of the effect [of the Eucharistic Liturgy]" p 79.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Robert j. Daly, *Sacrificed Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark, 2009) 37-39
- <sup>xv</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Dictionary of Theology* (Desclee, 1965) 64; see USCCB, National Directory for The Formation Ministry and Life of the Permanent Deacon (Wash DC: 2021) "The deacon's ministry begins at the altar and returns there. The sacrificial love of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist nourishes him and motivates him to lay down his life on behalf of God's people." N 39. Here we see clearly the source of the deacon's charitable self-donation is the body and blood of Christ in the sacrifice of the altar.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Bl Dom Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries* (St Louis: Herder, 1939) 349
- <sup>xvii</sup> Thomas McDermott, OP, *Catherine of Siena* (NY: Paulist, 2008) 89. In a mystical sense the blood of Christ is the "force", the activity of love. Blood of Christ symbolizes the complete and active gift of self that is the nature of love itself. Here the deacon meditates on how best to mediate this gift, as a result of his being the custodian of the Blood. How does his ministry communicate the blood of Christ, its reality as grace, as life coming from God?
- <sup>xviii</sup> Benedict XVI, *SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS* (2007) n. 70
- <sup>xix</sup> "We deacons do not preside at the Eucharistic liturgy; rather, we intone, in its dismissal rite, the initiation of the liturgy of charity, charging all to 'go in the peace of Christ to love and serve the Lord.' This presidency is not a juridical one, but rather one of moral and spiritual collaboration with the mission of the laity. Unlike the priest, our words do not bring about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In fact, the deacon utters no words in the 'liturgy' he presides over, except in the silence of his heart as it communes with the mystery that has claimed his life, '[I] came not to be served but to serve' (Mt 20:28). At the dismissal rite, the Eucharist 'processes' out of the church in the hearts of parishioners not as an inert memory ... but as a living call from Christ to go and transform culture. We preside by distributing the fruit of the Mass—the divine life within us. This service is our form of being in personae Christi: Christ acting in us. We do not share in the priesthood. Since we share in Orders, however, we receive a portion of the mystery of Christ's own actions. The priest shares in Christ's sacrificial self-offering in priestly thanksgiving "as head"—whereas we who are deacons receive that portion of Christ's own action which insures that the love of many will not grow cold (Mt 24:12). James Keating, *A Deacon's Retreat* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2009). 66-67
- <sup>xx</sup> Bernhard Blankenhorn, OP *Bread from Heaven* (Wash DC: CUA Press 2021) 71
- <sup>xxi</sup> Enzo Petrolino, ed *Compendium on the Diaconate* (Wash DC: USCCB, 2015) p 32 and pg79)
- <sup>xxii</sup> Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion* (Mich: Eerdmans, 2015) 235
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Hans urs Von Balthasar, *Elucidations* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998) 98
- <sup>xxiv</sup> See, Bl Dom Marmion, *Christ the Life of the Soul* (St Louis: Herder, 1925) 265, for an inspiring description of the effects the Body and Blood have upon body and soul
- <sup>xxv</sup> See James Keating, *Remain in Me: Holy Orders, Prayer and Ministry* (NJ: Paulist, 2019) 17; also, Dominic Cerrato, *Encountering Christ The Servant* (Ind: OSV 2020) 104ff
- <sup>xxvi</sup> USCCB, *The National Directory: Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons* (Wash DC: 2021) n115
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Hans urs Von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990) 131
- <sup>xxviii</sup> National Directory (2021) n 90
- <sup>xxix</sup> See Jose Granados, *Introduction to Sacramental Theology* (Wash DC: CUA Press, 2021) 36-40
- <sup>xxx</sup> See Jeremy Driscoll OSB *What Happens at Mass* (Ill: LTP revised Ed, 2011) 123, for a description of the Eucharist in spousal terms.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> CCC 1393
- <sup>xxxii</sup> National Directory, 2nd Ed 2021, n 40
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> See, Congregation for Clergy, *DIRECTORY FOR THE MINISTRY AND LIFE OF PERMANENT DEACONS* par 22, 1998; and also *The National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the USA* (2nd edition, 2021) par 63; "In the name of Christ Himself ,The deacon helps the church to participate in the fruits of that [Eucharistic} sacrifice." *National Direc* 2021 par 89; Par 90 is also vital...the deacon "pours" the gospel into

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human wounds...and he holds a vision of charity as wide and deep as the one held in the heart of Christ” (heart-blood)

<sup>xxxiv</sup> “The water represents the people whose unity with Christ is signified by the mixing of water and wine....***Participation in divine life comes through the Eucharistic liturgy.*** Blankenhorn, Bread from Heaven (Wash DC: CUA Press, 2021) 68