



July 2024

Dear People of God,

Roman Catholic Womenpriests (RCWP) is a movement within the Roman Catholic Church that envisions a renewed model of ordained ministry based on the archetype of the early Church. Our mission is to be prophetic, therefore, we prepare and ordain in apostolic succession qualified people, primarily women; of all sexualities, genders and marital statuses, called by the Holy Spirit. Our ministries are rooted in justice and faithfulness to the Gospel.

Our vision and mission impel us to open the Eucharistic table to all people seeking grace, the power of God's love always active and available in our world. The Eucharist is real food and spiritual sustenance to be received and shared at table and in the way we lead our lives. We believe Christ is truly present in each person and, indeed, all of creation is permeated by the Creator. We do not weaponize the gift of the Eucharist or exclude others because we did not see Jesus do this. Jesus welcomed everyone, offering only healing love, a Eucharist of Equals.

The bishops of the United States have spent \$14 million using the Eucharist as a rallying point for the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church. They devised a year of the Eucharist culminating in the Eucharistic (Revival) Congress in Indianapolis. Within this program the USCCB is emphasizing exposition and procession of the consecrated host through many communities around the country and the "REAL presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." The whole process reflects a pre-Vatican II theology.

When Jesus broke bread on Passover, he memorialized the covenant made in the blood sacrifice on Mount Sinai. Jesus is the New Covenant, the wine becomes his blood and the bread his body. He urged his disciples to take the bread and the wine; break, pour and share; and do this in remembrance of him. He said, "My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. They who eat my flesh and drink my blood live in me and I in them." (Jn 6:55)

We know that the early Followers of the Way continued to attend synagogue and met in homes breaking bread and sharing wine as Jesus had instructed them. The remembrance of that Passover meal grew into "agape" or love feasts to strengthen the love of the community through sharing the meal. The Eucharist was not simply the bread and wine. The Eucharist became sacrament and opened the door to action beyond the meal. Paul refers to the Body as the bread or the community. In the early church community leaders led the liturgy. The appropriation of Christianity by the Roman Empire led to a hierarchical, observational Mass. With the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the Mass returned to its participatory roots. The new Mass became once again the action of Christ and an action of the Church.



The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy tells us that God is present in scripture, in Eucharist, and in the people who pray and sing. The faithful unite, called to pray without ceasing. We carry Christ within us in our daily lives as a witness to Christ always present and active through the way we live. Paul says that through sharing Christ in the Eucharist we become what we are, the Body of Christ, a Eucharist of Equals.

In Luke's gospel on the road to Emmaus two disciples met a stranger. They only recognized the stranger as Jesus the Christ when he broke the bread and shared it with them. The Eucharist is not static; it is an action, a lived-out event. It is a sharing, not a setting apart and above. While we see value in practices like processions and adoration, Jesus never said, "Worship me," he said, "Follow me." He also taught that as often as we show love to the least among us, we show his love for the world. People will know Jesus Christ best through our faithful and just actions. This is our prophetic mission, to make Christ present for all people everywhere.

Faithfully,

+Martha Sherman, Bishop Midwest Region RCWP

+Jean Marchant, Bishop Eastern Region RCWP

+Jane Via, Bishop Region for the Holy Margins RCWP