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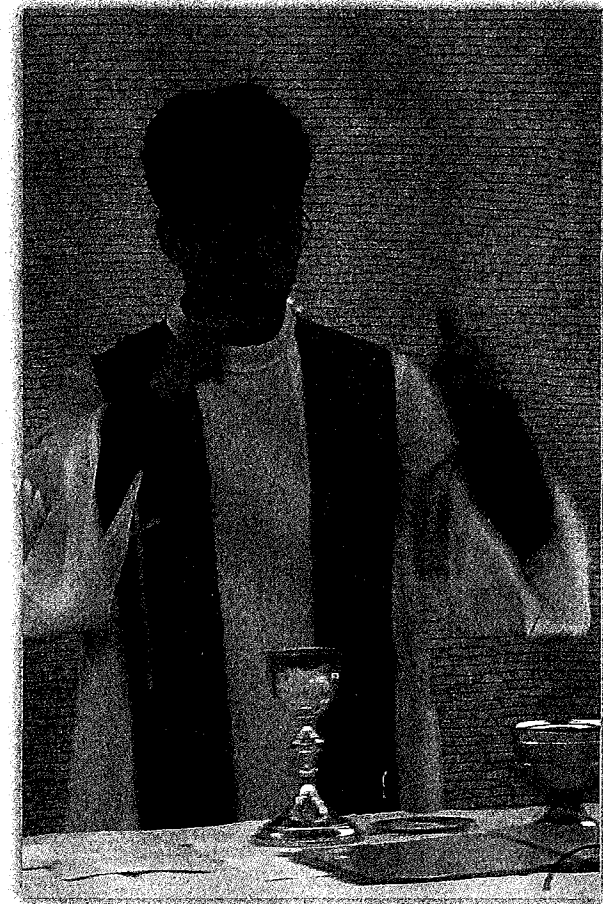
*Creating
Communities
of Welcome*

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Eileen D. Crowley

Min Seo Park

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long-term project supported by the school. Leadership is important, because usually it is the trip leader who will model relationship-building and long-term commitment and who will bring a spirit of mutuality, collaboration, and empowerment of the host community.

Reference

Priest, Robert J., and Joseph Paul Priest. "They See Everything and Understand Nothing: Short Term Mission and Service Learning." *Missiology: An International Review* 36, no. 1 (January 2008): 53–73.

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WORD AND WORSHIP

Rodica Stoicoiu

What Everyone Needs to Know about Sacramental Real Presence

Made you look! A short column like this one possibly won't carry out the entire promise of this title, but it can go a long way toward providing some basic concepts helpful in understanding sacramental real presence. I will do so by looking at four areas: the understanding of the Eucharist in the earliest New Testament writings, how symbols are to be approached as the language of sacrament, the place of mystery in this expression of Christ's presence, and the role of transubstantiation in the explanation of sacramental real presence. And why go to all this trouble? Well, remember that the celebration of the Eucharist is the most radical act we as Catholics can do. It is the symbol of our unity with God and one another. It is the fullest expression of our identity, born in the waters of baptism and most wholly expressed around the table. Through it we make known that we are the Body of Christ, a communion of persons—radically, socially, in the image of God. And through all of this we claim that Christ is truly, fully, really present. But what do we mean by this presence? This question is important on many levels—for catechesis,

for the faith of all who celebrate the Eucharistic liturgy, for ecumenical dialogue, just to name a few. Hence it would seem a credible project to more deeply understand the meaning behind this presence.

First, the place to begin is, of course, the New Testament. The earliest account of the Eucharist is that of Paul in First Corinthians. In this text he describes a eucharistic liturgy and gives a theology that challenges his community to live as Christ lived. Paul notes that he is passing on a tradition that he himself received and he is asking the community at Corinth to make this tradition their own. "For I receive from the Lord what I also handed on to you" (1 Cor 11:23). He is asking them through repeated celebrations of the Eucharist to appropriate its meaning and to make this meaning a part of their own lives, "For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor 11:29). He is asking them to live what they celebrate, a life focused on caring for the poor and the needy, a life of inclusivity and radical egalitarianism (Mitchell 1998, 74). Paul does not make a distinction between event (action) and

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object; it is all Eucharist, and Christ is present in it. That Christ was present was a given for Paul; how Christ was present is a question that would not have occurred to him (Mitchell 1998, 75). His concern was on the Eucharist as an action of the community, one that forms it into the Body of Christ through constant repetition. His focus was to make sure they celebrated well if it was truly to form and transform them into the church, the ecclesial body. From this we can say that there is a relation for Paul between the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the presence of Christ in the ecclesial body, the church (Mitchell 1998, 77). Paul's concerns are also our concerns. It is only in repeating the celebration of the Eucharist over and over again that we come to inculcate its meaning into our lives. It is only through repeated encounters with the Eucharist that we, too, make the connections between celebration, presence, and the church. As David Power notes, "It is significant and needs to be signified that Jesus is present to his community in every action of word, prayer and mutual charity, and in every exercise of the gifts of the Spirit. The ultimate symbolic expression of ecclesial being . . . is the reality of the body of the Lord around the communion table" (Power 2008, 326).

Second, the sacramental real presence of Christ is communicated to us through symbols. You can think of symbols as the language that conveys sacrament. Always keep in mind that our eucharistic celebrations are part of a symbolic order, rooted in a culture of specific symbols and rituals that sacramentally express the real presence of Christ. As is noted in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, there are four modes of the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic celebration: in the community celebrating, in the word proclaimed, in the priest presiding, and in a special way in the bread and the wine (7).

All four of these modes communicate Christ's presence symbolically. But not everyone understands symbols the same way. Many are suspicious of symbols. They see them as something superficial, holding little to no meaning. You've probably heard the expression, "It's not real, it's just a symbol." The implication here is that symbols are the opposite of reality. This is not true. Since the reforms of Vatican II, we have been retrieving an understanding of symbol as that which is complex and multivocal, that is, with many levels of meaning. Symbols mediate and interpret our reality. They invite us to participate and enter into a deeper reality. They call us to become involved emotionally, intellectually, and morally. Symbols point us to the "other" encountered in the celebration of the sacraments (Mitchell 1998, 99). They are multivalent, ambiguous, and very real. It is through repeated exposure to them that we come to a deeper experience of Christ's presence.

Our third concept is mystery. Indeed, the term sacrament (*sacramentum*) translates the Greek word *mysterion*, mystery, at the heart of which is the basic symbol of Christian life, the touchstone from which all other symbols are to be interpreted: the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and our lives therein, the paschal mystery. Mystery and symbol are intimately connected. The ability of symbols to open us to the "other" allows us to enter into the mystery of sacramental real presence. This is possible because there is both a divine presence in these encounters but also a divine absence. We come to experience the mystery at the heart of sacrament through symbols because they point to, yet cannot contain, the realities they communicate. There is always something absent in the indications symbols provide. This is their power. Nathan Mitchell argues that "the Catholic tradition has thus maintained (for nearly two millennia) that 'sacrament' both comforts us with presence and con-

fronts us with an absence, an irreducible 'otherness,' a mystery" (1998, 99). Hence our eucharistic symbols (word, action, event, object) are invitations into an experience of the transcendent. And there is a deeply relational dimension to this experience. Power presents this relational element as follows: "When Christ is present to his people through the sacramental gift of his body and blood, the sacramental representation of this gift is the offer to a community, and includes the response to invitation, which is the communal eating and drinking at the one table, of the one loaf and the one cup" (2008, 302). In the experience of sacramental real presence the community moves in relationship into the presence of Christ through the Spirit. Through the experience of the eating and the drinking we are drawn into the mystery of Christ, which itself as mystery can "redefine matter and reconfigure perception" (Mitchell 1998, 99). Sacramental real presence is truly mystery because it points to that which is both truly present but also truly absent, the divine mystery, the triune God.

Fourth, we need to know where transubstantiation fits into the picture. There was a time in our history when we emphasized an overly physical understanding of real presence. This happens when the relational, multivalent power of symbol is lost and replaced by allegory. When this occurs we move from "ambiguity to clarity . . . from revelation to explanation" (Mitchell 1982, 53). In so doing, we rob the symbol of its ability to communicate mystery. But we know that we are dealing not with the physical flesh of Christ "eaten by Christians, broken by the priest's hands," but with the sacramental real presence of Christ (Mitchell 1982, 148). Transubstantiation is understood as a change in the substance of bread and wine, a change in the "definitive reality of what is present and presented in the sacrament" and this happens as a "result of the

liturgical or sacramental action" (Power 1992, 256). The bread and wine act within a symbolic construct, revealing a deeper reality. Does the concept of transubstantiation go far enough in explaining sacramental real presence today? It is one possible explanation that certainly counters the intensely physical realism of an earlier age but it is limited. As Mitchell has stated, "Eucharistic real presence is not transubstantiation" (1998, 114). Transubstantiation specifically focuses on the objects of bread and wine. "The body of Christ offered to Christians in consecrated bread and wine is not something but someone. In the Eucharist Christ is present not as an object to be admired but as a real person" (Mitchell 2006, 176). To speak of sacramental real presence is to encompass the full mystery of sacrament as event through word, action and object. Ultimately, sacramental real presence must be understood as a totality of all of these.

From the early church to today we can understand that "the presence of Christ is given to the Church through the medium of narrative, blessing, bread and wine, eating and drinking, within a community of service" (Power 1992, 319). Sacramental real presence encompasses word, event, and object. It is fundamentally relational, an event that draws us more and more fully into the mystery of God. "The body of Christ is not only on the table but at the table" (Mitchell 2006, 176). In the end we will be the ones who are changed through this sacramental encounter. We will, in the words of St. Augustine, "become what we see, receive what we are." What are we? The Body of Christ, the Spirit-filled people of God.

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BOOK REVIEWS

A Concise Guide to Supervising a Ministry Student. By Ann M. Garrido. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2008. Pages ix + 180. Paper, \$17.95.

Reviewed by **Mark Schramm, S.V.D.**
Catholic Theological Union

A Concise Guide to Supervising a Ministry Student is a welcome and substantial addition to the small body of literature written from the Catholic perspective that focuses on the supervision of ministry students. Garrido writes from her experience as a student being supervised and as a director of field education at Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, Missouri.

This book has five chapters and five appendices. The chapters introduce field education and supervision, address the importance of theological reflection, look at some common issues, and speak to the spirituality of the supervisor. The appendices give samples of student and supervisor case studies, address the needs of self-assessment for supervisors, give an overview of prayer with supervisory images and give an overview of recent church documents that address the supervision of ministry students.

Garrido has written a very useful and insightful handbook for those of us who supervise ministry students. She carefully outlines what field education is and what it needs in terms of supervision, reflection, development of skills and identity, integration and assessment, and spirituality. She gives a very clear and insightful chapter to the process of establishing the student in the

ministry site and with the supervisor; her years of experience are clearly reflected here. Garrido offers another chapter to the importance and practice of theological reflection, which again is clear and helpful, reflecting her experience. She addresses in a further chapter the issues of conflict, ministerial boundaries, referral of the student to other resources, time management, and issues to consider in a cross-cultural context. In the chapter that addresses the spirituality of the supervisor, she speaks of the call to wholeness, to humility, to courage, to trust, to curiosity, to personal reflection, to embrace "death," and to hope. Each of these chapters ends with a summary that puts the chapter in the context of the whole. She also provides a few suggested questions for ongoing reflection and discussion.

A Concise Guide to Supervising a Ministry Student is an excellent tool for anyone who is new to supervising ministry students, as well as for those of us who have some years of experience in this ministry. Her work is a good guide and reminder and offers challenges and support for the supervisor, no matter the length of time the supervisor has in this ministry. The tools it offers in terms of structure and communication are well thought out and speak to the reality of any context. The call for ongoing theological reflection is a reminder to all of us that we are not "finished" but on a journey with our colleagues as well as with our students. Her reminder of and suggestions for the spiritual aspects of this ministry for the supervisor are well expressed and offer us a challenge to listen to the Spirit as the