

Eucharist, Theology and Discipleship

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Abstract: The author begins by describing the qualities of Eucharistic celebration in functioning Australian Eucharistic communities. He then summarises the eucharistic theology of Josef Ratzinger, who provides a well-argued basis for criticising these qualities. Because discipleship is expressed in local situations, we should expect to find the life of the local communities taken into the celebration of the Eucharist. Within the acceptance of Apostolic proclamation and office, we should also expect to find a democratic and demotic spirit because these express the shape of discipleship in Australia, and so may not improperly be called the gift of Australia to the universal church.

HISTORIANS OF THE EUCHARIST at different periods have often remarked on the distance between contemporary theologies of the Eucharist and contemporary practice. Sometimes, the distance marks the inadequacies of practice. But more often, it points to aspects of the Eucharist to which theologies are not yet attuned.

In this article, I would like to reflect on a modern and local gap between practice and theology. I shall begin by describing what I take to be the qualities of Eucharistic celebration in functioning Australian Eucharistic communities. Then I shall summarise the theology of Josef Ratzinger, who provides a well-argued basis for criticising these qualities. Finally, I shall ask where this confrontation between Australian practice and good European theology might lead.

To describe the essential qualities of good Australian liturgy is necessarily subjective and selective. It should be therefore unnecessary to add that many good communities will have styles other than the one which I describe, and not all examples of this style will be exemplary. And lest it be thought that I do no more than canonise my preferences, I am most at home in places where Gregorian music and Wesleyan hymns form the basic musical diet. But even after these qualifications, I still believe it proper and helpful to describe how good communities and good liturgy go together in Australia.

The essential qualities of the Australian Eucharist are well caught by Les Murray in his poem, *The quality of sprawl*:

Sprawl is the quality
of the man who cut down his Rolls-Royce
into a farm utility truck, and sprawl
is what the company lacked when it made repeated efforts
to buy the vehicle back and repair its image.¹

Murray's image and language suggest a liturgy that is both demotic and democratic. Instructions and communication are vernacular. Cinctures are ropes, patens are plates, and everybody involved in the liturgy has a proper pride and directness. The young people are as likely as not to wear baseball caps, and the sacristan when asked how many hosts are in the tabernacle, to reply, "She's chokka, Father".

Good Australian celebrations, too, move as easily from the sacred to the secular, as the poem moves from the front end of the Roller to the galvanised iron tray of the ute. They pass without incongruity from such expressions of public culture as football or films to the serious business of the liturgy without any sense of incongruity. The liturgy and the personality of the celebrant are serious without being solemn, are present without being imposed.

Good Australian liturgy is also inclusive, adaptable and comfortable. While the engine is respected, livery and superstructure are easily and eclectically changed to suit the celebration. At the Eucharist, too, hitchhikers are picked up: whether they are Catholics alienated from the church, from other churches or in a variety of irregular relationships. It is a liturgy for sinners.

The theology of the Eucharist is understated. Larger theological words like sacrifice, worship and real presence are relatively downplayed. The action is more often described in the simple words of coming together, of following Jesus, of celebrating the life of the community.

All these are qualities of style. At their best, they are worlds away from sloppiness. But the art which goes into liturgy conceals itself. Where the Eucharistic liturgy is good, too, it is good because it enables people to engage with the hard realities of their lives, to reflect on what the Gospel requires of them, and to commit themselves to one another, in celebrating Christ's gift.

While such liturgy often attracts criticism for being sloppy, irregular, thin or lacking a sense of transcendence, it is usually undaunted. In Murray's words:

It is loose-limbed in its mind.
Reprimanded and dismissed
it listens with a grin and one boot up on the rail

OF POSSIBILITY.

1. Les Murray, *The Quality of Sprawl: Anthology of Australian Religious Verse* (Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1991) 52.

THE THEOLOGY OF JOZEF RATZINGER.

I have chosen to discuss the theology of Josef Ratzinger,² not on the grounds that it emanates from the Prefect of the Congregation of the Faith and so can be taken to be normative, but because his theology of Eucharistic celebration, developed in many places, is coherent, stimulating and well argued, and because it provides grounds for a strong challenge to this Australian approach to Eucharistic liturgy.³

Ratzinger is no devotee of sprawl. Indeed, in his theology he commends a tightly woven synthesis of faith and life and consistently argues against theories and practices which fragment this organic unity.⁴ One root of this fragmentation he sees to be an emphasis on the subjective at the expense of the objective reality of Christ's proclamation and presence in the church.⁵ Other roots and symptoms include an emphasis on local autonomy at the expense of the universal body of Christ;⁶ an emphasis on the pragmatic, functional and secular at the expense of the sacred;⁷ an emphasis on local creativity at the expense of receptivity to the gift of Jesus Christ;⁸ and an emphasis on the historical life and message of Jesus at the expense of the Christ who is worshipped in the church.⁹ He believes that all these tendencies fragment the organic unity of Christian faith and life.

Within Ratzinger's theology, the Eucharist is the master symbol which undergirds his theology of communion.¹⁰ The image of communion brings together our vertical relationship to God and the horizontal relationship with other human beings, grounding both aspects of unity in Jesus Christ. In the Incarnation of the Son of God, human beings are joined together by being linked to Jesus Christ, whose sonship of the Father we also share through our incorporation with him into the church.¹¹ Because communion both with God and with other

2. A good survey of Ratzinger's theology is found in A. Nicholls, *The Theology of Josef Ratzinger: An Introductory Study* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988). A most stimulating appreciation of and engagement with his thought is found in R. Jenson, *Unbaptized God: The Basic Flaw in Ecumenical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).

3. Ratzinger develops his theology in lectures, articles and popular addresses. See, J. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today* (New York: Crossroad, 1996); *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: St. Ignatius, 1987); *Feast of Faith* (San Francisco: Saint Ignatius, 1981); *Journey Toward Easter* (New York: Crossroad, 1987); *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology* (San Francisco: St. Ignatius, 1984).

4. See especially Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 143-4.

5. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 75.

6. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 113.

7. Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 143ff.

8. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 117. See also Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 283.

9. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 4ff.

10. Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 99.

11. The best summary statement is found in Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 137ff. See also *Behold the Pierced One*, 88.

human beings is grounded in the Incarnation, it is to be seen as an initiative of God. Accordingly, Ratzinger insists on the objectivity both of revelation and of church structures.¹² They are not at our disposal.

In developing his understanding of communion, Ratzinger makes the Paschal Mystery central. That is to say, Jesus Christ's union with the Father is expressed through the self-giving love that takes him to death and is vindicated in the Resurrection.¹³ Similarly, the union of human beings with one another is grounded in that self-giving love of Christ. When Christ's love is enacted within the church, it also takes the form of self-giving love. The glory of the church, therefore, is the saint who serves the church unselfregardingly.

For Ratzinger, then, the Eucharist is best seen as the sacrament of communion. The Eucharist represents Christ's self-giving sacrifice. In offering ourselves with Christ, we are united to the Father and with one another. Eucharistic communion unites the church with its Lord and so in its members. Its realism demands that it be described in terms of real presence and of sacrifice.¹⁴

The unity of the church in Ratzinger's theology is universal. In the Eucharist the whole Christ is united to all his members. In each celebration of the Eucharist, the universal church is gathered together.¹⁵ To that extent, the universal church has priority over the local church in which it is realised. The essential orientation of the local celebration of the Eucharist to the universal church, too, makes Ratzinger hesitate to attribute theological weight to the more subjective aspects of the celebrating community.¹⁶

The unity of the church which is expressed and communicated in the Eucharist is also realistic and sacramental. Unity is neither an ideal nor a concept, but is expressed in a common faith and life. This life and faith, in turn, is derived from and protected by our acceptance of the proclamation of the Apostles. The unity of the Apostles is preserved by the ministry of Peter. The sacramental character of the unity of the church is expressed in the continuing ministry of the Apostles through the Bishops with the Bishop of Rome. To the unity of the church, therefore, apostolic succession, and the ordained priesthood that follows from it, are central.¹⁷

It should be clear from this framework that, when he discusses the Eucharist, Ratzinger regards it above all as a gift received. In the Eucharist we are beneficiaries of the self-giving of Jesus Christ through whom we have communion with the Father and with one another. At

12. Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 121ff.

13. See Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 139.

14. Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 104ff.

15. Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 252.

16. See Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 309; *Feast of Faith*, 147.

17. Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 268.

its centre is Jesus Christ's sacrificial offering of himself to the Father. The Christ present in the Eucharist is the whole Christ, associated with all his members. Because, therefore, at each level the Eucharist is a gift, its objectivity and its universality are primary; it resists any malleability that bypasses the apostolic office.¹⁸

These are the major themes of Ratzinger's treatment of the Eucharist. They will be recognised by anyone familiar with theologies of communion. These theologies, however, differ widely among themselves in the conclusions which they draw about sacramental life. To understand Ratzinger's individual appropriation of this symbolic theology, we need to ask more precisely how he treats the relationship between symbols and the world from which they are derived and to which they are applied.

The relationship between world and symbol is significant at two points: the point at which people, things and events of this world become symbols, and the point at which symbols are embodied in the people and things of this world. We can ask which aspects of earthly reality are taken into or considered irrelevant to the symbol, as, for example, whether Jesus' gender is relevant to his being saviour. When people are identified with symbols, too, we can also ask which qualities of the world of our experience affect their symbolic reality. So, we might ask, as the Donatists did, whether the moral qualities of the priest or of those who ordained him vitiate or are irrelevant to his acting *in persona Christi*.

When Ratzinger treats symbols he works at a relatively high level of abstraction from the world from which the symbols are derived. His theology is constructed from large theological blocks, such as Israel, the cross, Resurrection and church. While other theologians might consider the political and social context of Jesus' life and of the contemporary church to be relevant to discussion of these symbols, Ratzinger deals with such symbols in terms of their essential theological qualities and pays little attention to their context. Symbols are significant for their religious essence; the concrete relationships which would concern sociology, anthropology and politics are not relevant. The cross, for example, is described in terms of self-giving love, not in terms of concrete relationships between Romans, Jews and Jesus.

Similarly, when Ratzinger moves from the symbols to the concrete realities which embody them, he abstracts from the context. Saints, for example, are defined by their relationship to God and not by the concrete choices they made and their effects; bishops, priests and bishop of Rome are described in terms of their relationship to the apostles, and the church is seen as Christ's body. The cultural assumptions and

18. The best example is perhaps the preached retreat contained in *Journey Toward Easter*.

background and the political relationships between individuals that control the use of power in the church are not theologically relevant. In its symbolic reality the church is the Bride of Christ or the body of Christ and is without fault. Only individuals within it can sin.

Ratzinger's account of how symbols are made and of our appropriation of them is consistent with this relatively abstract treatment. Against theologies that emphasise the human origin of symbols, he insists that the Eucharist and church are gifts of God, and that our proper attitude to them is one of receptivity.¹⁹ That is why we must constantly be on guard against attempts to manipulate them.²⁰ In his strong emphasis on the grace of God, he is influenced by St Augustine. This makes him empathetic to many strands of Barthian theology, and also perhaps explains to some extent the lack of interest in the concrete existence of symbols. If the form and power of the symbolic framework comes from God, the human context is of little importance.

Despite their given character, however, symbols, are not arbitrary. Nor do they work automatically.²¹ Their making and their appropriation involve human interiority. In the case of Jesus Christ, for example, his prayerful interiority is important for establishing the meaning of his death. Ratzinger interprets the Marcan, "My God my God, why have you abandoned me?" in the context of trust emphasised in the whole psalm, resisting the fashionable desire to make the cry express a felt abandonment by God.²² This interpretation might threaten the proper connection between symbol and reality at the level of Jesus' intention.

Ratzinger also emphasises the importance of interiority for our appropriation of symbols. They are to be appreciated in their givenness, and we are to appropriate their resources in conforming our lives to the content of the symbolism. Misplaced creativity both tempts us to forget that symbols are given us, and distracts us from the contemplative approach which we need to enter them.²³

In summary, then, I would highlight four points of Ratzinger's theology and the pastoral practice which derives from it. He insists that the Christian symbols, including the Eucharist, are to be seen as God's work. From this flows his deep suspicion of local creativity and manipulation of symbols.

Secondly, he sees Christian symbols as universal, expressing God's choice and union with the whole of humanity in Jesus Christ. From this flow his reservations about the theological as distinct from the pastoral significance of the celebrating community.

19. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 150.

20. Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord*, 121 ff; *Feast of Faith*, 61ff.

21. Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One*, 13ff; *Journey Toward Easter*, 121ff.

22. See Ratzinger, *Journey Toward Easter*, 102ff.

23. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 68ff.

Thirdly, he considers the symbols of faith as abstract, leaving aside the contingent relationships and contexts of the world from which they are derived. This makes him see the integration of faith and culture as a long-term process which requires careful direction.²⁴

Finally, in the appropriation and making of symbols, he emphasises the part of interiority by which we attend to the spiritual meaning of the symbol. This makes him emphasise receptivity, reverence and perhaps even what could appropriately be called a contemplative style in celebration.

When judged by this theology, the Australian style of celebrating the Eucharist might need a good defence lawyer. It apparently lacks interiority, and asserts the primacy of the local over the universal, the creative over the receptive, the created over the given, and the relational over the transcendent. Furthermore, it minimises precisely the large meanings of Eucharistic symbolism – sacrifice, presence and apostolic tradition – that are the most important.

REFLECTIONS

Ratzinger's theology of the Eucharist is organised around the theme of communion. He shares this basis and its characteristic themes with many other theologians. But even among theologians of communion, he is distinctive in his emphases. While both the image of communion as an organising theme and Ratzinger's distinctive version of it are theologically rich, each is also limited in its appropriation of the riches of revelation. Other lines through the New Testament and the living of christian faith suggest the possibility of different theological constructions of the Eucharist.

The wealth of the resources out of which theologies of Eucharist can be built is sketched schematically by John Zizioulas in an article in which he contrasts two forms of presentation of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.²⁵ The first approach describes Jesus Christ as sending out the Spirit to accompany the disciples as they proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the leader, the one who has gone before, and the work of the Spirit is described in terms of power. In this context, the Eucharist is the meal of the disciples who recall their Lord and his life. He is made present and active by the power of the Spirit in the celebration.

A second approach to the Holy Spirit, which undergirds theologies of communion, sees the Holy Spirit as the eschatological Spirit promised and poured out in anticipation on the disciples, making of them the

24. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 79ff.

25. J. Zizioulas, "Implications ecclésiologiques de deux types de pneumatologie", in *Communio Sanctorum: Mélanges offerts à Jean-Jacques von Allmen* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1982) 141-54.

promised people of God. Within this understanding, Christians are gathered with Jesus Christ as children of the Father. The Spirit, therefore, is the animating force in the formation of the body of Christ. The Eucharist is seen as the local expression and temporal anticipation of the universal communion of the church around Jesus Christ. While the first approach to the Holy Spirit emphasises the themes of following, proclamation, memory and power, the second approach gives prominence to the images of communion, sacrament and anticipation.

Among theologians who prefer this second approach to the Holy Spirit, of course, are also found many divergent approaches. Some, like Zizioulas and Tillard, emphasise the embodiment of the church in the local community and in the rich life of locality.²⁶ Others, like Ratzinger, emphasise more strongly the universality of the church, and the claims which it makes on local expressions of church.

Theologies of communion are not only currently fashionable and coherent, but also allow room for sinuous development. Ratzinger's theology in particular, is well armed against a liberal deconstruction of faith and the church. But theologies of communion generally, and Ratzinger's in particular, may be less well equipped to appreciate and find room for the concrete demands of public discipleship.

In contrast, theologies which give prominence to our following of Christ in the power of the Spirit may be better adapted to incorporate discipleship centrally into thinking about the Eucharist. This promise encourages me to explore the implications of making discipleship central within the theology of the Eucharist. I hope thereby to suggest that there is more space for the characteristically Australian style of Eucharist than Ratzinger's theology would allow.

The Eucharist expresses and defines the call to discipleship. When we are told to do this in Jesus' memory, the doing of the ritual is tied to the deeper doing with our lives. We are to do as Jesus did. Whether this is expressed in Mark's image through the following of Jesus to and in Jerusalem, or through the Johannine image of the washing of the feet, this disposal of our lives after the example of Jesus entails a way of life to which the community is committed, and which brings it together to remember Jesus in the breaking of bread.

Now, it is in the nature of discipleship to be concrete. If we follow Jesus, we have to take account of contexts, relationships, contingencies, and consequences. For a community, the following of Jesus involves an implicit reading of the world and a stance to be taken within it. When the community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist, it does not put out of mind these concrete concerns. Nor, consequently, should the theology

26. See J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1985). J. M. Tillard, *Église d'Églises, l'écclésiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1987). See, too, P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist makes the Church* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).

or ritual of the Eucharist abstract from them. As a result, I would argue that while Ratzinger's major emphases on the primacy of God's action, on the self-sacrificing love of Christ, and on the universality of the church and on interiority are correct, they need to be complemented by a more realistically contextual account of the demands of discipleship. This demand qualifies each of the points which I have nominated as central in Ratzinger's theology.

In the first place, just as interiority is only one of the qualities in which discipleship is expressed, so it is only one of the ways in which symbols are made and entered. Self-giving love is expressed and learned though the whole range of ways in which we dispose our bodies. It has to do with externality, and not simply with intention. The symbolic shape of Jesus' self-giving love in Gethsemane or on the cross is established by looking at his body and its disposition and not merely by establishing his intention. Indeed Guardini and the liturgical school on which Ratzinger draws, stress the importance of the body in liturgy.²⁷ But the corollary is that our bodily dispositions have a symbolic value that often so transcends our attention that to emphasise intention and consciousness would render a thin account of reality.

For example, it would be artificial to distinguish sharply between the martyrs whose intention was to defend faith from those who were killed in defence of justice. It is also artificial to distinguish sharply between those who were directly attacked in counterinsurgency, like Romero, and those thousands who died as collateral damage through counterinsurgency strategies in the same war. A Jesus who died in felt abandonment is a totally effective symbol of obedience.

The ways in which we dispose our bodies in expressing discipleship are also varied, and are not confined to those which express intention. So, while bodily gestures which express intentional reverence towards God are important, they are only part of the appropriate expressions of discipleship. A good celebration of the Eucharist will therefore find room for the contingent expressions of discipleship – camaraderie, grief, apprehension, even self-consciousness. We should expect the incongruous to intrude into the Eucharist because it is inescapable from discipleship. It needs therefore to be given a proper weight in the theology and the practice of the Eucharist.²⁸

Secondly, if the Eucharist is necessarily an expression of discipleship, the theology of Eucharist should make room for the concrete reality of the earthly life of Jesus Christ's life and of the present life of the church. For we live out our discipleship by allowing the imagined contingencies

27. See R. Guardini, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930).

28. In his suggestive chapter heading, "The Playfulness of the Liturgy", Guardini opens new possibilities in liturgy. But he clearly feels the need to be apologetic about moving away from a view of liturgy that emphasises only its solemnity and earnestness. R. Guardini, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 85ff.

of Christ's life and death to illuminate the contingencies of our lives and journey towards death. In the Eucharist, we are gathered by the memory of Jesus Christ who is called to mind in the service of the Word. Therefore, the Jesus Christ with whom we are united in the Eucharist is a Jesus Christ present in his relationships to Israel and its hopes as well as to the powers of his day.

Similarly, when the disciples who follow Jesus Christ are identified as the body of Christ, the political interrelationships, play of personalities, convictions, culture and power at work among the disciples are also relevant. When some of these disciples are invested with a symbolic role in the church and the celebration of the Eucharist, the concrete qualities of their lives and relationships remain of significance, even though these qualities do not control the possibility of Christ working through these agents. They are theologically important, because the field of discipleship is concrete and therefore needs to take account of them. Our account of the real presence of Christ, therefore, needs to give some place to the historical contingencies both of Christ's life and of the life of the church.

How is this to be understood? Certainly not in any crude sense that assumes we can recover with historical accuracy the concrete circumstances and relationships of Jesus' life. The recovery of the concrete relationships of the past is the work of the imagination. Within the movement of discipleship by which we follow Jesus Christ as disciples, we must find him addressing the set of relationships within which we take our decisions. This demands that we imagine him also within a set of political and social relationships, among people with hopes that had reference to their daily lives. Our imagination in this respect is shaped by the attitudes, words and conduct of Jesus within the stories of the Gospels – in a word, by his confrontational hospitality.²⁹

The importance of this imaginative entry into the practice of Jesus, of course, creates tensions within any Eucharistic practice. The inclusiveness practiced by the Jesus of the Gospel stories is difficult to reconcile, for example, with the massive exclusion from the communicating church of the divorced and remarried. While this exclusion is explicable within the framework of a theology of communion, the widespread discomfort with it expresses the instinctive conviction that Eucharistic practice should reflect straightforwardly the values of Jesus.³⁰

29. In a moving appeal for openness to strangers, Ratzinger asks "Can legal immigrants find a home in our churches?" (*A New Song for the Lord*, 91). If the emphasis on discipleship were regnant, however, we would have to ask in the Germany of the last two decades (as in Australia today) on what christian grounds hospitality could be restricted to *legal* immigrants.

30. Ratzinger addresses this question by renewing in a properly nuanced way the claims for spiritual communion (*Journey Toward Easter*, 140). But while this proposal could

Western debates about the doctrines of the Real Presence and Sacrifice have situated them within reflection on the nature of time. Theologians have asked how the presence and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can be contemporaneous with the church in which the Eucharist is offered. The problem is identified as one of reconciling memory with presence. Catholic theology has consistently been developed in the face of the view that neither the presence nor the sacrificial action of Christ in the Eucharist is more than the product of memory. An incidental effect of the debate has been to disengage what is central to Jesus Christ – his cross and his contemporary presence – from the contingent relationships of his earthly life. For the presence of Christ is not merely said not to be created by memory and imagination, but is also said to have nothing to do with them.

Thus, although the Western approach to the Church largely assumes the understanding that the Spirit leads the followers of Jesus Christ, the contingencies of the life both of Jesus and of the worshipping community are largely considered as irrelevant within it.

These contingencies are made even more marginal in the account of real presence and of sacrifice offered by theologies of communion. In these theologies, the Eucharist enacts the presence of the risen Christ to his body the church, and associates believers in the eternal self-offering of Christ actualised in his Cross. Since in the Eucharist, we are brought into the sphere of the risen life of Jesus Christ, the theology of the Eucharist does not need to refer to the context and associations of his life.

Within a theology which emphasises discipleship, however, the Spirit makes use of memory and imagination to mediate Christ's real presence. The Christ who is present is necessarily the Jesus Christ of the Gospels. But the memory of Jesus Christ is also necessarily related to the context within which the community lives out its discipleship. The contingent relationships of the church community are illuminated by the memory of Jesus Christ, imagined out of the Gospel stories in his contingent relationships.

Therefore, while the risen Christ is present, offers and is offered, in the Eucharist, equally he loses nothing of his life. Nor does he cast off the particularity of his life or of his death. A strong Eucharistic theology, therefore, will give an account of real presence and of sacrifice that does not divorce these doctrines from the particularity of context and of relations. The actuality of the context in which Jesus Christ is set strengthens the link between his Eucharistic body and his church body. When we recognise him, for example, as the one who dined with prostitutes and sinners, we are impelled to develop a strong and realistic

soften the impact of exclusion if it were accepted widely in the church, the discrepancy between Jesus' meal practice and Christian hospitality remains disquieting.

understanding of the Eucharist as the body of Christ who forms the body of Christ.

Thirdly, the centrality of discipleship to the theology of the Eucharist suggests that Ratzinger's account of Church and Eucharist may fail to give adequate weight to the way in which symbols are shaped at the level of the local community of disciples. The emphasis on the local community follows naturally from the understanding that the Spirit leads us to follow Jesus Christ in proclaiming the Gospel. But it is also consistent with many theologies of communion which place emphasis on the eschatological Spirit gathering the community around Christ. Many such theologies give more weight to the local community in its relationship to the universal church than does Ratzinger.

Where the Spirit is seen as the power of discipleship, theology must take account of the local group of disciples whose celebrations of the Eucharist express and animate their following of Jesus Christ. We would expect each local community to leave its imprint on the celebration of the Eucharist, because the shape which each community is called to give to its following of Jesus Christ under distinctive conditions will also be distinctive. So, too, will be the way in which it appropriates and enacts the symbols of faith.

This is not to deny the central reality of the universal body of Christ, splendidly described in the image of communion. But although the universality of the church is given, equally it needs to be given concrete shape. For the proper shaping of universality, discipleship is essential. It operates at a different level than the structures which flow out of apostolic succession, but complements them. The universality of the church is enacted in the response to the universal call to follow Jesus, which alone justifies order in the church.

The universality of the Church is also embodied in the presence of Jesus Christ through memory. It is impossible to nurture in the imagination the Jesus of the Gospel stories without recognising his proclamation of the Kingdom within the context of God's universal call to Israel. To follow this Jesus demands that the church be conceived universally, and make any local barriers between local churches a contradiction in terms. A universal discipleship requires a universal church, just as in another theology, a universal church necessarily expresses itself in a universal discipleship.

Discipleship also expresses itself necessarily in hospitality. From this perspective, the structures of hospitality between communities at a simple level - the sending of visitors, representatives and missionaries to other communities - also shape in significant ways the universality of the church. As well as embodying the universal church, therefore, the local communities also give shape to it.

The role which I have attributed to the local community in shaping the symbols of Eucharist and church may also lead us to build on Ratzinger's central emphasis on God's grace. While the theology of discipleship insists that the Eucharist and discipleship itself are the gift of the Holy Spirit, it also insists that the disciples are active in their response to that grace. While this theology would agree with Augustine against Pelagius, it might be more hesitant to support his school against Cassian. Certainly, the Eucharist must be seen both as the gift of God and as the response of the disciples. Both these elements require expression in the way in which the symbols are given shape in the community.

The influence which discipleship properly exercises on the theology of the Eucharist will be reflected in our judgement of the way in which the Eucharist is shaped in Australia. This rounded theology of the Eucharist accommodates the qualities which I earlier nominated as distinctively Australian. Within the shape of the Eucharist given for the universal church, we would expect to find local variations within different communities. Because discipleship is expressed in local situations, we should also expect to find the life of the local communities taken into the celebration of the Eucharist. Within the acceptance of Apostolic proclamation and office, we should also expect to find a democratic and demotic spirit because these express the shape of discipleship in Australia, and so may not improperly be called the gift of Australia to the universal church.

The intimate relationship between discipleship and Eucharistic style, however, suggests that harder questions than those of style should be put to the Australian celebration of Eucharist. To speak of functioning communities begs the question of what it means for a community to function. I have suggested, however, a radical criterion by which to judge whether a given community is functional. Such a community is defined as a community of discipleship, whose celebration of the Eucharist expresses a concrete commitment to follow Jesus Christ in specifically Australian conditions. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul spoke trenchantly of the demands of discipleship in the community of his day. They are no less exigent today. And their stringency forbids us from seeing the Australian church as conspicuous in virtue. We might conclude, No Paul, no sprawl!