



## Reflections

On

***A Common Rule for Monastics: -***

# The Bread of Life

The Eucharist

(Chapter 7)

**“... and all we have to do is provide the hunger.”**

Paragraph 4, Lines 2 & 3

***The Eucharist is a sacrament. Christ is present in the Sacraments, and we encounter Him through them. The Eucharist is presented as the most vivid example of Christ's presence. The sacraments take us beyond words. Through them we are touched by Jesus.<sup>1</sup>***

Having listened to the talk on the Sacraments at two Cursillo weekends (one as a candidate and the other as a Presenter/Table Leader), one thing is lodged in my mind, and heart. It is that, when building a relationship, we talk - a lot. When that relationship has reached a certain level of intimacy, like on the honeymoon after courtship and marriage, we do less talking. Touch and other non-verbal communications are preferred. Touch stimulates growth.

The focus of this reflection is on the hunger for the Bread of Life, and the fact that in order for us to really be touched by the Food of Heaven, we must hunger for it. Hunger is not a casual desire. It is a profound and innate longing for that which is beneficial. If the yearning isn't to satisfy a beneficial need then the feeling is most likely greed or avarice. Hunger in the physical occurs to fill a need over which we have little control. With the spiritual, hunger may also be non-voluntary, because once we become fully aware of who we are in Christ, the yearning for more of Him begins. The less we have of Him, the hungrier we become.

As with the physical, in the spiritual, we can ignore the hunger and not feast on the things of God. When we do this, we become spiritually malnourished and deficient. This impoverishment leads to many spiritual diseases and disorders (sin), and the results are unpleasant. We ignore warnings (commandments and admonishments) because of our altered state of mind (caused by spiritual malnourishment), so we suffer the consequences.

How do we treat spiritual malnourishment? An initial step would be to empty yourself. Check the ego. If we are too full of ourselves, and any number of irrelevant distractions, we cannot fill up on the Heavenly Food of the Eucharist - be touched by Christ - and be aware of His glorious presence. One wise person has made an acronym of the word ego: **E**dging **G**od **O**ut. If we edge God out, and not feast on His body, we are playing with our health and inviting disaster.

The second step in treating spiritual malnourishment, is taken from *Hebrews 5:12*. Slowly dine on light spiritual fare (the milk of the Word), until we are able to sup on solid food (the meat of the Word). Once we

are mature enough, and have been strengthened by the Word, we may begin to realize that our feasting is not complete. So our spiritual bellies rumble. We yearn for His presence. We hunger for His touch. This is manifested when we participate in the Holy Eucharist with the fullness of our being and in anticipation of a glorious encounter.

The invitation of the Eucharist is to come and dine. This invitation is not extended to a particular denomination or any one other sect. It is extended to all who believe. It is the one meal that unites us as one in Christ. When we partake of this meal, having emptied ourselves, and yearned for its sweetness, we are inviting His presence. The Eucharist has many names in many religious groupings. The one I find most appealing is Love Feast (see Jude 12). It is because of love that His body was bruised and broken and His blood was spilled. Love brought Christ to earth. Love allowed Him to endure the worst punishment. Love, not the nails, kept Him on the Cross. This love gift to all (John 3:16). This love, freely given, seems a whole lot more satisfying when there is a great hunger for it.

Sisters and Brothers, the invitation is to always seek (HUNGER) for more of God: Hunger for relationship; hunger for fellowship; hunger for community; hunger for righteousness; hunger for holiness; hunger for love. Yes, hunger for His touch and His Presence, by way of His Body, and life Giving Blood, in the Eucharist. Hunger for the Bread that gives life and the Cup that makes us one.

A more appropriate phrase may be “**Keep Hungering.**”

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<sup>i</sup> National Episcopal Cursillo, *Lay Talk Workbook* (Booklet #14) 2004, Order #32