

The Holy Eucharist - Sacrament of Faith and of the Unity of the Church

The year 2014 has been recommended by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, as the Eucharistic Anniversary Year, i.e. the Anniversary Year of the Holy Sacraments and of the Confession and the Holy Eucharist and of the Holy Brâncoveni Martyrs. It is a large thematic richness that called and still calls the ecclesial body to deep meditation, reflection and confession.

The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which somehow summarizes everything that is specific to Church, faith, life and mission of the Church. In the Eucharist, in a real and living form, Christ the Lord Himself with His Body and Blood, is present. He is shared by His secret body, that is the Church, or the Church members. In other words: the Church, faith and sacraments are closely related, since they are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. We can not speak of the Church without speaking of the faith of the Church on which it is based and which it confesses. On the other hand, we can not speak of the one saving faith, that about “one Lord, one faith and one Baptism” (Ephesians 4, 5), without mentioning the space and the place where this faith works and is heard, that is the Church. At the same time, both the Church and the faith would be largely powerless and without any efficiency, if Christ Himself would not be present in the Church, personally and in a real way, in the Eucharist, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist means, at the same time, His real and saving presence in the Church - His mysterious body. The faith of the Church professes precisely this reality expressing the manifestation of God’s love, Trinity of infinite and eternal loving persons that pours His sanctifying and saving love to the entire human race, for it to

be able to enjoy the love that shines and elevates, sanctifies and perfects human life and the world. Faith in Jesus Christ becomes faith in the Holy Trinity, in God's creation, in His providence, His saving economy, in His Incarnation, Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and it affirms, at the same time, the truth of His world, His parousia, to judge the living and the dead, in order to plenary manifest His kingdom and the eternal life, that is, the revelation of the power of that "new heaven" and "new earth" (cf. Revelation 21: 1), in which the divine righteousness will reign. These are the essential points of the one faith of the Church of saving faith which the Church professes and teaches to believers for their salvation, and as a sign of belonging to the Church and receiving the life of Jesus Christ in the Sacraments. To have and to profess this faith in unity with all this is to live in union with Christ and progress in this union with Him in the Eucharistic communion. Only in the love of Christ we can have this unity, as expressed by the Church: "Let us love one another, as in a plan to confess: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity one in essence and inseparable".

In the Eucharist we have Christ with all the wealth of His salvation and life, which is professed by the faith of the Church. Without the Cross and Christ's sacrifice, it would have been impossible both the salvation and the Eucharist, that Jesus Christ established at the Last Supper, in which He predicted His death and resurrection. In the Eucharist, the faithful live together these acts and saving work of Christ; they are not only intellectual statements, pure rational knowledge of things, but they transpose the faithful in the upper plane of existence and life that inspires and lives due to the life of Christ (cf. Galatians 2, 20), in the Church. The Eucharist, the faithful are united with Christ, through His love, by the grace of His love for them to be one with Christ and one another, as Christ, the eternal Son of the Father is one with Him and the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Eucharist becomes a source of unity of the Church, initiating and promoting the unity of the Church, after the divine model (cf. John 17, 21). The Eucharist is offered to all who have the right faith in Christ, as a premise of partaking with Him and promoting the unity in Him and with Him and with all who confess Christ with the same faith and love.

The faith and the Church Eucharist become not only the factors of unity, but also ways of cultivating the love of Christ. The mystery of the Eucharist always helps people to discover the reality of the holy com-

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munion, through which the world is revealed, the love of Christ Himself, thus promoting the “union of all” pulling down the dividing walls between people, and between peoples.

The mystery of the Eucharist is increasingly required to be well understood today, having as spiritual guides on this journey of understanding the great Fathers of the Church, who showed us the way to this understanding of the Eucharist. What we believe and confess as Christians, we receive in the Eucharist as a gift and mission of everyday life. But, at the same time, we must not forget the fact that both faith and Eucharist are not personal human “goods”, but are gifts and ministries of the church, where people are invited to join increasingly deeper and true. To the extent that people are getting closer to the Eucharist, partaking of it, they become more united to Christ, they understand and love each other more and more, through a sacrificial, ministering love.

It is of an increasing importance in our time, to let people be conquered and enriched by the gifts of the Holy Eucharist, in which Jesus Christ calls them to draw near to Him with “fear of God, with faith and love”.

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