

Contents

Editorial	1
1. Eucharist – A Political Orthopraxis – <i>Dr. G. Valentine Joseph</i>	3
2. Celebrating Our Memories and Dreams – <i>Dr. D. Alphonse</i>	22
3. Body Broken for the World – <i>Dr. L. Anandham</i>	35
4. Eucharist – An Open Banquet? – <i>Dr. Michael Amaladoss, S.J.</i>	50

Book Reviews

The Encyclopedia of Christianity ed. by <i>Erwin Fahlbush and others</i> – <i>Dr. D. Alphonse</i>	58
Religion, Beliefs and International Human Rights by <i>Natan Lerner</i> – <i>Dr. T. Victor</i>	60
Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Moral Thought by <i>John Webster</i> – <i>Dr. T. Victor</i>	62

**THE EUCHARIST FOR A NEW WORLD****Editorial**

It is quite fitting that the great jubilee year 2000 has been declared by pope John Paul II as "an intensely eucharistic year" (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 55). The Eucharist is not only 'the source and summit' of Christian life and worship but also the sacrament par excellence in which all the fundamental facets and the most essential dimensions of our faith find expression in the most simple as well as the most sublime manner. It is also the supreme act of worship offered to God by the Christian assembly which through it experiences and expresses itself most profoundly as his own people, the Church, called together, covenanted, commissioned and sent forth by him to transform the world.

Any authentic renewal of the Church, therefore, not only begins with the revitalizing of the celebration of such a root mystery but also authenticity of the renewal is tested only by the resultant increased, more intense and meaningful participation in it and the transformation it effects in the lives of the participants. That is why the renewal of the Church as a whole launched by Vat. II had as one of its primary foci the renewal of the liturgy and particularly that of the celebration of the Eucharist. The achievements of Vat. II in this regard are highly creditable. It has brought to the fore some of the most basic dimensions of the Eucharist. (e.g. communion, meal, memorial) that had been for long lost sight of in the wake of the overly defensive concerns of the counter reformation movement. Greater active and meaningful participation by particularly the laity has been made possible by means of vernacularization, inculturation, introduction of new non-clerical roles, broader exposure to biblical texts, celebration in small groups and at times and places more suitable to the people etc.

Despite all the success achieved, the liturgical renewal inaugurated by Vat. II is far from completed and its intended fruits

are yet to be fully harvested. In fact, all can not be said to be well with the celebration of the Eucharist in many communities. For many Christians, even today, it is just an obligatory routine to be gone through to be at peace with God. The efforts at inculturation have been minimal and are mostly restricted to be mere change of language, postures, attire and the introduction of some local rituals such as lighting the *kuthuvilakku*, greeting with *ārathi*, *poornakumbam* etc. Despite the increase in the group celebration of the Eucharist and greater participation by the people the gathering assemblies are far from emerging as genuinely Christian and human communities. They have not witnessed any significant reduction, not to mention eradication, of social evils like economic exploitation, caste discrimination, patriarchal domination over women etc.

Most of our eucharistic celebrations tend to emphasize the real presence of Jesus in the consecrated bread and wine and individual communion with him through adoration, reparation, pietistic contemplation of and devotional identification with his gruesome sufferings and cruel death on the cross neglecting the other equally valid and important meanings. Some other forms of eucharistic devotion such as processions seem to give importance to the public demonstration of our faith. Such demonstrations do have the value of witnessing to the faith collectively and in front of non-Christians. However, in a multi-religious context, it must not be forgotten that they also could become occasions to express the unconscious and not so holy need to aggressively assert ones religious identity and to show up the community's numerical strength.

What is often forgotten in all these celebrations is that the Eucharist is the new Passover meal. The Paschal banquet of the Jews bonded them together and gave them strength and courage to start on an adventurous journey in search of the promised land of freedom, brotherhood and prosperity. And for Jesus the last supper that he celebrated with his disciples was the anticipated memory of his death and the assurance of his resurrection. For the Christian communities too, the Eucharist is the food for the way, the viaticum, not only at the moment of one's passage into after life but also every day of life that recommissions them to create and move into a new world where every tear will be wiped away, "death will be no more; mourning and crying will be no more" (Rev 21:4). It is the relation between the Eucharist and this new world that all the articles in this issue of *Vaiharai* explore from different angles.

D. ALPHONSE