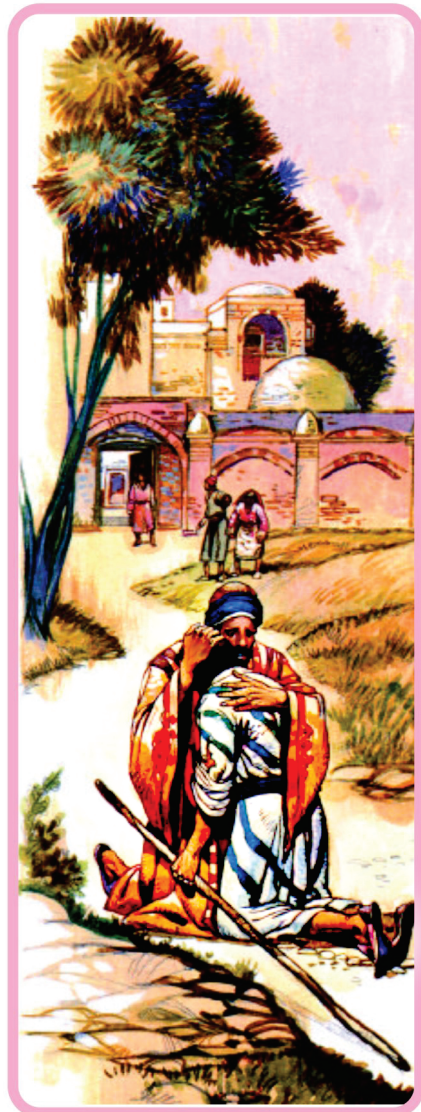


THE COMMUNION SERVICE AND THE CONCLUDING SERVICE

In the parable of the prodigal son, there is mention about the return of the repentant son. “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son”. Forgetting everything, the father received the repentant son; and he was given again the title of sonship. To signify this, he was given a bath, robed in the best dress, and a ring was put on his finger. There was a banquet arranged to honour him and all rejoiced at his return. (Lk. 15:1-24).

God has sent His son to redeem sinful man who went astray from Him. Jesus sacrificed himself and redeemed mankind. He arranged an eternal banquet for man and fed him with his own body and blood. He invites us to enjoy this banquet in every holy Qurbana . We become one with Jesus when we eat his body and drink his blood in the holy Qurbana; and thus, become inheritors of the salvation secured for us. We remember this mystery in the reconciliation rite of the holy Qurbana. There are four important divisions in this rite, namely, the rite of reconciliation, the rite of fraction, the rite of communion, and the concluding rite.



The Rite of Reconciliation

We must adorn the sacred robe of reconciliation in preparation to attend the banquet Jesus arranges with his own body and blood. **The rite of reconciliation prior to receiving the holy communion helps us unite ourselves with God.**

The rite of reconciliation starts with the private prayer, "O Christ, you are the peace ..." followed by the psalm of repentance, "Have mercy on me, O God". The incensing, at this juncture, leads us to forgiveness of sins.

The Rite of Fraction

The rite of fraction that follows reveals the holy Qurbana's characteristic power of absolving sins. As the prayer, "I am the living bread... from heaven.." is recited or sung, the celebrant raises the sacred host, and after dividing and dipping one half of the host in the sacred blood holds it together with the other half. The sacred body and blood of Jesus sacrificed for the expiation of our sins is being adored.

The grace of our Lord Jesus...

With this prayer, the rite of fraction ends. The prayer "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ..." is the wishing rendered by St. Paul. **The grace of Jesus, the love of the Father, and the presence of the Holy Spirit give us a heavenly experience.** Let us receive this blessing with a request for the grace to enjoy constantly the divine presence, the right of every Christian.

ACTIVITY - 1

Read the passage Gen. 3: 1-19 note the important problems evolved as a result of sin. Find out also the after effects of sin in our present day life.



The Karozutha of Reconciliation

The karozutha prayer- "Let us approach the mysteries of the precious body and blood"- prepares us for the holy communion. This prayer reminds of how we must prepare to receive holy communion and what are the benefits thereof. The reconciliation rite ends with the celebrant's reconciliation prayer- "Lord, in your mercy forgive the sins and offences of your servants".

The Communion Service

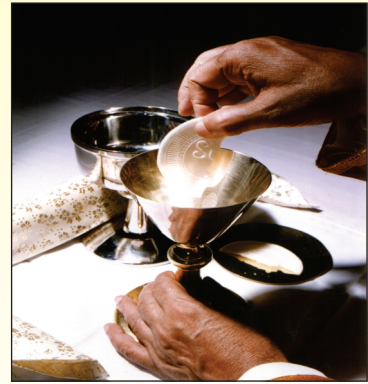
The most important element of this rite is receiving the holy communion and the consequent union with God. All the other elements of the holy Qurbana lead to the holy communion.

Our Father in heaven...

The Lord's Prayer is recited as a preparation for receiving the holy communion. Even though we reconcile with God and correct our evil ways, we still live amidst temptations. Hence, the celebrant implores the providence of God to be ever with the faithful.

An Invitation for Holy Communion

The celebrant blesses the community as a preparation to receive holy communion. **We, who receive the sacred body and blood of Jesus, the bread of our life, accept Jesus as our Lord.** The celebrant prays that all the members of the worshipping community may have this experience. We are, in fact, receiving through the holy Eucharist the resurrected Jesus (Lk.24:13-35).



Preparatory measures to be followed to receive holy communion:

- Make your conscience clear.
- Avoid spite for others.
- Keep away from quarrel.
- Dispense with enmity.
- Get rid of ill-will.
- Be in harmony with everyone.
- Keep the spirit of love.
- And be pious.

ACTIVITY - 2

Read the text of holy Qurbana and find out the following:

1. The prayers and service that express contrition for our sins.
2. Prayers which express the holiness of God.
3. Prayers that enumerate the forgiveness of sins through the holy Qurbana.

Partake in the Sanctity of the Triune God

The holy Eucharist is inseparably connected with the Holy Trinity; so, holy communion helps us acquire the holiness of our God. The proclamation - “the holy Qurbana is for the holy people” -reminds us that, **when we receive the holy communion, we intimate ourselves with the Father, the holiness of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and thus we partake in divine sanctity.**

The Holy Communion

In response to the invitation of the celebrant, the community confesses that God alone is holy. The grace of God makes us worthy to receive holy communion. We must mentally pray for this grace and receive the holy communion. **We, participating in the holy Qurbana, which is both a sacrifice and a banquet, should receive the body and blood, Jesus breaks and serves. It is necessary for the completion of our Eucharistic experience.** We must, therefore, participate in the holy Qurbana with the necessary preparation and purity of heart.

The Fruits of the Holy Communion

The holy Qurban is both a sacrifice and a banquet. We are granted forgiveness of sins, remission of debts, and divine life. This insures us of hope in the resurrection of the dead and a life anew in heaven. So, we participate in the holiness of God and attain divine life. This provides us with the experience of salvation; and the holy Eucharist is the center of Christian life.



The Concluding Service

The celebrant, the deacons, and the community render thanks for the holy Eucharist in the concluding prayers. The important rites and prayers of this rite are the Lord's Prayer (only in the solemn form), concluding blessing, farewell prayer and the kissing of the altar.

Thanksgiving Prayers

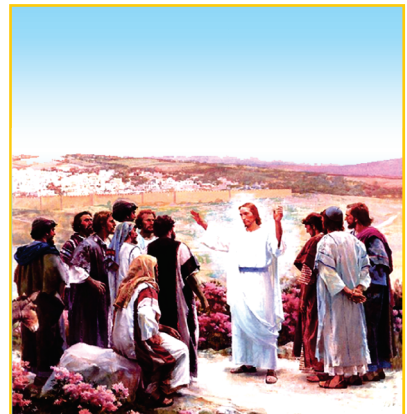
The worshipping community who has got a foretaste of heaven through the holy Eucharist place their trust in the end of this world and heavenly life, and praise God through their thanksgiving prayers. Praises are lavished upon Jesus in honour of his redemptive deeds. Requests for eschatological salvation and description of the many blessings Jesus granted are also mentioned. They pray that the sacred mysteries received in faith may be for the remission of their debts. Besides, they pray to make them worthy enough to accord a befitting welcome to Jesus on his glorious second coming and praise him in union with all in heaven. While thanking God for making us worthy to partake in the life-giving sacrifice, the community also implore for forgiveness of sins, resurrection, and a new life in heaven.

The Lord's Prayer

If the prayer Our Father is recited at this moment the community praises the heavenly Father in all happiness.

The Final Blessing

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus blessed his disciples and said, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news"(Mk.16:15). Jesus blesses each and every one of us to continue this mission; and fills us with the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. Actually, Jesus grants through this blessing the readiness to bear witness to the word of God with our words and deeds.



The worshippers who were in the presence of God, heard the word of life, participated in the paschal mystery, fed with the bread of life and are sanctified, are then sent out to be the evangelizers.

Kissing of the Altar

The celebrant kisses the altar, a symbol of the 'sepulchre' of the Lord and the altar of our sanctification, and recites the prayer of farewell.



Jesus has become a sacrifice to gather the scattered people of God (Jn.11:15). He longed to unite the people dispelling their disunity, and lead them to togetherness in life. With this intention, he nourished them with his sacred body and blood. **One who partakes in his sacrifice and feeds on his sacred body will attain divine life.**

Let us unite ourselves with Jesus, participating in his sacrifice and feeding on his sacred body and blood. Let us draw sustenance from the Holy Eucharist and be the ministers of love and service so as to sacrifice ourselves in the different spheres of our life. Thus, our lives will be blessed, and become redemptive.

**LET US
READ AND
MEDITATE THE
WORD OF GOD**

(Jn.6 : 48 - 59)

A Verse to Remember

“Those who eat my flesh
and drink my blood
have eternal life”(Jn.6:54).

Let us Pray

O Jesus, who nourished us with your
body and blood,
please make us worthy for your eternal banquet.

My Resolution

Whenever I participate
in the holy Qurbana,
I will receive
holy communion.

Teachings of the Fathers of the Church

The people of Israel ate the lamb in Egypt. Its symbol sanctified them.
If it were so, how much more will the true lamb sanctify the people?
(St. Ephrem)

QUESTIONS

1. The prayers of the reconciliation rite grants forgiveness of sins.
What is the meaning of this statement?
2. What preparatory requisites are essential to receive the holy communion
as exhorted in the karozutha prayer?
3. Why is it said that receiving holy communion is necessary for the
completion of the holy Qurbana?
4. Everyone who participates in the holy Qurbana is sent as a missionary.
Explain.
5. How do our lives become redemptive?