



# Faith in 52

A yearlong parish retreat based on the work *I Believe in Love*  
by Father Jean C. J. d'Elbee

*Week 41: August 12th through August 18th, 2013*

## For Individuals

(pages 224-228 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☩ symbol)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

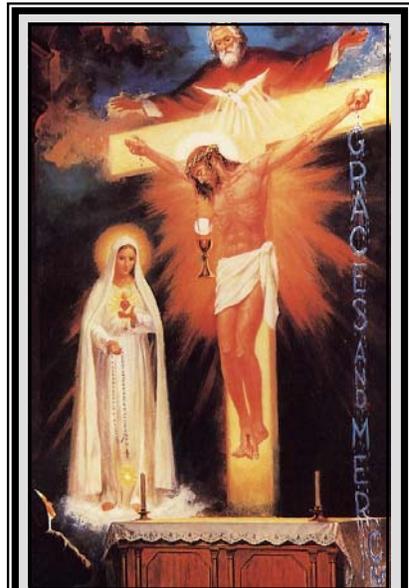
1. Speaking to the Holy Spirit, say: *“O Holy Spirit, soul of my soul, I adore You. Enlighten, guide, strengthen, and console me. Tell me what I ought to do and command me to do it. I promise to be submissive in everything that You ask of me, and to accept all that You permit to happen to me. Only show me what is Your will”* (Cardinal Mercier).

### **STEP 2: PRAYERFUL READING**

1. Prayerfully read **ONLY** the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*.
2. While reading, pay careful attention to the phrases, ideas, or images that might bring about comfort or even those that are challenging. Rest on these a while and speak with the Lord about them, receive His graces, and ponder what has been laid out before you.

### **STEP 3: MEDITATION**

1. Keeping your imagination quiet, figuratively or literally shutting your eyes to all the things of sense, and closing your ears to all the sounds of earth, so as to be able to withdraw into the sanctuary of your baptized soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, do the following:
  - How do you prepare for the Mass? What do you think about during it? What is the Mass? What do you offer to the Lord at Mass? Ask yourself these questions and answer them honestly.
  - Read and reread the following passage from Sacred Scripture: “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin” (Heb 4:14-15). Who is this Jesus and what does it mean that He is your priest? See how tender and compassionate the Lord is with you in your weaknesses. It is this love that He gives you in the gift of His Holy Eucharist.
  - Finish by saying the *Our Father* in a spirit of complete abandonment. ■



### **I am the Victim**

**I**n the morning, at Mass, I am the priest and Jesus is the victim; throughout the day Jesus is the priest and I am the victim.

- credited to Fr. Pierre Olivaint, S.J.,  
martyred on May 26, 1871. ■

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## The Eucharist: Our Sustenance

The heavenly sacrifice, instituted by Christ, is the most gracious legacy of his new covenant. On the night he was delivered up to be crucified he left us this gift as a pledge of his abiding presence.

This sacrifice is our sustenance on life's journey; by it we are nourished and supported along the road of life until we depart from this world and make our way to the Lord. For this reason he addressed these words to us: *Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in you.*

It was the Lord's will that his gifts should remain with us, and that we who have been redeemed by his precious blood should constantly be sanctified according to the pattern of his own passion. And so he commanded those faithful disciples of his whom he made the first priests of his Church to enact these mysteries of eternal life continuously. All priests throughout the churches of the world must celebrate these mysteries until Christ comes again from heaven. Therefore let us all, priests and people alike, be faithful to this everlasting memorial of our redemption. Daily it is before our eyes as a representation of the



*The Last Supper* (detail) by Hans Holbein the Younger

passion of Christ. We hold it in our hands, we receive it in our mouths, and we accept it in our hearts.

It is appropriate that we should receive the body of Christ in the form of bread, because, as there are many grains of wheat in the flour from which bread is made by mixing it with water and baking it with fire, so also we know that many members make up the one body of Christ which is brought to maturity by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Christ was born of the Holy Spirit, and since it was fitting that he should fulfill all justice, he entered into the waters of baptism to sanctify them. When he left the Jordan he was filled with the Holy Spirit who had descended upon him in the form of a dove. As the evangelist tells us: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from

the Jordan.

Similarly, the wine of Christ's blood, drawn from the many grapes of the vineyard that he had planted, is extracted in the wine-press of the cross. When men receive it with believing hearts, like capacious wineskins, it ferments within them by its own power.

And so, now that you have escaped from the power of Egypt and of Pharaoh, who is the devil, join with us, all of you, in receiving this sacrifice of the saving passover with the eagerness of dedicated hearts. Then in our inmost being we shall be wholly sanctified by the very Lord Jesus Christ whom we believe to be present in his sacraments, and whose boundless power abides for ever.

- from St. Gaudentius of Brescia,  
(Tract. 2; CSEL 68, 30-32). ■

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## For Group Sharing

(pages 224-228 of the book *I Believe in Love*, stopping at the ☞ symbol)

### **STEP 1: OPENING PRAYER**

1. Gathering with your spouse, family, or a group of friends at a time of your choosing, though preferably on the following Sunday, make the Sign of the Cross and then say together to the Holy Spirit: *“Come Holy Spirit, come by means of the powerful intercession of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, your well-beloved Spouse.”*

### **STEP 2: PUBLIC READING**

1. Depute or invite a competent reader among the group to read aloud the weekly assigned pages of *I Believe in Love*. All should be encouraged to listen attentively; any distractions, i.e., cell phones, televisions, etc., should be turned off or removed during this time.

### **STEP 3: PRAYERFUL DISCUSSION**

1. After the public reading, someone should facilitate the public discussion. This facilitator should read aloud the questions below. Considering the constraints of time or the particular audience, not every question need be asked nor discussed. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you when in doubt.
  2. Everyone may speak but should not speak over others, should not dominate the conversation, and should not ridicule others. All should try to be like Christ who is “gentle and humble of heart.” Moreover, all should be asked to keep confidential the contents of the discussion. No one should reveal more than what they feel comfortable sharing or be forced to speak.
- A helpful way to remember the varied forms of prayer is the acronym A.C.T.S.: **A**doration (sheer love of and praise for the Beloved); **C**ontrition (sorrow for the sins that have hurt the Beloved and the longing for reconciliation); **T**hanksgiving (humble gratitude for all that the Beloved has bestowed); **S**upplication (petitions, pleas, and intercessions for His divine aid). Share with each other and demonstrate examples of each of these kinds of prayer (see p. 224).

### **He Added Death** **by Raniero Cantalamessa**

What did Jesus mean to give us at the Last Supper when he said, “This is my *body*?” In the Bible the word “body” doesn’t indicate a component or part of a human being which, united to the other components, the soul and the spirit, forms the complete person. Our way of reasoning is influenced by Greek culture which, in fact, divided man in three parts: body, soul and spirit. In biblical terminology, and therefore in that used by Jesus and Paul, “body” indicates the whole human being in so far as it lives its life in a body, in a corporeal and mortal condition. In his Gospel, John uses the word “flesh” instead of “body” (“if you don’t eat the flesh of the Son of man...”) and it is obvious that this word in the sixth chapter of the Gospel means the same as in the first chapter where John says “the Word became *flesh*,” and that is, human.

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- The Protestant Reformer John Calvin criticized the Catholic Church because, in his view, Catholics were crucifying Jesus anew and repeatedly in the Mass (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Ch. 18), but is the Sacrifice of the Mass “another” or “new” oblation, or is it simply a participation in the “one glorious Sacrifice to God: the Incarnate Word” (p. 224)? How would you answer his charge?
- What do you think will draw people back to the Catholic Church from formal and practical atheism (p. 225)?
- “We do not have a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our weakness” (p. 226). What does this mean? What are some instances in Sacred Scripture in which Jesus manifests compassion towards human weaknesses?
- According to the Vatican II document *Lumen Gentium*, what is the difference between the “ministerial” and “common” priesthood (p. 227)? Do you see this distinction sometimes blurred in present-day practice? Give examples, if any, where you have witnessed the “clericalization” of the laity and the “laicization” of the clergy?
- How are all of the faithful called to be both priest and victim (p. 228)?

## STEP 4: CLOSING PRAYER

1. When finished with the discussion, the entire group should conclude with the prayer *Anima Christi*:



Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me. O good Jesus, hear me. Within Thy wounds, hide me. Suffer me not to be separated from Thee. From the malignant enemy, defend me. And at the hour of my death, call me; and bid me come to Thee, that with Thy saints I may praise Thee forever and ever. Amen. ■

## He Added Death (Continued from page 3)

The word “body” indicates, therefore, the whole of life. In instituting the Eucharist, Jesus left us the gift of his whole life, from the first moment of the incarnation to the very end, including all that had made up his life: silence, sweat, hardship, prayer, struggle, joy, humiliation....

Then Jesus also said: “This is my *blood*.” What else does he give us with his blood if he has already given us all his life by giving us his body? He adds death! Having given us his life, he now gives us its most precious part—his death. In the Bible the term “blood” doesn't indicate a part of the body, and therefore a part of a part of a person; it indicates a happening, death. If blood is the seat of life as was thought at that time (cf. Gen 9:4), the shedding of it is the plastic sign of death. “Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1). The Eucharist is the mystery of the Body and Blood of the Lord, that is of the life and death of the Lord!

- from *The Eucharist: Our Sanctification*, Frances Lonergan Villa, Trans. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), p. 22. ■

## Next Eucharistic “Hour of Power” in English

- Saturday, September 7th, 7-8 p.m., St. Peter McMahan Hall

## Next Parish Dessert Potluck\*

- Saturday, September 7th, 8-9 p.m., Upper Room Library