

MAKING AMENDS TO CHRIST

Corpus Christi

June 12, 1977

Genesis 14:18-20

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Luke 9:11b-17

On this occasion, all of you, the faithful and the priests who have gathered around the altar of this cathedral which is a sign of our Eucharistic sacrifice and our unity in faith and love, all of you are preaching the homily. You, who have filled this cathedral to capacity, together with the thousands of people listening to this message on radio and those participating in the numerous Masses being celebrated in the parish churches, all of you are preaching today's homily.

It seems as if the divine spouse of Christ, the Church, is truly visible in this diocese of San Salvador. For here this afternoon, with tears and on bended knee, people reverently receive the host that has been trampled under foot in Aguilares, stolen in Ciudad Delgado, and mistreated by those who have unworthily taken communion. The Church is the spouse of Christ and received this precious inheritance of the Eucharist on the night of Holy Thursday. The Eucharist is a living sign of Christ's presence and reminds all his children who been born throughout the centuries of this loving presence. How much Jesus loves us! Thus this spouse of Christ --- we, the Church --- kneel before this divine presence and say: *Forgive us, my Beloved! How we have mistreated you! Receive the love of these children who cry over so many unworthy abuses.*

Institution of the Eucharist

This is the hour to make amends. In order to call your attention to this reflection, I simply want to focus on the aspect of reparation, of making amends, for this is an integral part of the Eucharist. This is, indeed, one of the marvelous aspects of the Eucharist. In order to ask pardon of this Christ who has been affronted, we need speak no other word but the Eucharist. We are all capable of offending Christ, yet no human being is able to pronounce adequate words of reparation unless Christ places those words on our lips, in our hearts and in our hands. How good is the Lord! Offended, yet he shows us the way to be forgiven. Offended --- and incapable of being reconciled --- yet he offers his Body and Blood because he is the only one who can satisfy the brutal outrages of humankind. No, no one can offer reparation for all these brutalities. So, with his indescribable love, a love of madness, knowing how we would treat him, he decided to leave us, already prepared, the homage that could satisfy him.

For this reason, Saint Paul refers to tradition. Note this well, Saint Paul writes fifty three years after Jesus had instituted the Eucharist. For those who doubt the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist or see no value in the Eucharist, just take note of this historical detail. Half a century after the death of Jesus, Saint Paul writes: *I received [this tradition] from the*

Lord (a). In fifty years, such a thing could not have been invented. *I have also handed on [this tradition] to you.* After twenty centuries we are sure, thanks to this testimony of faith, that Christ is present in the host. As I, together with all the priests gathered here --- those responsible for fulfilling the command of Christ --- will say in a few moments: *Take this, all of you, and eat it: this is my body which will be given up for you* and then, *Take this, all of you, and drink of it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven* (b). This is not some human invention, rather it has its origin with Christ, on the night of his last supper. Anticipating the sacrifice on Calvary the following day, he left us this living reminder: *Do this in memory of me*. Therefore, Saint Paul says: *For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes* (c). My sisters and brothers, people who nourish themselves with the Eucharist and Catholics who live this faith, can never be hopeless even though their dignity, faith and belief are abused. This is the cross of Good Friday, but remember, there is always the promise of resurrection.

The amendment of the Eucharist

The Eucharist guarantees us that Christ is always present with his saving action. The aspect, however, of making amends to Christ must be viewed in light of the words: *this is my body that will be given up for you* and *this is my blood that is shed for you and the forgiveness of sins*. In the symbol of the host, trampled upon in Aguilares, we see the face of Christ on the cross. That wonderful poem of *Cristo Roto* describes the hour in which the sins of humankind passed before the face of Christ: blasphemy, adultery, theft, abuse of human dignity. At this time in our history, how many people are filled with hatred! How many people are the cause of calumny! How many times have we ourselves sinned! Yes, we are all sinners. Look! My face, the face of every one of us, the faces of our persecutors, the faces of those who slander us, are passing before the divine face of Christ who is in agony, who dies, and who speaks to us: *Here, my blood awaits you; it is shed for the forgiveness of all those sins*. As we receive the sacred host, we receive all of Jesus' suffering, all his love for sinners, all his feelings which are quite distinct from those who have offended him. *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do* (d); and the Father looks at the anxiety of his Son in his agony, the deprivation of all sinners, those who trampled on his hosts, who communicate sacrilegiously, all of us who offend the Lord. We all feel sinners this afternoon and confess to the Lord, calling on the power of the Eucharist for reparation: Lord, we are now going to honour you in a beautiful process at the end of Mass. Look on this Mass, Lord, as a homage of your Church, sinful and in need of pardon.

The dark pages of our history that have been published allow us to glorify and admit our sinfulness. Yet these pages recount only some of our sins. We have recognized this. During the Council, we humbly spoke and wrote about the sins of the Church and publicly proclaimed our sinfulness (e). Our depraved persecutors tell us nothings new about ourselves. They simply remind us of our need to beat our breasts, as we do at the beginning of the Mass: *I confess... that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do*. Those who set themselves up to point out the sins of the Church are like the Pharisees: *O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity* (f). But *let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone* (g). At this time of making amends, we all need to ask the Lord for forgiveness. And Jesus, who lives in the Church, is filled with neither rancor nor vengeance; he desires harm to no one. Jesus is on the cross, saying again: *Father, forgive them*. His reparation is love. His reparation is to behold sinners so that they might be converted. His reparation is an invitation

to behold him and be converted. My sisters and brothers, this is the hour of conversion. The more humble we are, the more able we are to be forgiven in Christ, who dies for us. Let us remain in his forgiveness that is extended to us in this Eucharist and let us, together, build our church.

I want to thank the parish communities that have given attention to this call. May God give you your merited reward. This is a beautiful community that fills the cathedral. It is a symbol of the burning love in the Archdiocese. The more we love, the more we are persecuted. Because we are in the midst of the world, persecution will always be the response of evil ones. Our response must be one of love, a response that speaks the words of Jesus: *Father, forgive them* (Luke 23:34). If we act this way, we can be assured that the Lord will bless us. Let us continue to build our Church. Let us continue the celebration of our Eucharist this afternoon and give this celebration a sense of reparation. Let us unite ourselves to Christ, because he came to save sinners and we are all sinners and in need of God's forgiveness. Let us give thanks for those people who know how to forgive --- they are the source of great blessings.

The heart of Jesus invites us to make this gesture of reparation. If you were to ask now what is the greatest need of our mother, Church? I would say the greatest need is reparation. The face of the Church has been spat upon. We must wash her face and make it more beautiful. We all must collaborate to make the Church, the spouse of Christ, more beautiful. Let us make her beautiful. Indeed, this is our task. Hopefully, this celebration is not an occasional act. I tell you: let us initiate a campaign to offer reparations. Let us offer our pain, our poverty, our suffering, our work on behalf of human dignity, our fulfillment of our obligations, our struggles to establish a more beautiful Church, our legitimate aspirations for a more worthy nation --- let us give a sense of reparation to all these actions. All honor to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. At this time I invite you to come next Friday to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. There we will celebrate the feast of the Sacred Heart and offer an act of reparation. As we continue to live our lives, may we make our life an act of reparation. How beautiful are our lives when we embrace the cross of Christ and from this cross ask forgiveness of God and our sisters and brothers. In this sense then let us live our Eucharist on this precious afternoon of the feast of Corpus Christi.

Margin References (a) 1 Cor 11,23: (b) Mt 26,26-28: (c) 1 Cor 11,24-26: (d) Lk 23,34: (e) LG 8: (f) Lk 18,11: (g) Jn 8,7.