

Richard Pavlić – Luka Španjić

## THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF JOSEPH RATZINGER / BENEDICT XVI

Doc. dr. sc. Richard Pavlić

KBF, Zagreb – Teologija u Rijeci

Mag. theol. Luka Španjić

KBF, Zagreb – Teologija u Rijeci

UDK: 265.3[232.96+260.2+262.13+262.5]JOSEPH  
RATZINGER / BENEDICT XVI = 111

Izvorni znanstveni rad

Primljeno: 7. studenoga 2020.

U teologiji Josepha Ratzingera tema euharistije zauzima značajno mjesto. Oslanjajući se na povijesno-kritičku egzegezu, on analizira Isusov čin ustanovljenja euharistije naglašavajući čitav pashalni misterij. Tim slijedom, Ratzinger promatra Krista u odnosu na njegovu Crkvu, te međudnos Kristovih vjernika te se dubinski se bavi činom ustanovljenja euharistije. Uspoređuje hramsko bogoslužje i ono prve Crkve. Trudi se obraniti žrtveni karakter euharistije, a ne samo gozbeni. Česta tema njegovih teoloških spisa je zajedništvo među vjernicima i njihovo djelatno sudjelovanje u euharistiji.

Članak je podijeljen u tri dijela. Početno se razmatraju polazišta Ratzingerova govora o euharistiji. Drugo poglavlje donosi pregled bitnih tema koje se provlače kroz Ratzingerova djela, a u trećem poglavlju prikaz je dokumenata iz vremena pontifikata Benedikta XVI. na temu euharistije. Zaključno se donosi sinteza prethodno iznesenih spoznaja Ratzingerove euharistijske misli.

**Ključne riječi:** euharistija, zajedništvo vjernika, Joseph Ratzinger, Benedikt XVI.

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### Introduction

The most significant contribution of the shift of the Church to the present time was made by the Second Vatican Council, convened by Pope John XXIII and completed during the pontificate of Paul VI, from 1962 to 1965. The Council is important for new, authentic thinking, but also for open criticism of some phenomena in the Church. Although he participated in the Council as a young theologian and served as advisor to Cardinal Joseph Frings, we can say that Jo-

seph Ratzinger's theology marked the post-Council period even more, which is especially true of Eucharistic theological thought. The Council, rejecting many elements accumulated in history, and returning to the essentials, gave a strong impetus to the many theological reflections on the Eucharist. In all this, neither the extreme tensions of a return to the "old" nor the excessively innovative theological enthusiasm of the post-Council period were avoided. Within such tensions, the importance of the sacrament and the marginalization of theological essences are easily diminished. That is why Ratzinger's theological thoughts on the Eucharist strive for a correct understanding of this sacrament, always in the light of the Council reflections of this living Tradition of the Church.

The Eucharistic plays a very important role in theology and the life of believers. However, in a changing world and a Church that wants to keep up with the times, it is necessary to think deeply about in which direction theology should go. One of the main problems that theology faces when it comes to the Eucharist is an emphasis on its importance and the lack of understanding of transubstantiation among believers. While many know that "the culmination of the Mass and the culmination of Christ's presence is converted"<sup>1</sup> a Pew Research Center found out that nearly 61 percent of Catholics in the United States believe that bread and wine are just symbols of Christ's body and blood.<sup>2</sup> 31% of Catholics in the US believe in transubstantiation<sup>3</sup> We can look at this through many different arguments, and one is a lack of studying and focusing on the Eucharist in scientific circles and perhaps in religious education classes. This may be a subject of further interesting researches: the Eucharist and its teaching in the Catholic Church.

The relevance of the theme of the Eucharist is manifested not only by a lack of understanding of transubstantiation, but also by a potential new wave of re-spiritualization of believers. Many researchers and authors have found that turbulent times and crises increase the level of spirituality in the world.<sup>4</sup> The crisis of the Covid-19 epidemic, which poses great challenges to humanity and causes many other crises, such as the economic one, leads to the return of mankind to faith and religion.<sup>5</sup> If the trend of rising religiosity continues and it

1 M. ŠPEHAR. Što činiš, to i živi! Euharistija – izvor svećeničke duhovnosti, in: *Riječki teološki časopis*, 18(2010)1., 178.

2 G. SMITH. Just one-third of U.S. Catholics agree with their church that Eucharist is body, blood of Christ, Pew Research Center 2019, in: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/05/transubstantiation-eucharist-u-s-catholics/> (Accessed 14 September 2020).

3 *Ibid.*

4 P. NORRIS, R. INGLEHART, *Sveto i svjetovno (Religija i politika u svijetu)*, Zagreb, 2007.

5 J. BENTZEN, Rising religiosity as a global response to COVID-19 fear, CEPR 2020, in: <https://voxeu.org/article/rising-religiosity-global-response-covid-19-fear> (Accessed 14 September 2020).

becomes a long-term manifestation, the Catholic Church should more actively explain and convey the message of the importance of the Eucharist. Academic articles can make a significant contribution to this process by opening up new insights, encouraging discussions and further research on the Eucharist and its role in the life of believers.

The topic of the article is the sacrament of the Eucharist, with special emphasis on the Eucharistic thought contained in the theological writings of the great theologian, Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI. In the first part, we explain and analyze Ratzinger's basic starting points on the Eucharist. The three most important theses for understanding these starting points are the inseparability of Dogmatics from exegesis, the concept of communion and the Eucharist, and the Paschal mysticism or *Mysterium Paschae*. The second part describes the Eucharist as our participation in the mystery of new life through four thematic settings: the temple (place of the Eucharist), *Communio* (subjects of the Eucharist), the Last Supper (the main action of the Eucharist) and finally a synthesis of these settings in the meaning of the Eucharist. The third part analyzes the Eucharist in several documents of Pope Benedict XVI.

## 1. The starting points of Ratzinger's discourse on the Eucharist

Observing the theme of the Eucharist in the works of Joseph Ratzinger (later, Benedict XVI) we can note several fundamental determinants. One of them is respect for the reach of the Second Vatican Council. The Council is the key point through which he observes the sacrament of the Eucharist and does not hesitate to point out errors in the post-Council theological perception of the Eucharist.

Inspired further by the Dogmatic Constitution on the divine revelation *Dei verbum* and later documents of the Church, we can observe that in his theological works Ratzinger attaches great importance to exegesis in Dogmatics, with special emphasis on the evaluation of historical-critical methodology. He therefore views the Eucharist as an *interpersonal relationship*, both on the vertical relation line, in the mutual relation of God and man, and on the horizontal line, in the mutual communion of the believers – *communio*. The theological theme of the interconnectedness of persons through communion can be considered a kind of paradigm of Ratzinger's theological thought.<sup>6</sup>

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6 See: N. KOVAČ, *Personalno-relacijska paradigma teologije Josepha Ratzingera/ Benedikta XVI.*, Zagreb, 2014.

The third determinant we cite here is the understanding of the Eucharist in a broader context of the Last Supper itself. The act of fasting should be viewed in the context of the overall Paschal mystery – *Mysterium Paschae*.

### 1.1. Inseparability of Dogmatics from exegesis

In its documents, the Second Vatican Council affirms and encourages the development of biblical sciences and respects historical-critical methods of researching the Scriptures, which consequently has an impact on Dogmatics. Therefore, we can say that “the interpretation of the Holy Scripture is inseparable from dogmatic teaching, that is, the tradition of the Church.”<sup>7</sup>

Although the Scripture is not the only theological place (*locus theologicus*) of Dogmatics, it enjoys a privileged place in theological research.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in Ratzinger’s theological works, we notice the permeation of Dogmatics and exegetical achievements. In the preface to his work *Jesus of Nazareth*, the Pope emphasizes that the “historical-critical method is indispensable from the point of view of the structure of the Christian faith,”<sup>9</sup> but also warns of limits, saying that it “does not exhaust the task of interpretation for those who see the Bible he believes he is inspired by God.”<sup>10</sup> Guided by the “principle of the incarnation,” he says that “at the center of the Christian faith is not a book, but a person – Jesus Christ, who is the living Word of God and who is expounded in the words of Scripture, but which can only be properly understood in life with him.”<sup>11</sup>

It is precisely from this perspective, the permeation of Dogmatics and the results of exegesis, that his discourse on the Eucharist should be viewed, especially in the establishment at the Last Supper and the mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection.

### 1.2. The Eucharist - the foundation of communion

In Joseph Ratzinger’s theology, people in interrelationship play a key role.<sup>12</sup> This has often been forgotten in the history of the Church. Today, systematic theology is largely concerned with God being in a relationship first in the believer and then with the believer. In her doctoral dissertation, sister Valerija

7 R. PAVLIĆ – Nikola PRŠA, Euharistija – naše udioništvo u otajstvu novog života prema Benediktu XVI., in: *Riječki teološki časopis*, 21 (2013.), 1, 231.

8 Cf. PAPINSKA BIBLIJSKA KOMISIJA, *Tumačenje Biblije u Crkvi*, Zagreb, 1995., 128.

9 J. RATZINGER/BENEDIKT XVI., *Isus iz Nazareta*, Split, 2007., 9.

10 J. RATZINGER/BENEDIKT XVI., *Isus iz Nazareta*, Split, 2007., 9.

11 J. RATZINGER, *Na putu k Isusu Kristu*, Split, 2005., 174.

12 N. KOVAČ, *Personalno-relacijska paradigma teologije Josepha Ratzingera/Benedikta XVI.*, Zagreb, 2014., 10.

Kovač recognizes a person and the relationship as a paradigm - a model that Ratzinger uses in all aspects of his theological thought.<sup>13</sup>

When we speak of communion, a relationship with Christ in the Eucharist is possible precisely because “Christ in his person has achieved a relationship between God and man.”<sup>14</sup> By analyzing the words of communion, Ratzinger clearly distinguishes the communion of Jewish and Greek thought from the New Testament. While in the former communion is never expressed between God and men, in the New Testament the situation is quite the opposite. The Church is “communion – not only among men, but also in communion with Christ, the incarnate Son of God, after his death and resurrection, and therefore communion with eternal triune love.”<sup>15</sup> This is exactly what is most evident in the sacrament of the Eucharist: “The body of Christ is the foundation of the unity of the Church which arises from the unity of the Eucharist.”<sup>16</sup> Sacramental communion is the communion of Christ and his Church. The Eucharist connects not only people with one another, but also with Christ, by whom communion is created: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:20).

The relationship between the persons we are talking about here can also be observed in Ratzinger’s reflections on ecclesiology. For him, “the Church is a Eucharistic communion. It is not simply a nation: from the many nations of which it is composed, one nation is created at one table, which the Lord has prepared for us all. The Church is, so to speak, a network of Eucharistic communions and is constantly united in one body, which we all receive.”<sup>17</sup> For him, the Church is the people of God precisely through the Body of Christ, and it is never an exclusively local community, but a universal Church, composed of smaller particular parts.<sup>18</sup> The Eucharistic *communio*, the communion of the Church, has an eschatological dynamic, striving for fulfillment – the final fullness of communion in heaven.<sup>19</sup>

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13 *Ibid.*, 11.

14 *Ibid.*, 11.

15 J. RATZINGER, *Zajedništvo u Crkvi*, Split, 2006., 77.

16 N. KOVAČ, *Personalno-relacijska paradigma teologije Josepha Ratzingera/Benedikta XVI.*, Zagreb, 2014., 347.

17 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 124-125.

18 N. KOVAČ, *Personalno-relacijska paradigma teologije Josepha Ratzingera/Benedikta XVI.*, Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 2014., 350.

19 *Ibid.*, 356.

### 1.3. Paschal Mystery

The Last Supper alone is not enough to understand the Eucharist. Because “the words that Jesus utters on it are an anticipation of his death, a transformation of death into an event of love.”<sup>20</sup> Not everything is left to mere words, but this is confirmed by Jesus’ death on the cross. But even that is not enough, Ratzinger continues, because “death would be left empty, it would annul the words if there had not been a resurrection in which it became apparent that these words were accompanied by divine authority.”<sup>21</sup> So, the word is not enough for him, but that word must be followed by death and resurrection. “Only these three together form a whole, only these three together are the true reality, and this Easter mystery is the source from which the Eucharist emerges.”<sup>22</sup>

Ratzinger never speaks of the establishment of the Eucharist only in the context of the Last Supper, but emphasizes that it is a paschal mystery. Supper is an anticipation and inclusion of the sacrifice of the cross and the victory of the resurrection.<sup>23</sup> Every proclamation of Jesus leads to suffering.<sup>24</sup> Ratzinger, relying on Bultmann, writes: “In Jesus’ words at the Last Supper, the spiritual execution of death takes place, in them, Jesus, transforms death into the spiritual act of his “yes”, into the act of giving love.<sup>25</sup> Words without death have no power, and death without words would be a mere execution of punishment.<sup>26</sup> “The institution of the Eucharist shows how in itself the violent and absurd death of Jesus became the supreme act of love and the final liberation of mankind from evil.”<sup>27</sup>

The legacy at the Last Supper without the mysteries of torment, death and resurrection could be understood as a banknote without cover.<sup>28</sup> For Ratzinger, the Eucharist is far more than a feast. The Catechism of the Catholic Church acknowledges the connection between these two aspects of the Eucharist: “Mass is at the same time an inseparably sacrificial memorial in which the sacrifice of the cross is immortalized and it is a holy feast of communion with the Body and

20 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 39.

21 *Ibid*, 39-40.

22 *Ibid*, 40.

23 BENEDIKT XVI., *Sacramentum caritatis – Sakrament ljubavi. Postsinodalna apostolska pobudnica Svetoga Oca Benedikta XVI. o euharistiji, izvoru i vrhuncu života i poslanja Crkve, upućena biskupima, kleru, osobama posvećenog života i vjernicima laicima* (22. II. 2007.), Zagreb, 2008., no. 10. (hereinafter: SaC)

24 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 123.-125.

25 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 24.

26 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 25.

27 SaC, no. 10

28 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 39.

Blood of the Lord.”<sup>29</sup> The second issue of the Catechism states the following about the altar, the place of celebration of the Eucharist: “On the altar, which is the center of the church, the sacrifice of the cross is present under sacramental occasions. The altar is also the table of the Lord, to which the people of God are called.”<sup>30</sup>

To conclude, the Eucharist is not a mere feast. “Its price is the death of Christ”<sup>31</sup> and consequently the Eucharist and the sacrifice: “The Eucharist is eschatologically oriented and therefore centered in the theology of the cross. That is what is meant when the Church emphasizes that the Mass is a sacrifice.”<sup>32</sup> Thus, we can view the Eucharist as a triad of the Paschal Mystery: Feast, Death, and Resurrection. The feast at the Last Supper could represent the Christian life. When Jesus broke and distributed the bread to his disciples, he shared his life with them and as St. John the Evangelist says many times, Jesus Christ is the Bread of Life. “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life.’ He who comes to me will not be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (Jn 6:35).

The Paschal Mystery can be seen as a complete circle of the Christian life, symbolized by a feast or life with Christ, suffering and death as the end and resurrection as the beginning of a new eternal life and all three parts receive their embodiment through the Eucharist.

## 2. The Eucharist - our participation in the mystery of new life

### 2.1. Temple

The Jerusalem temple, a place of sacrifice, blood and non-blood, a place of pilgrimage, it was an indispensable part of the religious life of the Jews until its destruction. Jesus, as he regularly made a pilgrimage to this holy place, called it “the house of prayer for all nations” (cf. Mt 11:17).

Writing about the Eucharist, Joseph Ratzinger often mentions the temple and its rites, linking them to the worship of the Church. Thus, as Jesus said at the Last Supper, he recognizes the sacrificial language of the temple, indicating that in Jesus’ words, they experience fullness as the final and actual sacrifice.<sup>33</sup> “God does not want animal sacrifices; everything belongs to him. He does not

29 HRVATSKA BISKUPSKA KONFERENCIJA, *Katekizam katoličke Crkve*, Zagreb, 2016., 1382. (hereinafter: KKC)

30 KKC, no. 1182

31 J. RATZINGER, *Slavlje vjere, ogledi o teologiji liturgije*, Split, 2018., 68.

32 *Ibid.*, 68-69.

33 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 27-28.

even want to sacrifice man, because he created him for life.”<sup>34</sup> Unity with God comes in Jesus Christ who gives himself to us.

In addition to the temple liturgy, the cult of Israel also takes place in the synagogue, which is not associated with sacrifice and does not have to be located in Jerusalem. The synagogue becomes a privileged place for reading God’s word and interpreting it. After Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples have no need to participate in temple worship because Christ is the temple.<sup>35</sup> He is “the place of contact between God and man.”<sup>36</sup> The Eucharist takes the place of the temple. This understanding is already present in Paul, who “abolishes the temple and its theologies of sacrifice, replacing them with Christology.”<sup>37</sup> The temple cult for the disciples of Jesus loses its purpose, but they still participate in the worship of the synagogue. They now “know that the whole Bible, the Law and the Prophets, speak of it.”<sup>38</sup> As it became increasingly difficult to interpret the Scriptures in light of Jesus Christ in the synagogues, at the end of the first century the young Church broke off relations with the synagogue. This led to the connection of two hitherto separate liturgies: the liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy. “This completed the essential Christian form as we know it today in the Eucharist of the Church.”<sup>39</sup>

Referring to the recent destruction of the Temple, Ratzinger explains that the worship of Jews in synagogues takes place in anticipation of its rebuilding. However, “Christian worship considers the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple final and theologically necessary. In this place came the universal temple of the risen Christ”<sup>40</sup> and “what had hitherto been sacrifices has now been replaced by the breaking of bread.”<sup>41</sup>

## 2.2. *Communion in the Church - communio and active participation of the believers in the Eucharist*

When it comes to the ecclesial community, it should be noted that Catholic theology did not develop this notion until the Second Vatican Council. It is only in Karl Rahner’s *Lexicon for Theology and the Church* that this term is

34 *Ibid.*, 28.

35 Cf. *Ibid.*, 63.

36 J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 47.

37 *Ibid.*, 47.

38 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 63.

39 *Ibid.*, 64.

40 J. RATZINGER/BENEDIKT XVI., *Duh liturgije*, Split, 2015., 46.

41 J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 42.



treated in three forms: general, local and particular Church.<sup>42</sup> Ratzinger writes that the community is a new discovery of the post-council period: “Once again we remembered that the Eucharist in the language of the old Church was called, among other things, *synaxis*, “assembly” and it brings people together, connects and unites them, it builds community.”<sup>43</sup>

Communion among the faithful is important because the Eucharist in addition to the vertical dimension, also possesses a horizontal, human relationship with others. It is the mystery of the Eucharist that invites and enables us to “boldly commit ourselves to the structures of this world in order to bring into them the originality of a relationship whose inexhaustible source is in God’s gift. Ratzinger emphasizes that unity with God also means unity with all those to whom he gives himself.”<sup>44</sup> In his first encyclical, *Deus caritas est*, he similarly writes: “The mysticism of the sacrament has a social character, because in sacramental communion I am united with the Lord like all communicants. To become one with Christ means at the same time to become one with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot have Christ for myself alone; they can belong to him in unity with all those who have become or will become his. Communion separates me from myself alone towards him and equally towards unity with all Christians. We become “one body,” completely fused into one existence.”<sup>45</sup> This leads us to the conclusion that the Christian cult is universally oriented. It is not a worship of a certain local community because the celebration of the Eucharist “is never a representation of a strictly defined group, a certain circle or a certain local Church. Christ wants to unite humanity; he wants to create one Church, God’s choir of all people.”<sup>46</sup>

Speaking of communion within the Church, it is necessary to refer to the notion of *communio*, which was “rediscovered” and popularized after the Council, when appropriate terms were sought for the development of the heritage of the Council. Seeking as comprehensive a word as possible to explain the intention of the Council, and at the same time the title of the new journal, Ratzinger reaches for the deep notion of *communio*, which was placed at the center after the Synod of Bishops in 1985 precisely because of its biblical background and

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42 Cf. N. Valerija KOVAČ, *Personalno-relacijska paradigma teologije Josepha Ratzingera/Benedikta XVI.*, Zagreb, 2014., 337.

43 J. RATZINGER, *Slavlje vjere, ogledi o teologiji liturgije*, Split, 2018., 152.

44 Nela GAŠPAR, Euharistija – izvor, vrhunac i središte kršćanskog života (Benedikt XVI.), u : *Riječki teološki časopis*, 18 (2010), br. 1, 49.

45 BENEDIKT XVI., *Deus caritas est – Bog je ljubav. Enciklika biskupima, prezbiterima i đakonima, posvećenim osobama i svim vjernicima laicima o kršćanskoj ljubavi* (25. XII. 2005.), Zagreb, 2006., no. 14. (hereinafter: DCE),

46 J. RATZINGER, *Duh liturgije*, Split, 2015., 47.

suitability for describing the Eucharistic celebration.<sup>47</sup> It comes from the Greek ambience and signifies association, a society of common affairs and common values. In the Gospel, in Jesus' call to the apostles (cf. Lk 5:10), we read that John and James, the sons of Zebedee, were Simon's *koinonoi*, his companions in fishing.<sup>48</sup>

The term *communio* is "primarily anchored in the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is why we simply call the reception of this sacrament communion"<sup>49</sup> (*kommunizieren*, to receive communion). By communicating with Christ, we become one with him, the limbs of one body. "Therefore, true communion devotion, together with the depth of Christology, necessarily has a social character."<sup>50</sup> The Church is not one in its hierarchical arrangement, but in the bread that comes from one Lord and thus unites all.<sup>51</sup> The Eucharist is "a visible event of gathering which is – in a certain place and beyond all places – an entry into communion with the living God, who brings people from within to one another."<sup>52</sup>

The Second Vatican Council marked the liturgy of the Church as an *action*.<sup>53</sup> "It is action, and therefore there is *participatio actuosa*, the active participation of all the believers."<sup>54</sup> The Constitution on the Holy Liturgy encourages the believers to "consciously, piously and actively participate in the sacred act."<sup>55</sup> It should always be borne in mind that the celebration of the Eucharist has a hierarchical arrangement and that everyone has certain tasks and roles.<sup>56</sup> The spirit of lasting conversion is required of the believers, without whom we cannot expect active participation in the Eucharist; reconciliation with God in the sacrament of penance; and active involvement in the life of the community, which brings with it the obligation of missionary work in society. Full active participation is achieved through holy communion.<sup>57</sup>

But soon after the Council it was realized that active participation was understood in a partially wrong, external way: that the liturgy must be produced by the community, that the community must be given as many tasks as possible

47 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Na putu k Isusu Kristu*, Split, 2005., 126.-130.

48 J. RATZINGER, *Hod prema Uskrsu*, Split, 2006., 174.

49 J. RATZINGER, *Na putu k Isusu Kristu*, Split, 2005., 130.

50 *Ibid*, 132.

51 Cf. *Ibid*, 133.

52 J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 137.

53 Cf. SaC 14-20, 30 s, 48 s

54 J. RATZINGER, *Slavlje vjere, ogledi o teologiji liturgije*, Split, 2018., 153.

55 SaC, no. 48

56 SaC, no. 53

57 Cf. SaC, no. 55

within the Holy Mass to make it as fun as possible. We will therefore try to specify in more detail what, according to Ratzinger, would be the active participation of the believers in the Eucharist.

The word liturgy originally means the public service of the people, the service for the benefit of the people. But what kind of service is this really about? According to Ratzinger, the word *actio* – the act, deed, action in which all members of the community should have a share – is the Eucharistic prayer.<sup>58</sup> “The real liturgical action, the true liturgical act, is the *oratio*, the great prayer that forms the core of the Eucharistic celebration.”<sup>59</sup> Then the human *actio* comes into the background, and the divine action occurs – *actio divina*. Confirmation of this can be found in 1 Corinthians 6:17: “He who clings to the Lord is one spirit” – with him he forms an existence in the Spirit. All this said does not prevent the deliberate arrangement of external actions such as singing, reading and the like.<sup>60</sup> But one should always be aware that this is a second-rate act and that the *participatio actuosa* has a much deeper meaning. “When individual external actions become important in the liturgy, and the liturgy degenerates into a universal action, then the essence of the liturgy Theo-drama is missed and everything has turned into a parody.”<sup>61</sup> In contrast to that, we approach the permanent, the truth. For “all outward participation and shaping is of no use unless it becomes a participation in the deepest, in the Lord’s way – participation in God. In the liturgy, it is not necessary to constantly change, but precisely to experience more deeply what does not need to be changed.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the participation of believers should be mutual and outward, towards their neighbors in communion, but also inward through prayer, silence and composure within the believer. This mutual process culminates in the Eucharist founded on the Last Supper, when the believers gather together to receive the Body of Christ, and after receiving the Eucharist they silently pray adoration or thanksgiving.

### 2.3. *The Establishment of the Eucharist at the Last Supper*

Jesus, rooted in the ambience of Israel, celebrates the Last Supper in the context of the Passover holiday. It is a supper that is not a mere meal, but has its own ritual character, evoking the memory of God’s work done in the midst of his people. “This ceremonial supper, associated with the sacrifice of the lamb

58 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Duh liturgije*, Split, 2015., 168.

59 *Ibid*, 168.

60 Cf. *Ibid*, 170.

61 J. RATZINGER, *Duh liturgije*, Split, 2015., 171.

62 J. RATZINGER, *Slavlje vjere, ogledi o teologiji liturgije*, Split, 2018., 155.

(cf. Exod. 12, 1-28.43-51) was a remembrance of the past, but also a prophetic remembrance, that is, a proclamation of future liberation.”<sup>63</sup> It is a mention of the past, but also an announcement of future liberation.<sup>64</sup> What is essentially new is what Jesus accomplishes in this context, and that is the Passover of Jesus.<sup>65</sup> “He gave himself and just celebrated Easter with them. Thus, the old was not rejected, but was brought to its full meaning.”<sup>66</sup> Paul will say that “our Passover, Christ, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5: 7). The ritual act is transformed into a Christological and existential meaning.<sup>67</sup> That is why the Last Supper is understood as making an alliance. It is not about abolishing the Sinai alliance, but about renewing it. “The renewal of the covenant, which has been an essential element in the Israeli liturgy from the earliest times, reaches its highest possible form here.”<sup>68</sup> Israel, a people who often lived in exile, knew very well what it meant to break a covenant. Thus, especially in times of captivity, the longing for a new covenant intensifies.<sup>69</sup> This new covenant, “which stands before us indestructible in the body and blood of the risen Christ,” requires its renewal. Jesus’ command “do this in remembrance of me” (cf. Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24) refers to this.

In his first encyclical, Pope Benedict speaks of Jesus’ offering of himself and the gift of a lasting presence by establishing the Eucharist at the Last Supper.<sup>70</sup> In the same vein, he continues: “We do not receive the *Logos* embodied in a static way, but enter into the dynamics of his surrender to himself. What used to mean standing in God’s presence is now united with God through shareholdings in Jesus’ sacrificial offering, shareholding in his body and in his blood.”<sup>71</sup>

Speaking of the Last Supper, the most important words are those of the establishment of the Eucharist. Ratzinger starts from the premise that “there is no tradition of Jesus’ words without acceptance in the emerging Church, which knew it had a strict obligation to remain faithful to the essential, but was also aware that the breadth of Jesus’ words, with their subtle similarities to Scripture, allows shaping in shades.”<sup>72</sup> Thus, in the words of Jesus, we recognize

63 N. GAŠPAR, Euharistija – izvor, vrhunac i središte kršćanskog života (Benedikt XVI.), in: *Riječki teološki časopis*, 18 (2010), 1, 45.

64 Cf. SaC, no. 10.

65 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 115.

66 *Ibid*, 115.

67 Cf. *Ibid*, 116.

68 J. RATZINGER, *Crkva, Izrael i svjetske religije*, Split, 2007., 51.

69 Cf. *Ibid*, 53.

70 DCE, no. 13

71 DCE, no. 13

72 R. PAVLIĆ – N. PRŠA, Euharistija – naše udioništvo u otajstvu novog života prema Benediktu XVI., in: *Riječki teološki časopis*, 21 (2013.), 1, 238.

the Law and the prophets, the words of Exodus 24, Isaiah 53, and Jeremiah 31. "This is my body; this is my blood" (cf. Exod 24: 1-8) are expressions of the Jewish sacrificial language. Jesus, taking these words, marks himself as a sacrifice. The second element, taken from the book of the prophet Isaiah: "This is my body, which is given for you; my blood, which is shed for you and for many" (Cf. Is 53:12), evokes the fate of a suffering people who are in exile and at the same time awakens the expression of hope in anticipation of the one who will be God's witness in this world.<sup>73</sup> Jesus' utterance of these words signifies that the expectations of the people have been fulfilled in him. The third sentence in Jesus' establishment "this is the new covenant in my blood" (cf. Jer 31:31) is related to the discourse on the new covenant in the book of Jeremiah. Jesus' surrender and suffering, his dying, is the making of the New Covenant: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Man, who shows his love even in death, and transforms death into an event of love and truth, is the answer; a new covenant was founded in it."<sup>74</sup> But was this new covenant founded, "for many" or "for all"?

In the reports of the establishment of the Eucharist, Jesus speaks of the bloodshed "for many" (cf. Mt 20:28; Mt 26:28; Mk 10:45; Mk 14:24). While in the Latin Missal and the Greek New Testament there is the term "for many", the Missals of some linguistic areas such as German and Croatian, translate it as "for all" and thus cause discussions among theologians who wonder if it is a forgery of Scripture. In his book *God is with us*; Ratzinger summarizes the issue in three points, trying to give his view of the problem.

From the beginning of the Church, it is clear that "God wants the salvation of all and that Jesus did not die for one part, but for all."<sup>75</sup> This is corroborated by the Epistle to the Romans, which says that God "delivered his Son to death for us all" (Rom 8:32). The same is in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "He who is one died for all" (2 Cor 5:14). In addition to biblical evidence, Ratzinger cites examples of the Church's tradition, unequivocally concluding that Jesus died for all. While the first point is about the unequivocal biblical message that the Lord died for all, the second point makes it clear that despite God's desire to save all people, this will not happen. "God never forces salvation. God accepts man's freedom."<sup>76</sup> As much as God's love for us is immeasurable, it does not abolish our freedom. In the third point of this reflection, Ratzinger concludes that Scripture and tradition know both formulas: "for all" and "for

73 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 28-30.

74 *Ibid*, 35.

75 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 30.

76 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 33.

many”.<sup>77</sup> While the former emphasizes the universality of Christ’s sacrifice, the latter presupposes man’s freedom. We can say that both of these formulas complement each other.

Through the Eucharist, Jesus Christ thanked God for the gifts he gave us. That thanksgiving became a blessing, a transformation, and thanksgiving – *ευχαριστία*, became the name for the new reverence given by Jesus. Referring to the words spoken over the bread, Benedict XVI emphasizes that it is not a mere body being distributed, but that it is the whole person of Jesus who is incarnated at every Holy Mass during the Eucharist. In conclusion, we can say that the Church was founded by the Eucharist, because Christ became the new temple. It originates from the Last Supper and is unique precisely in the eating of the body of Christ by doing so in his memory.<sup>78</sup>

#### 2.4. *The legacy of the Eucharist from the Last Supper to the celebration of the Church*

The previous chapters give an exhaustive account of Ratzinger’s starting points and reflections based on the texts of the Last Supper. Now it remains to look at Jesus’ command “do this in remembrance of me” which comes to us through Luke and Paul (cf. Lk 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24) and by which “Jesus asks us to respond to his gift.”<sup>79</sup> The first communities took the order seriously, but what does the order refer to?

Ratzinger immediately rules out the Passover supper, all the more so as this is Jesus’ farewell supper.<sup>80</sup> “Only what Jesus did that evening was ordered to be repeated: the breaking of bread, the prayer of blessing and thanksgiving, and with it the words of the conversion of bread and wine.<sup>81</sup> Taking Jungmann’s thoughts, Ratzinger says that the starting point of the liturgy is Jesus’ prayer of thanksgiving, not a mere supper. Thus, the Church further develops this gratitude over bread and wine.<sup>82</sup> Thus, “what the Church celebrates in Mass is not the Last Supper, but what the Lord established at the Last Supper and handed over to the Church: the remembrance of his sacrificial death.”<sup>83</sup> This command of Jesus acquires full meaning after the cross and resurrection. “The cross and the resurrection belong to the Eucharist, without them the Eucharist is not the

77 *Ibid*, 33.

78 Cf. J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 137.

79 SaC, no. 11

80 J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 138.

81 Cf. *Ibid*, 138.

82 Cf. *Ibid*, 138.

83 *Ibid*, 139.

Eucharist.”<sup>84</sup> Continuing this, we can sense this twofold character of the Eucharistic celebration - the feast and the sacrifice. Ratzinger summed it up as follows: “There is no opposition between dinner and sacrifice; in the new sacrifice of the Lord, the two are inextricably linked.”<sup>85</sup> Although these two aspects are its integral parts, Ratzinger writes much more in his texts about the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. We can say that he stands in defense of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist because he believes that due to a misinterpretation of the liturgical renewal there came an unjustified overemphasis upon the festive character at the expense of the sacrificial one.<sup>86</sup>

In his reflections on the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, Ratzinger asks: if the Eucharist is the present sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what about man’s initiative? Is not man an eternal debtor of God?<sup>87</sup> He believes that the Eucharist gives the answer to these questions: “God gives to us so that we can give.”<sup>88</sup> And the Roman canon confirms this: “Of all that you have given and given to us, we offer to you” (Roman Missal), and this is also confirmed by the history of the chosen people. Ratzinger compares the Eucharist to the Paschal Haggadah, a praise to God in which events from the history of Israel are told a sacrifice in a manner of words.<sup>89</sup> The Roman canon, as well as today’s Prefaces, which rely on that canon, is a kind of continuation of that *Haggadah*. Thus, man here is not a deprived passive observer, but he is a partaker of the Eucharistic celebration. In the Eucharistic sacrifice, Jesus “offers himself to the Father and, in the power of his love, surrenders himself to the Father.”<sup>90</sup>

The Last Supper establishes “the dogmatic content of the Christian liturgy, but not its liturgical form.”<sup>91</sup> That is yet to come for the Church. The celebration of the Eucharist is not a mere repetition of Jesus’ supper, because in the end it was not Jesus’ intention. This is about a community of students gathered around a table.<sup>92</sup> It has already been stated that this order has nothing to do with the Passover supper, but nevertheless the Eucharist takes on many elements present in the celebration of Passover, but in a new context “given to them by the day of the Lord, that is, the day of the first encounter with the Risen One.”<sup>93</sup>

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84 *Ibid.*, 141.

85 J. RATZINGER, *Slavlje vjere, ogledi o teologiji liturgije*, Split, 2018., 52.

86 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 56.

87 Cf. *Ibid.*, 42.

88 *Ibid.*, 42.

89 Cf. *Ibid.*, 48.

90 J. RATZINGER, *Hod prema Uskrsu*, Split, 2006., 196-197.

91 *Ibid.*, 43.

92 Cf. *Ibid.*, 44.

93 *Ibid.*, 47.

Ratzinger looks critically at those who associate the celebration of the Eucharist with Jesus' daily meal with his disciples or tax collectors and sinners. However, he immediately opposes this idea by claiming that it directly contradicts the testimony of the Bible.<sup>94</sup> Jesus celebrates the Last Supper under specific conditions, in family communion. So, it is not about something ordinary, but about something distinct. Of course, there is a place for tax collectors and sinners in the sacrament of the Eucharist, but it would be sinful to equate it with the sacrament of reconciliation. It "presupposes this sacrament. It is the sacrament of reconciliation, of those who of course always remain sinful and weak, but who nevertheless lent him a hand and became his family."<sup>95</sup>

The Church as a creation was created only after a failed attempt to conquer all of Israel. Until then, we cannot even speak of the liturgy of the Church as something independent. The original celebration of the service of the Word in the synagogues was gradually integrated into the celebration of the Eucharist. This is how the worship of the word and the celebration of the Eucharist are connected, which is already visible at the beginning of the second century.<sup>96</sup> The Church thus became the institutionalization of the Eucharist, created after the temple of Israel by breaking the bread of Christ at the Last Supper, where the apostles made the first community or *communio*.

### 3. The Eucharist in the documents of Pope Benedict XVI

The two basic documents of the pontificate that speak exclusively of the sacrament of the Eucharist are the *Motu proprio Summorum pontificum* and the post-Synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*. But we will also analyze the document *Verbum Domini*, also a post-Synodal stimulus, because of the connection between the Word of God and the celebration of the Eucharist.

#### 3.1. *Motu proprio Summorum Pontificum*

With the *Summorum Pontificum* and the accompanying letter to the bishops, Pope Benedict XVI allows the celebration of the Eucharist and some sacraments according to the ritual valid before the Council renewal of the liturgy, according to the 1962 missal proclaimed by Pope John XXIII.

In an interview with journalist Peter Seewald, speaking about the *Motu Propri*, the Pope explains that the liturgy is not a mere introduction of itself, but

94 J. RATZINGER, *Bog je s nama*, Split, 2005., 58-59.

95 *Ibid.*, 59.

96 J. RATZINGER, *Isus iz Nazareta – od ulaska u Jeruzalem do uskrsnuća*, Split, 2011., 142.



an entry into something much bigger, wider. He emphasizes that the liturgy is not built by ourselves, but refers to the cosmic feature of the liturgy – that “the liturgy was not simply conceived by anyone and at any time, but that it developed organically starting from Abraham”.<sup>97</sup> He therefore explains that “we cannot say: before everything was wrong, now everything is right.”<sup>98</sup> The Pope says that this is about the continuity of the Church, that “what was previously the holiest thing in the Church will not be suddenly completely forbidden.”<sup>99</sup> It is about the internal reconciliation of the Church with itself.<sup>100</sup> What is in the content of this document?

At the beginning of the *Motu propria* the Pope describes the historical development of the Roman liturgy. From Pope Gregory the Great to John Paul II, the liturgical treasure was preserved and promoted. The Pope explicitly mentions Benedictine monks who, according to their Rule, took care that “nothing is more important than the service of God”.<sup>101</sup> Among the many important first Roman high priests, St. Pius V is prominent, who is credited with the liturgical renewal according to the decisions of the Council of Trent.

After a historical review, the Pope highlights the latest Council renewal that adapts worship to the “needs of our time.”<sup>102</sup> This resulted in liturgical reform and the renewal of liturgical books during the pontificate of Paul VI that “is the regular expression of the rules of prayer of the Catholic Church of the Latin ritual”<sup>103</sup> (*forma ordinaria*), while that of John XXIII is extraordinary (*forma extraordinaria*). This did not lead to a division in belief, only to two ways of celebrating the same ritual.

As one of the reasons for the *Motu propria*, the Pope states that “in some parts a considerable number of believers with so much love and zeal remained attached to the previous liturgical forms.”<sup>104</sup> His predecessor John Paul II with

97 BENEDIKT XVI., *Svijetlo svijeta, Papa, Crkva i znakovi vremena*, Split, 2000., 130.

98 *Ibid.*, 130.

99 BENEDIKT XVI., *Posljednji razgovori s Peterom Seewaldom*, Split, 2016., 214.

100 *Ibid.*, 214.

101 BENEDIKT XVI., *Summorum pontificum* (7. VI. 2007.), in: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20070707\\_summorum-pontificum.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html) (Accessed 22 February 2019).

102 *Ibid.*

103 BENEDIKT XVI., *Summorum pontificum* (7. VI. 2007.), in: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20070707\\_summorum-pontificum.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html) (Accessed 22 February 2019).

104 BENEDIKT XVI., *Summorum pontificum* (7. VI. 2007.), in: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20070707\\_summorum-pontificum.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html) (Accessed 22 February 2019).

the *Moto proprio Ecclesia Dei* encourages the bishops to generously grant this possibility to all the believers who ask them to do so.

The pope summarizes his provisions in eleven articles in which he describes the conditions for celebrating the extraordinary form of the Roman liturgy. According to another article of that document, any priest may, except for the celebration of the Easter Triduum, celebrate the Eucharist without the people equally according to both missals without seeking any special permission. In the third article, this provision extends to communities of consecrated life, but according to the decisions of senior leaders of the same communities, and the fifth article extends it to all believers who request it. In the following points, the Pope issues a series of practical guidelines and instructions for celebrating the liturgy and resolving possible problems, authorizing the Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, which is responsible for all matters of the document.

On the occasion of the publication of the *Motu proprio*, the Pope sent a cover letter to all the bishops in which he explained in more detail the motives of this new decree. In the letter, he points out, among other things, that these are not two rituals, but two ways of using the same Roman ritual.<sup>105</sup> He also emphasizes that Council reform must not be called into question. Not wanting to create divisions, he believes that the renewed liturgy is in no way compromised by these provisions.

In the second part of the letter, the Pope addresses the legal issue of the old ritual and emphasizes that this ritual was never legally abolished. As one of the goals, he states the rapprochement with those communities that have separated from the communion with the Catholic Church, and whose reunification with Peter's successor was tirelessly advocated by his predecessors. He also points out the many young people who have discovered the way of meeting the Lord in the old liturgical form. But speaking of the old ritual, the Pope emphasizes the need for an appropriate liturgical formation, both of the priests and of the believers participating in the celebrations. According to the Pope, those priests who would celebrate Mass according to the old rite should never neglect the new rite.

However, the *Summorum Pontificum* and the cover letter to the bishops provoked divided reactions, and discussions about them are still present today. First, if we assume that one of *Motu Proprio's* motives was rapprochement with communities that separated from communion with the Catholic Church, then this document does not address much, precisely because these groups ex-

105 I. ŽIŽIĆ, Nove odredbe o 'starom obredu'. *Motu proprio* Benedikta XVI. *Summorum pontificum*, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2007.), 3, 304.

press wider disagreement with the decisions of the Second Vatican Council. Although it is known that during the pontificate of Pope Francis, work was done on rapprochement, it seems that not much has been done and in conclusion it is imposed that the “double use of the same rite”<sup>106</sup> from the document *Summorum Pontificum* did not produce the desired result.

Another problem that arises is the relationship between liturgy and Dogmatics. In his article on this topic, Ivica Žilić summarizes the issue as follows: “*Motu proprio* of Benedict XVI predicts two different forms of liturgy, which are related in continuity and mutual reciprocity, but are included in a single belief. Thus, neither the unity of belief nor the unity of the liturgy would be endangered. But this raises another, much more complex question about the position of the liturgy in relation to belief. By that logic, isn’t the liturgy, with its alternative dual use, reduced to a subordinate means of dogmatic records, and does it not diminish its dignity as the source and culmination (SC 10)?”<sup>107</sup> Another objection that can be made to this document is the fact that the Roman liturgy is a rite – *Ordo*. This is a single order that would not tolerate alternatives. It is the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that emphasizes the importance of the unity of the rite and its inclusion in the unity of belief.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, any duplication of rites would lead to a violation of that unity.

According to Žilić, the pastoral problems arising from the Pope’s decision have strengthened the traditionalist currents within the Church, the violation of the unity of the parish community, the relativization of the regular rite, and the glorification of the extraordinary. The author further wonders whether the choice of liturgy can be the subject of the arbitrariness of individual priests or groups of believers and concludes that the conciliar liturgy should be strengthened, which is consistent with the old rite, but also goes beyond it, precisely because of the problems that led to the restoration, rather than simply enabling a return to the old, doing nothing of use, but instead isolating the individual.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.2. *Sacramentum caritatis*

106 BENEDIKT XVI., *Summorum pontificum* (7. VI. 2007.), in: [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20070707\\_summorum-pontificum.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20070707_summorum-pontificum.html) (Accessed 22 February 2019).

107 I. ŽIŽIĆ, Nove odredbe o 'starom obredu'. *Motu proprio* Benedikta XVI. *Summorum pontificum*, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2007.), 3, 308.

108 Cf. SaC, no. 7-10

109 I. ŽIŽIĆ, Nove odredbe o 'starom obredu'. *Motu proprio* Benedikta XVI. *Summorum pontificum*, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2007.), 3, 310-312.

The *Sacramentum caritatis* is the Synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Benedict XVI on the Eucharist, the source and culmination of the life and mission of the Church, issued on February 22, 2007, as a stimulus for a deeper immersion in the Eucharistic mystery. According to Ivan Bodrožić, there are two reasons for the frequent commitment of the Magisterium and the focus on the Eucharist. The negative reasons are superficiality and misinterpretation of the conciliar provisions, and the positive determinant is the need for human growth in understanding this mystery.<sup>110</sup> “With this Exhortation, the Pope wants to fully permeate and awaken the believers’ consciousness that Eucharistic spirituality cannot be reduced to devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, but must encompass the whole of life.”<sup>111</sup>

The petitioner *Sacramentum caritatis* is divided into three parts. The first part is entitled *The Eucharist – a mystery to be believed* and is based on dogmatic teaching. The second part, *The Eucharist – a mystery to be celebrated* concerns concrete liturgical and pastoral practice, and the third part, entitled *The Eucharist – a mystery to be lived* is of a missionary character, directed outwards. The petitioner does not present any novelty in terms of learning and is faithful to the previous teaching. Even the liturgical and pastoral guidelines do not provide concrete news, but from the Initiative we can read some elements that encourage the renewal of “the zeal of the whole Church, especially those who celebrate the sacred mysteries, but also the whole Church.” a life from which a consistent and zealous proclamation then arises.”<sup>112</sup> The petitioner is filled with a sense of admiration for the sacrament of the Eucharist and this can be read in the first issues: “How astonished the apostles must have been in their hearts before the words and gestures of the Lord during the Last Supper! What order of admiration must arouse the mystery of the Eucharist in our hearts as well!”<sup>113</sup> In a world that is losing its sense of admiration, this is exactly what it should arouse in the Eucharist, separating it from the everyday, the ordinary.

Referring to his first Encyclical *Deus caritas est*, the Pope connects the Eucharist with love, in fact, he calls it the “sacrament of love.”<sup>114</sup> Number 14 of the Exhortation speaks of the primacy of Christ’s love who “first loved us.”<sup>115</sup> His death on the cross is “love in its most radical form.”<sup>116</sup>

110 I. BODROŽIĆ, Benedikt XVI. i apostolska pobudnica *Sacramentum caritatis* – Glavne hermeneutske odrednice, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2017.), 4, 383.

111 *Ibid*, 384.

112 *Ibid*, 387.

113 SaC, no. 1

114 SaC, no. 1

115 SaC, no. 14

116 DCE, no. 12

The next important dimension of the Exhortation is freedom. “First, God gives himself to man in freedom, and he expects a free response from the man, he expects man to accept him freely and to accept his way of free giving. God’s action is not conditioned by anything, because God possesses absolute freedom in himself.”<sup>117</sup> The Eucharist is, therefore, the meeting of God’s freedom and man’s freedom. “Man was created for true and eternal happiness, which can be provided by God’s love. But our wounded freedom would be lost if it were not already possible to experience something of future completion. After all, in order for a man to be able to walk in the right direction, it is necessary to guide him towards the ultimate goal. This ultimate destiny is in fact Christ the Lord, the victor over sin and death, who is present in a special way in the celebration of the Eucharist. Although we are “newcomers and travelers” (1 Peter 2:11) in this world, in faith we are already partakers of the fullness of the resurrected life. The Eucharistic Feast, by announcing its distinctly eschatological dimension, comes to the aid of our freedom in walking.”<sup>118</sup> The Pope goes on to speak of another form of freedom, freedom from liturgical norms and determinants. He believes that “the true art of worship is not left to human arbitrariness and ability, which means that the worship of the Church is not left to human freedom, but is determined by the divine will.”<sup>119</sup>

The Pope concludes the petition by mentioning Mary, a person who “unconditionally accepts the gift of God.”<sup>120</sup> “In it we find in the perfect way the realized essence of the Church. The Church of Mary, “woman of the Eucharist,” the servant of God as John Paul II called it – sees his most perfect icon and observes it as an irreplaceable model of the Eucharistic life.”<sup>121</sup> Many of the Pope’s theological thoughts, which Ratzinger developed in the time before he became the Pope, are present in the Exhortation, and it’s goal is to awaken awareness of the greatest gift of love, the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>122</sup>

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117 I. BODROŽIĆ, Benedikt XVI. i apostolska pobudnica *Sacramentum caritatis* – Glavne hermeneutske odrednice, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2017.), 4, 394-395.

118 SaC, no. 30

119 I. BODROŽIĆ, Benedikt XVI. i apostolska pobudnica *Sacramentum caritatis* – Glavne hermeneutske odrednice, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2017.), 4, 402.

120 SaC, no. 33

121 SaC, no. 96

122 I. BODROŽIĆ, Benedikt XVI. i apostolska pobudnica *Sacramentum caritatis* – Glavne hermeneutske odrednice, in: *Služba Božja*, 47 (2017.), 4, 407.

### 3.3. *Verbum Domini*

The Word of God in the life and mission of the Church is the theme of the regular General Synod of Bishops held in the Vatican from October 5 to 26, 2008. The apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* is the fruit of this Synod, “a testimony to the Church and to the world of how beautiful the encounter with the Word of God is in ecclesial communion.”<sup>123</sup> In the document, the Pope looks back at the development, research and rediscovery of the Word of God, especially from the pontificate of Leon XIII to the culmination of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum*, to the present day.<sup>124</sup>

The document begins with reflections on God’s original initiative (He is the one who speaks), then on man’s response to God’s speech. The interesting part is the Word of God in the Church, more precisely the liturgy – its privileged place. In the liturgy, God “speaks to the assembled people who listen and respond.”<sup>125</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says that in the liturgy “the Scriptures are of the utmost importance. Readings are read from it and interpreted in the homily; psalms are sung from it”<sup>126</sup> Moreover, Christ is present in his Word. The Word is proclaimed in the liturgy following the rhythm of the liturgical year, centered in the Paschal Mystery.<sup>127</sup>

The Liturgy of the Word is an integral and indispensable part of every sacramental act. This is most evident in the sacrament of the Eucharist. This “inner unity between the Word and the Eucharist is rooted in the testimony of Scripture, witnessed by the Church Fathers and confirmed by the Second Vatican Council.”<sup>128</sup> The proclamation of the Scriptures and the interpretation lead us towards the goal, “towards the sacrifice of the covenant and the feast of grace, that is, towards the Eucharist.”<sup>129</sup> The word and the sacramental act are inter-related and one without the other is incomprehensible and incomplete.

The Pope goes on to address issues such as the importance of the ministry of the reader, the homily, and the preparation for it, and refers to the Homile Directory and points out that Christ is the center of the homily. In the following text of the petition, the Pope speaks of the Word in other sacraments and acts

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123 BENEDIKT XVI., *Verbum Domini – Riječ Božja. Postsinodalna apostolska podbudnica Svetoga Oca Benedikta XVI. biskupima, svećenicima, posvećenim osobama i vjernicima laicima o Riječi Božjoj u životu i poslanju Crkve* (30. IX. 2010.), Zagreb, 2011., no. 2. (hereinafter: VD)

124 Cf. VD, no. 3

125 VD, no. 52

126 SaC, 24

127 Cf. VD, no. 52

128 VD, no. 53

129 VD, no. 55

of the Church, paying particular attention to the relationship between the Word and silence. He appeals for silence to become part of the liturgical celebration.<sup>130</sup> The document also addresses various topics, such as the Word of God in the Church, the Word addressed to the world, the value of the Word in culture, interreligious dialogue and many others.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, although most of Ratzinger's work was not written about the sacrament of the Eucharist, he mentions them in several documents, primarily because of the importance of that sacrament in the lives of the believers. It seems that this topic constantly occupies his thoughts and that he cares about the correct understanding and direction of this sacrament as a foundation for building a quality religious life. To make this mystery, which is the source and culmination, as understandable as possible, the Pope uses the achievements of the biblical sciences, paying special attention to the results of historical-critical exegesis. From his works one can easily read the evaluation of the reach of the Second Vatican Council. The use of guidelines and documents shows its focus on that Council.

Ratzinger puts at the center a person, who is always in a relationship, never left to himself. He is no stranger to Jewish customs and the cult of the temple; through whose prism he observes the establishment and development of the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Paschal Mystery, Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection, all have an impact on the Eucharist, because without surrender and celebration, Jesus' Last supper was a mere event of the past. In several of his writings, he describes in detail the course of Jesus' Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist, explaining step by step every aspect of that event, from the date of the establishment, all the way to the analysis of Jesus' words. A correct understanding of active participation in the Holy Mass, as one of the essential topics of the Council Reform and the communion of believers gathered on the Day of the Lord are important topics that according to Ratzinger are important to correctly establish because their misunderstanding certainly leads to trivialization of the holy celebration.

In his brief pontificate, Benedict XVI emphasized in many places the importance of the sacrament of the Eucharist. He did so primarily as an ordained clerk, by celebrating that mystery. Furthermore, he left numerous written works such as homilies and catecheses in which the theme of the Eucharist appears.

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130 Cf. VD, no. 66

Although three documents closely related to the sacrament of the Eucharist have been singled out in this paper, there are many other topics related to the sacrament of the Eucharist, and they are part of Ratzinger's written opus, such as art and music in the service of worship, aesthetics, silence, gestures and many others. We can conclude that Joseph Ratzinger is a great connoisseur of various theological and liturgical fields throughout history, from the beginnings of the Church, through the Restoration of the Council, to the present day. He does not hesitate to openly criticize the current situation and the abuses that occur in the Church. Since these are the reflections of one theologian, we cannot expect everyone to necessarily agree with his thoughts. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the works of Joseph Ratzinger have been widely read, translated and make a strong contribution to the development and understanding of the Eucharist, always in continuity with the tradition of the Church.



## THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT OF JOSEPH RATZINGER / BENEDICT XVI

### Summary

In Joseph Ratzinger's theology, the theme of the Eucharist has a significant place. Relying on historical-critical exegesis, he analyzes the act when Jesus established the Eucharist while emphasizing the Paschal mystery. In this sequence, Ratzinger observes Christ in relation to his Church, the interrelationship of Christ's believers and deals deeply with the act of establishing the Eucharist. He also compares the present worship in temples with that of the first Church. Ratzinger seeks to defend the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, not just the feast. A common theme of his theological writings is communion between the believers and their active participation in the Eucharist.

The article is divided into three parts. The starting points of Ratzinger's discourse on the Eucharist are considered initial. The second chapter provides an overview of important topics that run through Ratzinger's works, and the third chapter presents documents from the time of the pontificate of Benedict XVI on the topic of the Eucharist. The conclusion is a synthesis of the previously presented insights of Ratzinger's Eucharistic thoughts.

*Key words:* Eucharist, Communion of Believers, Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI.

