

Lyceum 133 -February 12, 2026 – a forum to Think, Discuss, Share, and Learn from one another. Your input is welcomed - Iron sharpens iron.

Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.” – Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

Note: I will be sending a second Lyceum this weekend on Black History month before any more of it will be erased from the annals of history by this present administration.
-rvb.

Sacraments – Moments of Grace. A source of spirituality of spiritual nourishment and growth. Reflections on the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination, and Anointing of the Sick. -Roger J. Vanden Busch.

REAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

- Christ is truly present under the form of bread and wine.
- The Eucharist contains the “whole Christ.”
- In holy Communion we share in God’s own life.
- The Eucharist is both real and a symbol.
- Other modes of Christ’s presence point toward the Real Presence in the sacramental species.
- St. John Chrysostom reminds us that more sacred than the altar in church is the human altar set up in every street, home, office, school, factory, and city. On the first altar Christ is offered, but on the second altar is Christ himself. When you leave the doors of your church, look around with the eyes of faith, and let the Real Presence burst forth within your souls, for Jesus is in our midst.

Soul Searching:

Is Eucharist the centerpiece of your life and family, and a reason for attending Eucharist? What are your reasons for attending? What do you think of the following reasons?

Take a fresh look at celebrating the Eucharist:

- a. Because it is not good to be alone.
- b. To take my rightful place humbly within the human family.
- c. Because God calls me there.
- d. To dispel my fantasies about myself.
- e. Because ten thousand saints have told me so.
- f. To help others carry their pathologies and to have them help carry mine.
- g. To dream with others.
- h. To practice for heaven.
- i. For the pure joy of it...because it is heaven.

-Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*, p. 134ff.

Does the Eucharist call you to see the presence of God in your daily experiences, happenings, and situations? No Substitutes, please! In an imaginative essay, R. Voight writes: “He was old, tired, and sweaty, pushing his homemade cart down the alley, stopping now and then to poke around in somebody’s garbage. I wanted to tell him about the Eucharist but the look in his eyes, the despair on his face, the hopelessness of somebody else’s life in his cart, told me to forget it. So, I smiled, said ‘Hi’ and gave him Eucharist. She lived alone, her husband dead, her family gone, and she talked at you, not to you, words, endless words spewed out. So, I listened and gave her Eucharist. My Father, when will we learn you cannot talk Eucharist, you cannot theologize about it. You DO it. Sometimes you laugh it, sometimes you cry it, often you sing it...You see Eucharist in another’s eyes, give it in another is handheld tight, squeeze it in an embrace. You pause Eucharist in the middle of a busy day, speak it in another’s ear, listen to it from a person who wants to talk...I give you my supper, I give you my sustenance, I give you my life, I give you me. I give you Eucharist.” Eucharist is not the sole and exclusive right and privilege of the ordained minister; it is our

baptismal right and privilege to celebrate Eucharist when and wherever we are gathered with two or more. There, Jesus is present.

Discuss the following quotation: “In a committed, loving, covenantal relationship is sacramental, part of a couple’s Eucharist.—You and your significant other - keep in mind that often we refrain from connecting sexuality and the sacraments – our sexuality is the deepest and most basic desire we possess – we must realize that our bodies are holy and that sexual relationships are sharing of the divine energy that comes from the Eucharist that animates the universe.” -The Holy Longing, p.199, Ron Rolheiser.

The Eight Cs of the History of the Eucharist - summary

The goal of this essay is to enhance your understanding of the history of the Eucharist from its inception. As Confucius wrote: “When you drink from the spring, remember the source.”

Pope John XXIII said, “We are not on earth to be museum keepers, but to cultivate a flourishing garden of life.” When we no longer have any innovative ideas then it is time to see the undertaker. Unless we change and grow, we will die.

CELEBRATE: Passover and the Jewish Synagogue Service

There is no doubt about the Jewish influence on Christian worship. Our Christian roots are deeply embedded in the rich soil of Judaism as expressed in the Jewish Passover and the synagogue service. The Passover is a real memorial where God is freely, graciously, and sacramentally present. In the words of Walter Bruggemann, “He is a God who is faithfully present as a covenant-keeper, an exile-ender, a freedom –bringer, and a life-giver.”

Jewish Roots

The Christian liturgy of the Word emerges out of the synagogue service, and the liturgy of the Eucharist is influenced by the Jewish meal. The synagogue service includes prayers, psalms, commentary, and blessings. The liturgy of the Eucharist derives from the blessings (BERAKAH) and the praises (EUCHARISTIA) of the domestic Jewish liturgical celebration or meal.

COMBINE: The Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist

By 150 C.E., the two blessings, divided by the regular meal, are combined, and placed as a single rite at the end of the meal. This became the liturgy of the Eucharist. Later, the Liturgy of the Word replaces the meal. This format becomes normative until the present:

+Liturgy of the Word: Two readings; commentary; prayers

+Liturgy of the Eucharist: bring gifts; Eucharistic prayer: blessings and thanksgiving; take bread and wine; give thanks; and distribute.

Consolidate: Bishops as the Hub

From the fourth century onward, there is a gradual evolution from a brief and simple ritual meal into a more elaborate liturgy. In 313 C.E. Constantine grants religious toleration for Christians and thus paves the way for an increasingly closer relationship between church and state. The church morphs from small, intimate communities to larger, less familiar gatherings. Bishops are given the authority to function as judges in some civil matters. They preside in basilicas which create a greater distance from the people of God. Liturgy becomes more an official, public ritual. By the seventh century, the Papal Mass becomes normative, with special clothing, miter, tiara, incense, and throne. These are trappings of the Roman emperor. Liturgy symbolizes the unity of the empire.

Major Influences

The bishops become central figures in their respective dioceses. They are preservers and defenders of the apostolic tradition. The liturgy becomes a clerical affair, centered on the bishop with his priests and deacons while the monks lead the singing. The laity still participates, but to a much lesser extent and gradually become passive spectators. There is a definite shift from a spontaneous expression of worship to a stately ritual of recited prayers and organized activities.

Arianism, dating from the fourth century, was another major influence on the liturgy. Arius, a Greek speaking priest, taught that Christ was fully divine, but not fully human. The Church, at the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., rejected this position, arguing that Christ is “one in being with the Father.” What is at stake, of course, is the question of whether Christ is divine or not. The resulting one-sided emphasis on Christ’s divinity has had a lasting influence on the theology of the church and her liturgical practices.

At the Eucharist, Christ is perceived more as the unapproachable divinity. Even though by the eleventh century the church is no longer dealing with a direct reaction to the influence of Arianism, the posture of the church is one of defensiveness. As J.A.

Jungmann writes, “The suppression of Christ’s humanity continued to act and contribute to the formation of the style and expression of medieval piety” (Pastoral Liturgy, p. 41).

Breakdown of the Experimental Liturgical Community

Rome remains solemn, rigid, and less emotional in its celebrations. By the tenth century, the Papacy reaches its liturgical nadir. Liturgy is neglected. There is very little participation. The early church remained faithful to the fundamental spirit and practice of the liturgy. However, like most human institutions or practices, liturgy gradually becomes formalized and institutionalized and loses some of its immediacy, spontaneity, clarity, and meaning. Jungmann pointedly captures the liturgical spirit of the early Middle Ages: “Divine worship was solemn and remote from the people...it was an external activity, carried out according to prescribed rules...it had become a lifeless civil act” (p. 69).

Rise of Devotional Practices

The period 1000-1400 C.E. is one of “dissolution, elaboration, reinterpretation and misinterpretation” (J.Emminghaus, p. 70). In addition to the clericalization of the Mass and a decline in the reception of Holy Communion, the lack of liturgical experience leads to the development of para-liturgical devotions. The rise of “Corpus Christi” piety is an example. Here, the static presence of Christ is stressed. Christ is perceived as a “liege-Lord” holding audience on a throne. The raised host is to be contemplated but not received. The people were silent spectators; they were pious, but their piety was not liturgical; “they did not pray the Mass, but prayed during it” (Emminghaus, p.70).

CENTRALIZE: Reformation and Trent

Martin Luther is not pleased with the abuses that continue to fester and spread throughout the life of the church. For Luther scripture is enchain and piety supplants faith. Mass has become more of a superstition. He does not support private masses and mass stipends. He believes that the clergy is a special class which represses the community’s awareness of itself as a “priestly” people.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) is a centralizing and conserving council. Abuses are held in check. Centralization and control are historical necessities. Private masses become the norm and people remain spectators. Participation continues to be devotional rather than liturgical. Communion is infrequent. The Scriptures continue to be read in Latin, a foreign language. These practices lack a real, conscious relationship to the source, origin, center, and summit of Christianity.

CRACKED-OPEN: Pioneers and the Spirit of Vatican II

Pope John XXIII's vision is reflected in Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963. The document on Sacred Liturgy assesses that, "Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the fountain from which all her power flows" (#10). Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis encourage the people of God to take an active, conscious, fruitful, and devout part in the Eucharist, which is a dialogue with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

POPE BENEDICT XVI: THE EUCHARIST, ANTIDOTE AGAINST INDIVIDUALISM AND SELFISHNESS

The Eucharist sustains and transforms the whole of daily life.

The 2,000-year-old history of the Church is sprinkled with saints whose existence is an eloquent sign of how in communion with the Lord and from the Eucharist a new and intense assumption of responsibility comes into being at all the levels of community life; thus, a new positive social development is born which is centered on the person, especially when he or she is poor, sick or in need. Being nourished by Christ is the way not to be foreign or indifferent to the fate of the brethren, but rather to enter into the same logic of love and of the gift of the sacrifice of the Cross; anyone who can kneel before the Eucharist, who receives the Body of the Lord, cannot but be attentive in the ordinary daily routine to situations unworthy of the human being; anyone who can bend over the needy in the first person, who can break his own bread with the hungry and share water with the thirsty, who can clothe the naked and visit the sick person and the prisoner (cf. Mt 25:34-36).

Consubstantial:

On Sunday Pope Francis I said that the Eucharist is no mere symbol but is in fact the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which can transform our hearts and minds to be more like him. "The Eucharist is Jesus who gives himself entirely to us. To nourish ourselves with him and abide in him through Holy Communion, if we do it with faith, transforms our life into a gift to God and to our brothers and sisters."

To let ourselves be nourished by the "Bread of Life," he said, "means to be in tune with the heart of Christ, to assimilate his choices, thoughts, behaviors."

It also means that we enter into "a dynamism of sacrificial love and become persons of peace, forgiveness, reconciliation and sharing in solidarity," he added.

-Roger J. Vanden Busch – published in Emmanuel Magazine, November 1984, revised 9/16/20 and 1/27/24. A summary adaptation of the article.

The communion of empty hands – Eduardo Galeano

Pastors and lay Christians imprisoned by countries authoritarian government in the 70s and 80s in Uruguay.

1973, Montevideo, 9th Cavalry barracks. A rotten night. Roar of trucks and machine gun fire, prisoners face down on the floor, hands behind their heads, a gun at every back, shouts, kicks, rifle blows, threats...In the morning, one of the prisoners who had not yet lost track of the calendar recalled, “Today is Easter Sunday.”

In the morning, one of the prisoners who had not yet lost track of the calendar recalled, “Today is Easter Sunday.” Gatherings were not allowed. But they pulled it off. In the middle of the yard, they came together. The non-Christians helped. Several of them kept an eye on the barred gates and an ear out for the guards’ footsteps. Others walked about, forming a human ring around the celebrants.

Miguel Brun whispered a few words. He evoked the resurrection of Jesus, which promised redemption for all captives. Jesus had been persecuted, jailed, tormented, and murdered, but one Sunday, a Sunday like this one, he made the walls creak and crumble so there would freedom in every prison and company in every solitude.

The prisoners had nothing. No bread, no wine, not even cups. It was a communion of empty hands. Miguel made an offering to the one who had offered himself. “Eat,” he whispered. “This is his body.” And the Christians raised their hands to their lips and at the invisible bread. “Drink. This is his blood.” And they raised the nonexistent cup and drank the invisible wine.

Source: Voices of Time. A Life in Stories, Eduardo Galeano.

Haikus composed by the adults whose children are preparing for their first communion – Haikus are composed of three lines – 5, 7, 5 syllables. They challenge

you to compose your understanding and feelings about the Eucharist. How about you? Compose a Haiku.

1. Bread becomes His flesh/ Wine His Blood upon the altar/ Jesus truly here.
2. Eucharistic feast/ Humbly take my rightful place/ True presence in me.
3. Jesus, I need you/ Thank you for your sacrifice/ All are welcome here.
4. White bread, silent cup/ Heaven comes to earth this day/ Hearts find rest in Him.
5. Eat and drink with me/ The void is filled with community/ All are welcome here.
6. Quiet altar awaits/ Bread and wine are set before/ God is near in love.
7. Restore my soul Lord/ Help me to find inner peace/ Healing bread of life.
8. The body of Christ/ “Amen” I say, loud and proud/ I feel joy and peace.
9. Family in church/ Brings everyone together/ God shows us the way.
10. Believe, “Just”/ Structure “Gives”/ Piece of mind.
11. We come together/ Share in the body of Christ/ Then share it with all.
12. Holy Communion/ Christ is present/ Let us receive Him.
13. Bread and wine we share/ Jesus comes to be with us/ Love is in our hearts.
14. Small piece of white bread/ Jesus says, “to eat this bread.”/ So here we are now.
15. His love was once here/ Now I am called to show love/ I will act like Him.
16. I’m here today Lord/ Fully, open, raw, and humble/ Connecting with You.
17. White snow falls softly/ Blanketing the silent weeds/ Winter finds its home.
18. With us, for us. Amen. / Your bread sustains us, calls us/ To welcome, forgive.
19. One table, one Lord/ Many lives, one sacred meal/ We are made as one.
20. I am open to You/ Enter my soul to help guide me/ Make me one with You.

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Neighborhood “The 1826, in Connecticut, a farmer named Josiah Holbrook started a school for ‘the general diffusion of knowledge and raising the moral and intellectual taste’ of Americans. In those days, the opportunities for higher education were limited to those venerable old universities that had long served the upper crust. Holbrook’s vision was to make learning – practical, liberal, and humane – available to working people of all kinds. He named his school the Lyceum, after the garden where Aristotle once taught his students philosophy.... We need to go deeper than the superficial fights that characterize public life. We need to return to the first principles and meet each other there as human beings.” – Nathan Beacom, Plough Magazine, Autumn 2023, p. 9.

In honor of Black History month and approaching the centennial of national Black history commemorations as founded by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)—we’re reminded of the importance of protecting stories that were long ignored.

Preserving Forks of the Road ensures that the lives forever changed here are acknowledged, allowing these stories to take their rightful place in our shared history.

10 remarkable Black women who quietly changed history.

These 10 remarkable Black women defied barriers and reshaped history—often without the recognition they deserved. Across science, sports, politics, and civil rights, their bold actions and quiet strength helped build a more just future. Their stories continue to inspire and demand to be remembered. -Washington Archives and NASA.

1. Claudette Colvin.

In 1955, 15-year-old Claudette Colvin was arrested for refusing to give up her bus seat. She later became one of the plaintiffs in Browder v. Gayle, the case that ended bus segregation. Yet Civil rights leaders sidelined her due to her age and pregnancy. Her juvenile record was cleared many years later, cementing her legacy.

2. Bessie Coleman.

Denied entry to U.S. flight schools, Bessie Coleman learned French and trained in France in 1921, becoming the first Black and Native American woman pilot. Nicknamed "Brave Bessie," she thrilled crowds with aerial stunts and rejected segregated shows. She dreamed of opening a flight school for Black pilots, but she died before achieving it.

3. Dr. Rebecca Lee Crumpler.

In 1864, Crumpler was the first Black woman in the U.S. to earn an M.D. She treated former slaves in Virginia despite constant racism. One of only 300 women physicians nationwide, she published a rare 1883 medical book, the first by a Black doctor. Sadly, her contributions went unrecognized long after her death.

4. Ida B. Wells.

Ida B. Wells bravely exposed lynching in the 1890s through fearless journalism. She co-founded The NAACP in 1909 with W.E.B. Du Bois and others to fight for civil rights and racial justice. Refusing to give up her train seat long before Rosa Parks, she was posthumously awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2020.

5. Madam C.J. Walker.

Born to formerly enslaved parents, Madam C.J. Walker created a beauty empire in the early 1900s, becoming the first female self-made millionaire. Traveling by train, she sold her products nationwide, employing over 20,000 women across North America and the Caribbean. Her mansion stood proudly among those of New York's wealthiest elite.

6. Dorothy Vaughan.

Dorothy Vaughan was NASA's first African American supervisor, leading the West Area Computing unit of Black women mathematicians. A key figure in the early U.S. space program, she secretly taught herself and her team FORTRAN programming. Portrayed by Octavia Spencer in "Hidden Figures," Vaughan worked for 28 years without formal recognition until the 2000s.

7. Althea Gibson.

Playing paddle tennis in Harlem, Althea Gibson broke racial barriers in sports. She became the first Black Grand Slam winner in 1956, then won Wimbledon and the U.S. Nationals in 1957 and 1958. Later, she broke ground in pro golf. Despite her fame, she faced financial struggles and faded from the spotlight.

8. Henrietta Lacks.

Henrietta Lacks was a Black mother of five who succumbed to cervical cancer in 1951. Her cells, taken without consent, became the first immortal human cell line named HeLa—driving breakthroughs in polio, cancer, IVF, and COVID-19. However, her family was not informed for 20 years, which sparked a global debate over medical ethics and consent.

9. Mary McLeod Bethune.

A pioneering educator and activist, Mary McLeod Bethune founded a school for African American girls in 1904, which later evolved into Bethune-Cookman University. She advised President Roosevelt and founded the National Council of Negro Women. Her legacy was cemented with the first statue of a Black American in the Capitol's National Statuary Hall.

10. Fannie Lou Hamer.

Fannie Lou Hamer challenged all-white delegations at the 1964 Democratic Convention. A fearless voting rights activist, she registered to vote despite suppression. Hamer survived a brutal jailhouse beating and lived with lasting injuries. Her powerful words, "I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired," still echo.

9 Historical Truths about discrimination You Were Never Taught in School

1. The Tulsa Race Massacre (1921 - The University of Virginia).

In 1921, a white mob razed the prosperous Black neighborhood of Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Known as the Black Wall Street, this thriving community was reduced to ashes. Hundreds were killed, and thousands were left homeless. This violent eruption of racial hatred was largely omitted from history books. For decades, the trauma lingered, un-addressed. The massacre symbolizes a dark chapter in American history that echoes the systemic racism prevalent in society.

2. The Wilmington Coup (1898) - Coastal Review.

In 1898, Wilmington, North Carolina, witnessed the only successful coup in U.S. history. White supremacists overthrew a legally elected biracial government, killing dozens. This violent coup d'état starkly illustrates the lengths to which some would go to preserve racial hierarchy. The short-lived biracial government held promise for racial harmony. The coup's legacy lingered, leaving a stain on American democracy and race relations that took generations to address.

3. The U.S. Government's Role in Redlining -NPR.

Federal housing policies in the 20th century systematically segregated communities through redlining. These discriminatory practices denied Black families access to homeownership, impeding generational wealth accumulation. Maps marked minority neighborhoods as "high risk," curbing investment. This economic exclusion reinforced racial disparities, leaving lasting effects. Redlining's legacy is visible in today's urban

landscapes, manifesting in education, health, and economic inequality. Understanding redlining is essential to addressing systemic racism's roots.

4. U.S. Involvement in Slavery After 1808 - Historic New Orleans Collection.

Despite the 1808 ban on the transatlantic slave trade, slavery flourished in the U.S. until 1865. Southern economies thrived on forced labor, supported by political and economic interests. This period highlights the contradictions within the nation, fighting for freedom while perpetuating bondage. Enslaved people's resilience and resistance played crucial roles in their eventual liberation. Understanding slavery's persistence emphasizes the deep-rooted challenges faced in the struggle for equality and justice.

5. The Deacons for Defense and Justice - The New Orleans Tribune.

During the Civil Rights era, the Deacons for Defense and Justice emerged as an armed African American self-defense group. Formed to protect activists from Ku Klux Klan violence, they played a crucial yet rarely acknowledged role. Their presence ensured safer marches and rallies, challenging the narrative of nonviolent resistance. The Deacons' legacy underscores the diverse strategies employed in the fight for civil rights, highlighting a seldom-told story of courage.

6. COINTELPRO (1956–1971) - Zinn Education Project.

The FBI's COINTELPRO, a covert program from 1956 to 1971, targeted civil rights and activist groups such as the Black Panthers and Martin Luther King Jr. This secret operation aimed to disrupt and discredit these movements. It exposed the lengths to which the government would go to maintain control, infringing on civil liberties. The revelation of COINTELPRO led to greater scrutiny of intelligence agencies, shaping public distrust in governmental power.

7. American Eugenics Movement- Berkeley Political Review.

Before Nazi Germany, the U.S. led the world in eugenics laws, including forced sterilizations of thousands deemed "unfit." This movement, rooted in pseudo-scientific beliefs, sought to control human reproduction. Policies disproportionately targeted marginalized groups, reflecting societal prejudices. The eugenics movement's influence on Nazi ideologies underscores the dangers of scientific abuse. Acknowledging this history is crucial for understanding contemporary debates on genetics and ethical research practices.

8. The Role of Slavery in the American Revolution - History.com.

Britain's offer of freedom to enslaved people who joined the British army during the American Revolution posed a significant threat to American slaveholders. This offer influenced the revolution's trajectory by intensifying fears of emancipation. Enslaved individuals' choices between opposing sides highlight their urgency and the complex motivations at play. Understanding slavery's role in the revolution sheds light on the contradictions and challenges within the fight for independence.

9. The Real Effects of the GI Bill - History.com.

The GI Bill provided significant benefits to millions of veterans after WWII, yet systemic racism often excluded Black veterans from equal access. Educational and housing benefits were unevenly distributed, perpetuating racial disparities. This inequity highlights the challenges of translating policy into practice. GI Bill's mixed legacy underscores the importance of addressing structural barriers to ensure true equality. Understanding these effects is crucial for creating equitable opportunities for all veterans.

+ “Prejudice blinds, ignorance retards, indifference deafens, and hate amputates. In this way, some people disable their souls.” Mary Robinson (1944-)

+ “The country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.” Theodore Roosevelt (1858 – 1919)

+ “White people are trapped in a history which they do not understand; and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it.” James Baldwin (1924-1987)

+ “We are citizens of one world; we are all of one blood. To hate someone because he was born in another country, because he speaks a different language, or because he takes a different view on a subject, is a great folly.” John Comenius (1592-1670)

+ “There is no room in this country for hyphenated Americans.” Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919)

+ “Immigrants of color never have been fully assimilated into U.S. society. They instead join a racially stratified society with deep inequalities that will forever deny them the opportunity available to their white counterparts to be fully integrated into the national community.” Kevin John (1958)

We are created in the image and likeness of God – Imago DEI= “of God” in Latin and DEI also means Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion.

Roger J. Vanden Busch.